



ASPEN
UNIVERSITY ...*Education - Delivered*



Bachelor of Science in Nursing RN-to-BSN Completion

2019 Student Handbook



Aspen University

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We understand the demands and constraints associated with trying to fit education into an already busy work and life schedule. Harnessing the power of the Internet and online collaboration, Aspen has created interactive, flexible, facilitated, online courses designed to fit around your lifestyle. Education is a journey of professional growth. The starting point is you, here and now. The ending point is you, with the skills and knowledge to compete and win in a world where business and technology are inextricably intertwined.

Re-create yourself at Aspen University - the award-winning, accredited University where you can earn your degree online – without setting foot in a classroom.

A Higher Degree of Education!

Aspen University has always been an online University - effectively leading the way in online education. By reaching the learner in his or her real world, and real work environment, distance learning programs enhance the way individuals learn best: through experience, reflection, implementation and experiment. By stepping out of the known environment of classroom-centered instruction, Aspen University's distance learning programs consider what needs to be gained or changed through the learning process. Aspen's programs provide its graduates with an advantage to excel in the challenging professional work environments of today and tomorrow.

Aspen University understands your educational needs as a working professional and your desire to have relevant opportunities for lifelong learning. We also understand the pride you have in your accomplishments, in your proven capabilities to direct your own life, and in your potential as someone who can grow in today's rapidly-changing work environments.

Flexible

Log on day or night and you're in class. Network as you learn. Interact with respected technology leaders and fellow professionals from around the globe, or opt for even more flexibility with courses facilitated one-on-one with the instructor. Then apply what you've learned right away in your professional environment.

Tailored for the Adult Learner

Aspen University understands your educational needs as a working professional in this business climate and your need to have relevant opportunities for lifelong learning. All Aspen courses are facilitated by industry-expert instructors with advanced degrees, so you can be assured of a high level of relevant and meaningful feedback.

Discover Aspen University

Join us at Aspen University. Apply online at <https://application.aspen.edu/application/index.html> or call our admissions office at: 303-333-4224 or Toll-free in the United States at 1-800-373-7814.

“Quality patient care hinges on having a highly educated nursing workforce. Research has shown the lower mortality rates, fewer medication errors and quality outcomes are all linked to nurses prepared at the baccalaureate and higher degree level.”

-American Association of Colleges of Nursing

Aspen University Mission

Aspen University is dedicated to offering any motivated college-worthy student the opportunity to receive a high quality, responsibly priced distance-learning education for the purpose of achieving sustainable economic and social benefits for themselves and their families. This is accomplished by achievement of the following goals:

The **Academic Achievement Goal** is to transition motivated learners to higher levels of productive citizenship by providing a readily accessible education that teaches knowledge and skills of enduring value.

The **Economic Responsibility Goal** is to offer tuition rates low enough that a majority of our students will not incur debt through utilization of federal financial aid, and ensure alumni have achieved a return on investment benefit following earning a degree from Aspen University.

Accreditation

Aspen University is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC). DEAC is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency, and is a recognized member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.



Distance Education Accrediting Commission
1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808
Washington, D.C. 20036

The baccalaureate degree in nursing and master's degree in nursing at Aspen University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001. (202) 887-6791

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)
655 K Street NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20001
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Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)



Mission Statement

The mission of the Aspen University School of Nursing is to enhance the health and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities at local, state, and national levels through excellence in teaching, scholarship and practice. The RN-to-BSN program builds upon previous learning, and prepares nurses for a higher level of nursing practice, allowing them to advance their nursing careers. By developing stronger clinical reasoning and analytical skills, BSN-prepared nurses can assume roles as care providers; as designers, managers, and coordinators of care; and as members of a profession within a diverse society and across a spectrum of healthcare settings.

RN-to-BSN degree program

Aspen University offers an online RN-to-BSN degree program for registered nurses who have an associate degree or diploma in nursing and wish to pursue a baccalaureate degree. With a liberal arts foundation, our RN-to-BSN program builds on initial nursing preparation with course work to enhance professional development, prepare for a broader scope of practice, and provide a better understanding of the cultural, political, economic, and social issues that affect patients and influence care delivery. All courses in the RN-to-BSN program are completed online. Full-time students can complete the RN-to-BSN program in as little as one year, enabling them to quickly achieve their educational goals and increase their options for career mobility.

RN-to-BSN Program Goals

The goals of the RN-to-BSN program are to educate professional nurse generalists who emulate the following characteristics and behaviors:

1. **Professional Behavior/Ethics** (AACN Essential 1, 6, 7, 8, 9)
Develop a personal values system and value-based behaviors that include the capacity to make and act upon ethical judgments
2. **Cultural Competence** (AACN Essential 1, 7, 8, 9)
Recognize the need for evidence-based knowledge and sensitivity to variables such as age, gender, culture, health disparities, socioeconomic status, race, and spirituality
3. **Research and Evidence-Based Practice** (AACN Essential 1, 3, 9)
Use research findings and other evidence in designing, implementing, and evaluating care that is multidimensional, high quality, cost-effective and leads to improved patient outcomes

4. **Leadership/Advocacy** (AACN Essential 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8)
Work within organizational and community arenas to promote high quality patient care through organizational and systems leadership, quality improvement, and safety
5. **Technology** (AACN Essential 1, 4)
Design and implement measures to modify risk factors and promote healthy lifestyles, utilizing emerging advances in science and technology

RN-to-BSN Program Admission Requirements

- Associate Degree in Nursing or diploma with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater.
 - Students may petition for an exception.
- Provide documentation of a current, unencumbered license to practice as a registered nurse.
- A minimum of one year of nursing experience completed within the past 5 years.
- A current resume.

Liberal Arts Education Requirements

A solid base in liberal education provides the distinguishing cornerstone for the study and practice of professional nursing. Liberal education enables the nurse to integrate knowledge, skills, and values from the arts and sciences to provide humanistic, safe quality care; to act as advocates for individuals, families, groups, communities, and/or populations; and to promote social justice (*Baccalaureate Essentials*, AACN, 2008, p. 12).

Examples of recommended liberal arts courses include:

Communications

- English
- Writing

Sciences

- Physical sciences
- Mathematical sciences
- Social sciences

Arts

- Humanities

RN-to-BSN Program Degree Completion Requirements

The BSN degree requires a minimum of 120 credits, 30 of these credits must be completed at Aspen University:

- 50 credits in liberal arts and electives
- 40 credits from lower-division nursing courses
- 30 credits earned at Aspen University
 - 21 credits from upper-division (400-level) nursing courses
 - 9 credits from health professions-related general education courses

Liberal Arts Requirements

The broad spectrum of liberal arts credits provides students with a background in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences/mathematics and a foundation for the professional nursing requirements and potential future graduate study.

Lower-Division Nursing

The 40-credit lower-division nursing requirement will be satisfied by transfer credit from an active RN license and an associate degree nursing program or by the award of credit for diploma nursing course work.

Upper-Division Nursing

The 21-credit upper-division nursing requirement is completed entirely by online courses offered by the Aspen University School of Nursing. These seven courses are N490-N496.

Health professions-related general education courses

This requirement will consist of nine credits of general education courses that are directly relevant to and compliment the nursing curriculum. These three courses will include *HUM410 Academic Success: Strengthening Scholarly Writing*, *MM320 Healthcare Policy*, and *CIS450 Informatics in Healthcare*. These cross-disciplinary courses allow students to explore topics of importance to the delivery of health care while simultaneously gaining exposure to the perspectives of students from related health-care fields.

Grading policies are consistent with other undergraduate courses. All financial obligations to Aspen University, including the graduation fee, must be satisfied before a diploma and final transcript can be released.

RN-to-BSN COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

N490 Issues and Trends in Professional Nursing

Issues and Trends in Professional Nursing analyzes the impact of economic, demographic and technological forces on health care delivery, and the concerns relating to ethical, legal, and social issues that influence nursing practice. A historical background gives perspective to current nursing problems, and future trends are considered in terms of their impact on roles and practice. Issues impacting professional nursing are examined within a framework set forth by the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) five core competencies on quality and healthcare. The potential transformation of nursing practice in response to societal changes will be explored as well as the new opportunities these challenges have for career development.

N491 Concepts and Theories in Nursing

Concepts and Theories in Nursing provides an introduction to theory and reasoning in nursing. The significance of theory for nursing as a profession is explored, thus providing students with a foundation for professional nursing practice and research. This course provides an overview of theory, theory development, important nursing theories and nursing theorists, as well as a method for critiquing theory. Students are guided to develop a foundation of reasoning skills that are necessary to integrate the components of knowledge, skills, values, meanings, and experiences into nursing practice.

N492 Community Health Nursing I

Community Health Nursing I provides a solid foundation in community and public health nursing concepts and interventions for individuals, families, and communities. Various roles of the nurse are explored in relation to primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention with target populations across the lifespan. The impact of political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural concerns on the health of populations is examined. Health promotion and disease prevention concepts are integrated into the multifaceted role of population-focused, community-oriented nursing practice. *It is anticipated that 20-30 practice hours will be required to complete the community assessment project.*

***Please note, students who hold an RN license in the state of WA are required to complete a minimum of 20 practice experience hours in this course.*

N493 Community Health Nursing II

Community Health Nursing II builds upon the foundation provided in N492 *Community Health Nursing I*. From a theoretical and scientific framework, the concepts of epidemiology and disease transmission, comprehensive assessment of risk factors and health problems, program planning and intervention, environmental health, and collaboration with the interdisciplinary team are explored. The practicum component focuses upon developing and evaluating health promotion programs, family assessment, community assessment, and community-based home care within the context of the community. The nursing process is applied with the goal of promoting and preserving the health of populations. *It is anticipated that 70-100 practice hours will be required to complete this health promotion project.* ***Please note, students who hold an RN license in WA are required to complete a minimum of 80 practice experience hours in this course.*

N494 Essentials of Nursing Research

Essentials of Nursing Research introduces the steps of the research process and the role of research in the practice of professional nursing. The methods and analytical tools required to critically evaluate nursing research literature are emphasized. Quantitative and qualitative approaches are highlighted. The focus of this course is on accessing and analyzing current nursing research literature to enable the professional nurse to apply research to current practice and issues. The skills of using technology to locate research information are developed, and the essential role of databases is explored. An understanding of ethical research practices is explored. This course prepares students to be critical consumers of evidence based research, and serves as a foundation for graduate-level nursing research courses.

N495 Health Assessment

Health Assessment focuses on the complete health assessment, the nursing process, and its relationship to the prevention and early detection of disease in diverse patients across the life span. The process of health assessment is introduced, including: interviewing, history-taking, and physical assessment. Health assessment occurs within the context of the family and community and incorporates cultural and developmental variations and needs of the patient. Normal findings and cultural and age variations are emphasized. Incorporated throughout the course is the importance of communication and collaboration with patients and health care professionals. This course prepares the professional nurse to apply the concepts, knowledge and skills necessary to complete a health assessment for patients in all age groups, emphasizing the major elements, sequence and methodology of health assessment. This course also serves as a foundation for a graduate-level health assessment course.

N496 Nursing Leadership and Management

Nursing Leadership and Management provides broad and comprehensive coverage of leadership and management theories and processes that are critical to the creation of a work environment that is efficient, cost-effective, and committed to quality nursing care. The emphasis is on understanding the key skills employed by highly successful nurse leaders/managers such as critical thinking, effective communication, conflict resolution, successful delegation, team building, controlling resources, quality improvement, stress management, utilization of information technology, and leading change. Students are engaged with opportunities to participate in learning activities that integrate knowledge about the activities, roles, and responsibilities of nurse managers/leaders and enable students to practice conceptual, technical, and interpersonal management and leadership skills. This course prepares the student for an entry position into the professional nurse manager role, and serves as a foundation for graduate-level leadership and management courses. *Approximately 10 practice hours are included in this course. **Please note, students who hold an RN license in WA are required to complete 10 practice experience hours in this course.*

HUM410 Academic Success: Strengthening Scholarly Writing: This undergraduate-level course acclimates students to the academic community by developing and refining the knowledge and skills needed to read and critically analyze scholarly texts, write essays of increasing complexity, and practice stages of the composing process. Students are introduced to principles of effective written communication and critical reading, with a focus on invention, drafting, revising, editing, and self-assessment of written scholarly work. While a number of citation and formatting styles exist in scholarly writing, this course focuses on application of the basic rules of the American Psychological Association (APA) style.

CIS450 Informatics in Healthcare: This undergraduate-level course provides students with an introduction to health care informatics from an interdisciplinary perspective. Foundational concepts of health care informatics are explored, including theoretical underpinnings of health care informatics; use of information systems in a variety of health care settings; the e-patient and participatory informatics; quality, usability, and standards related to health care informatics, legal and ethical implications for practice; and emerging technologies.

HCA320 Healthcare Policy: This undergraduate-level course focuses on how healthcare policies, financial issues, regulations, legislative actions, businesses, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders influence healthcare in the United States and the world. Students will develop a solid understanding of the broader context of healthcare, including how patient care services are organized and financed, and how reimbursement is structured. Students will learn how healthcare policy is both developed and changed, and how that process can be influenced by healthcare professionals as well as lay and special advocacy groups. Students will be encouraged to participate in the political process and advocate for patients, families, communities, their profession, and changes in the healthcare system as needed. Advocacy for vulnerable populations with the goal of promoting social justice is discussed.

Policies and Regulations

RN-to-BSN students are guided by the policies and regulations as outlined in the Aspen University catalog: (<http://catalog.aspen.edu/>). In certain situations, policies governing nursing students may differ, and are specified here.

Credit Policies

The BSN degree requires a minimum of 120 credits, 30 of these credits must be completed at Aspen University. The RN-to-BSN curriculum contains 30 credits; therefore a student MAY NOT use transfer credit or portfolio credit for any of the program specific courses outlined in the RN-to-BSN curriculum.

Credit Transfer

Aspen University accepts academic credits earned from accredited/approved academic institutions when the course content is deemed to be the equivalent to our own. Aspen University accepts transfer of 90 credits into the BSN Completion program (40 credits for RN licensure plus 50 Liberal Arts credits as required for program completion). Ninety credits is the maximum that can be transferred in to baccalaureate degree programs. Credit Transfer (beyond these 90 credits) is NOT available for courses in the RN-to-BSN program.

Portfolio Credit

Prior Experiential Learning (Portfolio Credit) is any learning experience that was not part of a college or university course and does not carry academic degree credit.

Course Progression and Participation

For information regarding Aspen's academic participation policy, please click on the following link:

<http://catalog.aspen.edu/policies/academic-progress-participation-policy/>

8-Week Course Schedule

<u>Before the End of Day</u>	<u>Activity</u>
3	Establish attendance by posting on the Discussion Board
7	Submit First Module Assignment
14	Submit Second Module Assignment
21	Submit Third Module Assignment
28	Submit Fourth Module Assignment
35	Submit Fifth Module Assignment
42	Submit Sixth Module Assignment
49	Submit Seventh Module Assignment
56	Submit Eighth Module Assignment
56	Final day to submit any additional work for the class

Grading Policy: Discussion Participation

Students are expected to actively participate in online discussions if assigned during the module. Students will make a minimum of one original posting to the discussion assignment, AND respond to a fellow learners' posting. If there are no other students in the course, the dialogue interaction will occur with the faculty member. We are attempting to create a learning community in which the perspectives and viewpoints of others with diverse personal and professional experiences enhances the learning environment.

The quality of comments is as important as the quantity, so students are expected to be reflective in their original posts and responses (i.e. not "cut and paste" from a website or reiterate material directly from the textbook!). Generally, a minimum of 400 words are required for your initial postings, along with scholarly support. Responses to fellow learners need to seek clarification, question and help enhance the student's original thoughts. A minimum of 200 words is expected to accomplish this. A grading rubric for "Discussion Participation" is included in Appendix B. Initial posts to the discussion board are due on Day 3 of each module, to allow classmates time to read and reflect on posts. Replies to classmates are due on Day 6 of each module.

Grading Policy: Written Assignments

Course assignments will be graded according to the rubrics in the course.

Submitting Assignments

Submit only one module at a time, completing them in sequence. Generally speaking, the modules build on the information presented in previous modules, so it is important to incorporate the feedback and suggestions you receive from the faculty into your subsequent module assignments.

Course Grades

The letter grade earned at the completion of each course in the RN-to-BSN program is based on a percentage of total points earned for all assignments (discussion questions,

module assignments, signature assignments, etc.) in the course.

Sample Grading Scale for RN-to BSN and other undergraduate courses. Students must receive at least a 70% on the signature assignment to pass each course:

Numeric Grade Percentage	Letter Grade	GPA
94% - 100%	A	4.000
90% - 93.9%	A-	3.667
87% - 89.9%	B+	3.333
83% - 86.9%	B	3.000
80% - 82.9%	B-	2.667
77% - 79.9%	C+	2.333
73% - 76.9%	C	2.000
70% - 72.9%	C-	1.667
67% - 69.9%	D+	1.333
63% - 66.9%	D	1.000
60% - 62.9%	D-	0.667
59.9% or Under	U	0.000
Pass / Fail - P / U	*	*

* Not counted towards the GPA calculation.

Verifying the Authenticity of Student Work

Online universities are uniquely challenged to verify the authenticity of student work. In other words, *how do we know that the work submitted by the student (essay papers, exams) is actually completed by the student?* In the nursing program, we have built in several opportunities for “direct observation” of the student. These include:

- Presentation of legal photo identification during video presentation in N493.
- RN-to-BSN comprehensive exam: A comprehensive exam over core knowledge in the RN-to- BSN program will be taken at the end of the program.

Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the Proctored Exam is to evaluate a student’s ability to synthesize, analyze, and apply core concepts/theories studied. Satisfactory performance on the Proctored Exam will demonstrate mastery of the expected student learning outcomes for the BSN program. The Proctored Exam is offered in multiple choice format. The multiple-choice format will require students to complete 60 multiple choice questions within a two-hour time period. The Proctored Exam is graded on a S/U (Successful/Unsuccessful) basis. A passing grade on the Proctored Exam is a 70%.

Students who fail to successfully complete their Proctored Exam may have one additional attempt at the exam.

Student Governance

Students have input into the workings of Aspen University and the nursing program through a variety of mechanisms. Input is sought at the completion of each course, through course evaluations. At the completion of the RN-to-BSN program, graduates are given a survey to assess how they feel their personal learning objectives were met. As alumni, survey data are collected at 1-, 3-, and 5-years post-graduation to determine how well the nursing program prepared graduates to meet the advanced roles that they fulfill.

Formal committees at Aspen University and within the nursing program provide another avenue for student input. The two nursing committees that have student representation include the Curriculum Committee and the Program Advisory Board. Descriptions of these two committees follow:

Program Advisory Board

Purpose: The Program Advisory Board acts in an advisory and consultative capacity to promote, assist, and perpetuate the goals and objectives of Aspen University nursing program. This board meets twice per year.

Functions:

- Identify emerging health care needs that may require programmatic and institutional response
- Provide an opportunity for the exchange of viewpoints between business/professional persons, alumni, and academicians as they relate to nursing education.
- Provide a direct liaison between faculty and the community for the purpose of promoting the activities and mission of the Aspen University nursing program and the nursing profession.
- Advise and inform the EAC on local, state, and national perceptions regarding nursing education and the nursing profession, suggest possible avenues for marketing the program.

Membership: The dean and various members of the community of interest: current student, alumni, nurses, leaders in health care

Curriculum Committee

Purpose: The Curriculum Committee is responsible for the curriculum, specifically to develop, implement, and evaluate the nursing curricula. This committee meets twice a year or as needed.

Functions:

- Monitor and formulate policies governing the curriculum of the nursing programs
- Lead the evaluation of the curriculum according to the nursing program evaluation plan
- Recommend curricular revisions for the nursing programs
- Recommend curricular revisions for the nursing programs based on input from the community of interest

Membership: The dean, the nursing program directors, at least 2 faculty members as dictated by curricular needs, 1 student from each program.