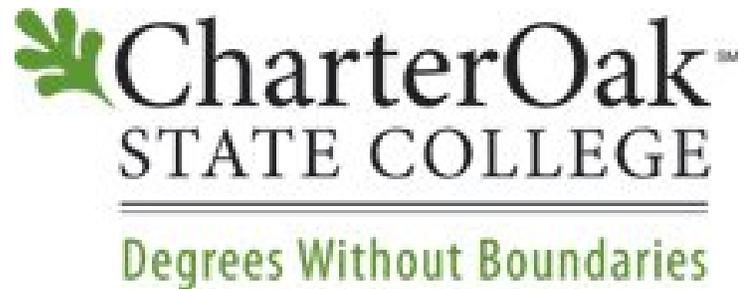


**CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE (COSC)
REGISTERED NURSE (RN) –
BACCALAUREATE IN NURSING (BSN) PROGRAM**



**NURSING PROGRAM
STUDENT HANDBOOK
2020-2021**

A Guide to Program Standards and Practices

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GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

The *Nursing Program Student Handbook* is a guide to the standards and practices of the COSC RN-BSN Program. The RN-BSN Program is offered under the auspices and infrastructure of Charter Oak State College and the *Nursing Program Student Handbook* exists to support the specialized needs of the students, faculty, and staff of the RN-BSN Program. Please refer to the [Charter Oak State College Official Catalog](#) for general college policies applicable to all students.

Students are required to review and abide by the contents of the *Nursing Program Student Handbook* each academic year or upon re-entry into the program. Students are required to complete an orientation to the RN-BSN Program either live or online; see the ACORN Portal, Nursing Page for the most recent student orientation presentation. A signed acknowledgement of receipt of the *Nursing Program Student Handbook* must be provided to the program administrator or designee (Appendix F).

Mission, Vision, and Philosophy for the RN-BSN Program

The Charter Oak State College (COSC) online RN to BSN program is designed to provide a quality, affordable, seamless, diverse, and accessible alternative for registered nurses prepared at the associate degree (AD) or diploma level to progress to the baccalaureate degree in nursing. The RN to BSN program has been designed to meet the recommendations of the *Connecticut Articulation Model for Nurse Educational Mobility* (CLN, 1992, 2014), established at the urging of the Connecticut state legislature in 1992 to maximize opportunities for nursing educational advancement.

Consistent with the mission of COSC, the *Mission* of the RN-BSN program is to facilitate academic progression of registered nurses (RNs) in partnership with employers to meet the healthcare workforce needs in Connecticut and beyond. Effective academic/workforce partnerships assist RNs to reach their goals and aspirations to improve health within the communities served.

In combination with the core nursing discipline courses, the strong liberal education component of the RN-BSN program is designed to help students acquire specific skills and knowledge to enhance critical thinking, communication, ethical decision making, and information literacy. The program has been designed to minimize redundant educational requirements between the AD or diploma and the baccalaureate in nursing.

The *Vision* of the RN-BSN program is to be a personally and professionally rewarding academic program of choice for RNs seeking to advance their education. The

COSC RN-BSN program fosters diversity, innovation, quality, and excellence. As lifelong learners, COSC RN-BSN graduates enhance their impact upon the lives of those they care for, their communities of practice, and the profession of nursing.

The COSC RN-BSN Program Philosophy:

Building upon the strong foundation of AD and diploma nursing preparation the COSC RN-BSN program philosophy is grounded in the metaparadigm of nursing, and a belief in dynamic, professional relationships between students, patients, peers, members of the interprofessional healthcare team, and faculty. The nursing metaparadigm describes the roles of the nurse and directs professional practice. The metaparadigm includes four concepts, the *Person**, the *Environment*, the *Nurse*, and *Health*. The *Person* is considered within *Environments* of care where the *Nurse* promotes *Health* and manages illness in partnership with the *Person* and the interprofessional health care team.

The COSC RN-BSN curriculum is guided by local, regional, and national standards and trends within healthcare, higher education, and the nursing discipline. Organized through the integration of the *Massachusetts Nurse of the Future Nursing Core Competencies* (NOFCC, 2016), the curriculum is designed to meet the *Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Practice* (AACN, 2008).

Role of the Baccalaureate Nurse

Beginning in 2013, Connecticut's leaders in nursing education and practice adopted the *Massachusetts Nurse of the Future Nursing Core Competencies* (NOFCC, 2016) to clarify the gaps in the education between nurses prepared at the associate and baccalaureate degree levels (Beauvais, et al., 2017). Committed to the preservation of the associate degree as an entry into professional nursing practice and 80% BSN by 2020, research was undertaken in Connecticut to explore best practices for RN-BSN education and to determine the ways in which the state's most recent AD graduates were advancing to the BSN (Perfetto, 2015; Perfetto, 2018; Perfetto & Orsolini, 2019; Perfetto, 2019). The research evidence and the gap analyses were both applied to develop the COSC RN-BSN Program as an effective solution to the essential academic progression of associate degree nurses.

Baccalaureate nursing education is guided by the *Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Practice* (AACN, 2008). The nine essentials guide the work of

nursing academicians with their students in baccalaureate programs:

- I. Liberal Education for Baccalaureate Generalist Nursing Practice
- II. Basic Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Care and Patient Safety
- III. Scholarship for Evidence-Based Practice
- IV. Information Management and Application of Patient Care Technology
- V. Healthcare Policy, Finance, and Regulatory Environments
- VI. Interprofessional Communication and Collaboration for Improving Patient Health Outcomes
- VII. Clinical Prevention and Population Health
- VIII. Professionalism and Professional Values
- IX. Baccalaureate Generalist Nursing Practice

Essential IX describes generalist nursing practice at the completion of baccalaureate nursing education.

The ten *Massachusetts Nurse of the Future Nursing Core Competencies* (NOFCC, 2016) provide the framework for the curriculum and assure that graduates are able to meet the *Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Practice* (AACN, 2008). The competencies addressed throughout the program are:

1. Patient-Centered Care
2. Professionalism
3. Leadership
4. Systems-Based Practice
5. Informatics and Technology
6. Communication
7. Teamwork and Collaboration
8. Safety
9. Quality Improvement
10. Evidence Based Practice

End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes

While providing nursing care to individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations within the health care system, COSC RN-BSN program graduates:

1. Demonstrate a strong foundation in evidence-based nursing practice through

purposeful, informed, outcome-oriented thinking and action that reflects a commitment to lifelong learning.

2. Utilize and apply knowledge, critical thinking, and clinical decision-making skills to make sound clinical judgments that identify and address individual, population, and organizational challenges.
3. Integrate leadership skills of systems thinking, communication, and change facilitation to meet patient care and organizational needs across the continuum of care.
4. Guided by the acquisition of a liberal arts education, utilize an ethical framework to advocate for patients amid economic, political, social, and demographic forces affecting the delivery of regional, national, and global health care.
5. Integrate determinants of health and patients' cultural beliefs and practices into the delivery and management of care to promote health across the lifespan.
6. Interact using effective communication skills with patients, families and interprofessional team members that fosters mutual respect and shared decision making to enhance patient satisfaction and health outcomes.
7. Apply evidence-based practice models to identify and integrate scientific evidence to address practice issues and assure quality nursing care outcomes.
8. Advocate for and participate in patient safety and quality initiatives as a member of the interprofessional healthcare team.
9. Utilize informatics and patient care technology to enhance communication in the provision and management of safe, effective patient care.
10. Incorporate professional nursing standards and accountability into practice as a member of the interprofessional healthcare team.

Program of Study

In addition to nursing professional standards, requirements for the Charter Oak State College Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing (BSN) conform to the requirements of the college. College requirements assure that students attain the Liberal Education required for Baccalaureate Generalist Nursing Practice (AACN BSN Essential I), gain the knowledge and skills to succeed in the program, further develop their potential, and enhance their capability to engage in a lifelong process of learning. More in-depth information can be found at: <https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/undergraduate-degree-requirements/>;

https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/undergraduate-degree-requirements/gen_ed_requirements.php; and

https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/undergraduate-degree-requirements/ug_academic_residency_requirements.php.

The Charter Oak State College RN-BSN Program of Study can be accessed at: <https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/undergraduate-programs-bachelors/nursing.php>. Information about the courses in the RN-BSN program of study can be accessed at: <https://www.charteroak.edu/syllabus/>.

RN-BSN Program Goals

In keeping with the program mission, vision and philosophy and the mission of the college the RN-BSN program seeks to achieve the following goals:

Graduation Rate:

75% of students will complete the nursing program within 5 years of starting the nursing courses

Program Satisfaction:

- The mean rating of overall student satisfaction with learning experiences in the nursing courses will be 4.0 or above on a scale of 1-5 over each academic year.
- 80% or more of program graduates responding to the Graduation survey will report their overall satisfaction with Charter Oak as Very Satisfied or Satisfied.
- 80% or more of or more of program graduates who respond to the Graduation Survey and indicate they are planning to attend graduate school, indicate that their Charter Oak education prepared them well or very well.
- 80% or more of program graduates who respond to the Graduation Survey indicate their level of competency in one or more areas within the Personal Skills Assessment* as very competent, competent, or somewhat competent at graduation

Job Placement/Performance:

- 85% or more of program graduates who respond to the Graduation Survey report that earning a Charter Oak degree has resulted in one or more career-related changes.

- 85% or more of program graduates who respond to the Graduation Survey report that the Charter Oak Experience has enhanced their job skills.

**Areas Assessed on the Personal Skills Assessment: writing & speaking effectively; critical thinking; analyzing & using Information; making ethical decisions; understanding of US history & government, history and culture of other countries, literature and fine arts, people, groups, & society, mathematics, and science & the scientific method; and global understanding.*

Approval and Accreditation

The Charter Oak State College RN-BSN program is licensed and accredited by the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education. In addition, the program is pursuing initial accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (www.ccnaccreditation.org). Applying for accreditation does not guarantee that accreditation will be granted. Visit the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](http://www.ccnaccreditation.org) for more information.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Charter Oak RN-BSN students must be aware of the [Charter Oak State College Academic Policies and Regulations](#) prior to enrollment in the program. In addition to the general academic policies and regulations of Charter Oak State College, additional standards and practices are applicable to COSC RN-BSN students. Individual course policies and expectations are found in course syllabi and may be more stringent.

Registered Nurse Licensure Requirement

Licensure as a registered nurse (RN) in good standing (unencumbered) in any US state or territory is required for all students in the RN-BSN program. Applicants who have not yet received their RN license, but meet all other admissions requirements, will be permitted to enroll in the college for one semester. Proof of RN licensure must be provided for continued enrollment.

Following the initial verification of a student's unencumbered RN license, it will be verified at additional points in the program:

1. Prior to engagement in the practicum experience in NUR 320
2. Prior to engagement in the practicum experience in NUR 495

It is the student's responsibility to inform the RN-BSN program director and/or the registrar's office of any encumbrance of their RN license outside of the required assessment times. Students for whom an unencumbered RN license cannot be verified will be required

to withdraw from the RN-BSN program. They may continue enrollment in the college in another degree program if they meet requirements.

Regardless of their unencumbered RN licensure in any US state or territory, students admitted to the program who graduated from an Associate Degree or Diploma in Nursing Program that does not hold national accreditation (i.e. through ACEN or CNEA), must successfully complete IDS101 and NUR 301 on the first attempt.

Attendance Policy

The practicum courses in the COSC RN-BSN program (NUR 320 and NUR 495) have specific attendance requirements. These requirements can be found within the course syllabi.

Course Transfer Policy

COSC RN to BSN students may transfer in two (2) nursing courses from another RN-BSN program with grades of 'C' or above, provided the credits are equivalent in content and credit value and were earned at another regionally accredited institution which also holds a national Nursing Program Accreditation (i.e. CCNE, ACEN).

Select courses in the RN-BSN Program have mandatory assignments to assist students to prepare for the practicum experiences in NUR 320 and NUR 495. Students receiving transfer credit for any nursing courses will be required to complete these assignments as deemed necessary.

Course Grading Policy

A grade of C or above is required for all nursing (NUR) courses. Students must achieve a Level of Performance of Satisfactory (4) on each Practicum SLO on the Practicum Evaluation by the end of the practicum experience to pass the practicum component of NUR 320 and NUR 495. Students who are unsuccessful in the practicum component of a nursing course will receive a grade of F for the entire course regardless of performance in other areas of the course. In these cases, students will be afforded the opportunity to repeat these courses once, pending assessment of their readiness in collaboration with course faculty, academic counselors, and the program director. Consult NUR 320 and NUR 495 course syllabi for more specific information.

Course Repeat Policy

COSC RN-BSN students are required to repeat a nursing (NUR) course if they receive a final course grade lower than a C. Both attempts of the course will appear on the transcript. The most recent grade will be calculated into the grade point average and will be

applied to the degree. Students are advised to contact Financial Aid prior to repeating a course.

If a *COSC RN-BSN student* fails (C- or below) or withdraws from (W or AW) a Nursing (NUR) course, the student must retake the course. If the student fails (C- or below) or withdraws from (W or AW) the course a second time, the student will be dismissed from the RN-BSN program, but may continue their studies in another major.

Grade Appeal Process

RN-BSN students who wish to appeal a course grade should follow the Charter Oak State College grade appeal procedures found at

https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/academic_policies_regulations/grade_appeal_procedures.php.

Graduation Requirement

The COSC RN to BSN Program must demonstrate that students complete the degree within a reasonable span of time. Students will receive academic counseling to support completion of the BSN within 3 calendar years. In order to support this rate of completion an individualized plan of study will be designed for each student in collaboration with their academic counselor. The plan of study will prescribe an order for the completion of general education and nursing course requirements to achieve an acceptable work-life-school balance consistent with student success.

Inactive Student Policy

COSC RN-BSN students must show evidence of academic progress. Consistent with the college policy (https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/academic_policies_regulations/inactive_student_policy.php) in the absence of evidence of academic progress (i.e. by taking courses at Charter Oak, submitting any transcripts for courses taken elsewhere, standardized examination score reports, or prior learning evaluations) for two consecutive semesters (excluding the summer term), the student will receive a letter from the Registrar's Office notifying the student that progress needs to be demonstrated. If no transcripts, score reports or confirmation of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) completion have been received by the deadline date established, the student will be administratively withdrawn from the RN-BSN program and the college. If the student wishes to return, they will need to go through the application process and will be required to meet current degree requirements.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Non-discrimination Statement

The COSC RN-BSN Program abides by the [Charter Oak State College Policy of Nondiscrimination](#), compliant with all applicable federal and state laws. Please refer to this policy for guidance.

Office of Accessibility Services

The COSC RN-BSN Program is committed to the goal of achieving equal educational opportunities and full participation in higher education for persons with disabilities who qualify for admission to the program and college. As an online institution, Charter Oak is uniquely positioned to work with students using a variety of modalities and is able to serve students with a wide range of disabilities. In order to receive accommodations, a student must be registered with the Office of Accessibilities. To find out more about accommodations or to request services, visit the Office of Accessibility website at <https://www.charteroak.edu/current/services/accessibility.php>.

Student Advisement

Each student is assigned an academic counselor for guidance related to the RN-BSN program. It is advised that students contact their assigned academic counselor at least once a semester to review their plan of study and discuss strategies for success. The COSC academic counselors provide access to information and resources pertinent to the student to support progression in the program. Through the help of academic counseling, RN-BSN students are connected with resources and opportunities available through the college to assist them in meeting their academic and career goals.

Students should seek the advice of the RN-BSN Program Faculty related to nursing course requirements. The ACORN Portal, Nursing Page is a helpful source of information about the program and requirements. Should a student seek additional information and direction they are free to contact the RN-BSN Program Director at any time.

Program Costs, Tuition, and Fees

Information about program tuition, fees, and financial assistance can be found at https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/fees_financial_aid_scholarships/. In addition to COSC tuition and fees, expenses for students in the RN-BSN program may include specific learning resources, travel and parking fees, and requirements to engage in practicum experiences such as immunizations, toxicology screening, and criminal background checks. The college utilizes Castle Branch, Inc. to track mandatory program requirements, thus

students are required to establish a Castle Branch account; related instructions will be posted on the ACORN Portal, Nursing Page when available.

Academic Honesty

A fundamental tenet of all educational institutions is academic honesty; academic work depends upon respect and acknowledgement of the research and ideas of others. Students in the COSC RN-BSN Program are expected to integrate and apply the standards of the most recent *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) to all aspects of the writing process.

Because Charter Oak State College is a nontraditional college, and the student's work is done at a distance, upholding academic integrity is of utmost importance. Charter Oak State College expects its students and faculty to uphold high standards of academic honesty in their scholarship and learning.

Plagiarism

Charter Oak uses electronic monitoring to check students' papers for plagiarism. Currently Charter Oak is using the plagiarism detection website, [Turnitin](#). When a paper is submitted to Turnitin.com for review, the paper becomes part of the Turnitin.com database. If the paper has already been submitted to Turnitin.com, it will check the second paper against the first paper and it will show line by line the similarities in the two papers and calculate the percentage of similarity. Students are expected to submit all written assignments to Turnitin to avoid the sanctions associated with plagiarizing threaded discussions, written and oral assignments. Please review the sanctions associated with any form of plagiarism located in the [Charter Oak State College catalog](#).

Additional general expectations for academic honesty can be found at https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/academic_honesty_policy.php. For specific course related expectations consult course syllabi.

Student Conduct

In general, Charter Oak State College and the Connecticut Board of Regents (BOR) for Higher Education have the obligation and right to institute appropriate disciplinary action when a student ignores or fails to act in accordance with applicable codes of conduct. The *BOR/CSCU Student Code of Conduct* provides the procedures for the investigation, definitions of terms, and resolution of complaints regarding student conduct, including those involving sexual misconduct. Students should refer to the related policies, standards and practices at

https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/student_code_conduct.php and

https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/sexual_assault_policy.php.

As registered nurses, COSC RN-BSN students not only represent themselves but also the RN-BSN program and the trusted nursing profession. COSC RN-BSN students are expected to demonstrate and uphold professional behaviors according to the regulatory, legal, and ethical principles of the profession in both academic and practicum settings. As such, character and behavior consistent with the [*ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses*](#) with Interpretive Statements is required of students at all times, regardless of setting.

Technology Requirements and Social Media

Selected portions of the COSC RN-BSN curriculum are taught, reinforced, or reviewed using educational software, instructional media, publisher resources, computer programs, audio/video recordings, etc. Students are required to adhere to all copyright policies when using these resources.

Students are required to have access to the necessary technology (i.e. computer, webcam, etc.) to enable participation in all learning activities in the online courses in the RN-BSN program. Please see college guidelines for technology requirements at <https://www.charteroak.edu/bb/resources.php>. Additional information is provided in Appendix B, *Personal Technology Guidelines for COSC RN-BSN Students*. In addition, Students should refer to college course syllabi for more specific requirements or information.

COSC RN-BSN students are reminded that posts to any social networking or social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, Snapchat) must reflect the same behavioral standards of honesty, respect, consideration, and professionalism that are expected in academic and practice environments. In any social media posts or communications, students must adhere to restrictions related to privacy for fellow students, faculty, and clients/patients in accordance with the federal [*Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)*](#). Information related to practicum experiences must NOT be posted on any social media. Inappropriate use of social media by students is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.

Students should review and refer to [*A Nurses Guide to Social Media*](#) made available through the *National Council of State Boards of Nursing* (NCSBN) and the [*American*](#)

[Nurses Association \(ANA\) Principles for Social Networking and the Nurse](#) for additional guidance.

Request for Letter of Recommendation

Students requesting a letter of recommendation for prospective employers or for college or scholarship applications are required to complete a *Faculty Recommendation Request Form* (Appendix A) and submit it to the faculty member who will write the recommendation.

PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE AND AGENCY REQUIREMENTS

In addition to meeting the requirements of the college, RN-BSN students must demonstrate that they meet requirements of practicum sites in order to meet the requirements of the program. The college utilizes Castle Branch, Inc. to track these mandatory requirements. Beginning in spring 2021, all RN-BSN students are required to establish an account with Castle Branch prior to enrollment in NUR 301. Continuing students will be required to establish a Castle Branch account by October 30, 2020, related instructions will be posted on the ACORN Portal, Nursing Page when available.

Overview of Practicum Experiences and Agencies

In the COSC RN-BSN program students engage in practice experiences, known as practicum experiences, that afford the opportunity to apply knowledge and concepts integrated into each nursing course to practice. Two of the seven nursing courses, NUR 320 *Population Health* and NUR 495, *The Baccalaureate Capstone* integrate practicum experiences. Select courses in the RN-BSN Program have mandatory assignments to assist students to prepare for the practicum experiences in NUR 320 and NUR 495.

As registered nurses aspiring to the BSN, students are expected to self-identify practice sites that will enable them to meet the objectives of the practicum experiences in both courses. By the second term/course or in NUR 310, students are expected to have developed a verbal agreement with a site for the NUR 320 *Population Health* practicum, along with an Organizational Mentor, BSN preferred, who works at the organization. In NUR 315 students identify a practicum site for NUR 495, *The Baccalaureate Capstone*. College and program leadership make every effort to arrange a *Clinical Affiliate Agreement* or “contract” between sites identified by the student and the college, necessary for students to complete practicum experiences in sites they prefer.

Students are encouraged to engage in practicum experiences within the organization they are employed, if possible. Students should be familiar with Appendix C, *Special*

Guidelines for Practicum Experiences within a Current Employer Setting to minimize any associated challenges or conflicts.

Practicum Organizational Mentors

Students are expected to align themselves with organizational mentors at their designated practicum sites, who as employees of the practicum facilities will be in a position to support the student with their practicum projects. The guidelines developed for organizational mentors are applied to facility/organization employees designated to supervise the RN-BSN student while engaged in related work within the facility. Though each student should have a site-based mentor to supervise their work within the organization while engaged in the practicum, the course faculty are responsible for the evaluation of the student with respect to the learning outcomes associated with the practicum. Agency and Organizational Mentor Request Forms for the practicum experiences in NUR 320 and NUR 495 will be made available on the ACORN Portal, Nursing Page.

The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of Organizational Mentors:

1. Serve as an advisor to the student as needed to facilitate project goals
2. Provide feedback to the student designed to enhance their ability to accomplish project goals
3. Facilitate opportunities for learning within the scope of the organization and project goals
4. Provide regular feedback to the designated Charter Oak RN-BSN Program faculty related to the student's progress and success with practicum projects
5. Assist the student to arrange for a mutually convenient time to present their project to parties affiliated with the organization when concluded.
6. Notify the designated Charter Oak RN-BSN Program faculty member with any concerns related to the project and/or the student

Health Requirements

The Charter Oak State College Immunization Exemption Policy

https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/immunization.php does not apply to RN-BSN students. Documentation of specific student health requirements is mandatory prior to participation in any practicum experience. Students are to utilize the COSC RN-BSN student *Health Assessment Form* and abide by procedures for submission of the form for review. Students are required to follow all instructions for documentation of immunization status with the required laboratory reports and the health care provider's signature. Certain items may require annual follow-up during the program (i.e. flu vaccine, Hepatitis B vaccination). Failure to complete and submit requirements in

accordance with the COSC RN-BSN student *Health Assessment Form* by the required deadlines may result in the inability to participate in practicum experiences. The COSC RN-BSN student *Health Assessment Form* will be made available on the ACORN Portal, Nursing Page.

Exceptions to the completion of the *Health Assessment Form* may be made for students authorized to complete practicum experience(s) at their place of employment only with authorization by a qualified representative. Please refer to the final page of the COSC RN-BSN student *Health Assessment Form*.

During academic year 2020-21 students are asked to sign the *COVID-19 Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability* as a condition of participation in practicum experiences. The required form is located in Appendix E.

Criminal Background Check & Toxicology Screening

Due to practicum affiliate agreements, criminal background checks and toxicology (drug) screening may be required prior to participation in practicum experiences. Students must follow instructions for obtaining criminal background checks and toxicology screenings and utilize the vendor adopted by Charter Oak State College. Results of criminal background checks and toxicology screening do not become a part of the student's educational record, as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").

Exceptions to the completion of the Criminal Background Check & Toxicology Screening may be made for students authorized to complete practicum experience(s) at their place of employment only with authorization by a qualified representative.

The following procedures and guidelines apply to criminal background checks and toxicology screening for any student:

1. Fees for all screenings must be paid by the student;
2. The need for additional screening/assessment beyond the initial screening/assessment is related to practicum affiliate requirements and/or results of the initial screening/assessment;
3. Notification and recordkeeping of toxicology screening results and/or criminal background checks are performed in a manner that ensures the integrity, accuracy and confidentiality of the information;
4. Students are not allowed to hand-deliver results of either toxicology screening or criminal background checks;
5. Students are required to sign a release for results of toxicology screenings and criminal background checks to be sent to Charter Oak State College.

6. Student refusal of either the background check or toxicology screening will result in dismissal from the RN-BSN program due to the inability to complete practicum requirements.

Criminal Background Checks

Students who are found guilty of committing a felony and/or misdemeanor can be prevented from participating in practicum experiences per practicum facility policy. If a student is unable to be placed at a practicum site, the student will not be able to meet student learning outcomes. In this case, the Director will contact the student and provide an opportunity for the student to withdraw from the program. Refusal to withdraw from the program will result in dismissal from the RN-BSN Program. Students have an on-going duty to inform the Director of the RN-BSN Program of any conviction that occurs after the initial criminal background check and/or while they are enrolled in the RN-BSN Program. Failure to report a conviction can result in dismissal from the RN-BSN Program.

Toxicology Screening

Positive toxicology screens can prevent students from participating in a practicum experience per affiliate contractual agreements. The following guides the response to a **positive** toxicology screening for any student:

1. All specimens identified as non-negative/positive on the initial test shall be confirmed, reviewed, and interpreted by the vendor;
2. The student is required to provide documentation by a healthcare provider in the event there is a medical explanation for a positive result (i.e. the result of a prescribed medication).
3. In accordance with federal law, a positive toxicology screen for legally prescribed marijuana can prohibit a student from being placed in a practicum setting that accepts federal funding.

Toxicology screening results that require retesting include but may not be limited to:

1. Vendor reports the screening specimen was diluted;
2. If a student challenges a result, only the original sample can be retested.

If a student tests positive for drugs that are illegal substances, non-prescribed legal substances, or the student is deemed unsafe for the practicum setting by a healthcare provider, the student will be immediately dismissed from the Nursing Program.

Readmission following dismissal from the program in response to a confirmed positive toxicology screen is subject to re-entry guidelines and the following conditions:

1. The student provides documentation from a qualified healthcare professional

indicating status of abuse, addiction, or recovery, and/or documented rehabilitation related to the alcohol/drug abuse;

2. Documentation of a confirmed negative toxicology screen immediately prior to readmission; and,
3. All other readmission/re-entry requirements are met.

Students may also be required to submit additional toxicology screening during the RN-BSN Program in accordance with affiliate contractual agreements or when reasonable suspicion of impairment exists. Observations that constitute reasonable suspicion may place the student at risk for disciplinary action up to and including program dismissal. Reasonable suspicion screening may be a response to observations by faculty and/or staff to include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Physical symptoms such as slurred speech, unsteady gait, confusion or other manifestations of drug/alcohol use;
2. Presence of an odor of alcohol or illegal substance;
3. Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior during practicum learning activities, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, or deterioration of performance during the practicum regardless of any threat to patient safety;
4. Suspected theft of medications including controlled substances while at the practicum facility; and
5. Evidence of involvement in the use, possession, sale, solicitation or transfer of illegal or illicit drugs while enrolled in the RN-BSN Program.

Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification

COSC RN-BSN Students are required to provide documentation of current health care provider training in Basic Life Support (CPR & AED) for the adult, child, and infant prior to beginning practicum experiences. A training certificate can only be earned through the *American Heart Association* or the *American Red Cross* and must remain current throughout the RN-BSN program. Failure to comply will result in exclusion from the practicum learning experience.

Health and Safety Training

COSC RN-BSN students are required to successfully complete any training required by the practicum site prior to participation in on site learning. The successful completion of the online [CT Hospital Association \(CHA\) Health and Safety Training Course](#) and test is required prior to participation in practicum experiences in health care facilities in Connecticut.

Confidentiality Agreement

Students must submit the signed COSC RN-BSN Program *Confidentiality*

Agreement for Practicum Experiences in Appendix D prior to participation in practicum experiences. If a practicum site requires additional related documentation, students will be informed.

Injury Insurance & Reporting Incidents

All enrolled students are covered by a School Time Injury Only Insurance Plan. School time is defined as the time a student is attending classes or participating in and traveling directly to or from an activity sponsored by the College. Any student who sustains an injury at the practicum site must follow the policies of the institution and must report the incident to the course faculty immediately and complete appropriate forms per facility and college policies.

Professional Liability Insurance

Charter Oak State College provides professional liability insurance for RN-BSN students while engaged in practicum experiences. Students should also consider purchasing additional professional liability insurance which is available at a reduced cost through membership in the American Nurses Association, the National Student Nurses' Association or other professional organizations.

Transportation & Parking

COSC RN-BSN students are responsible for transportation to and from practicum sites. Students are subject to the parking regulations established by practicum agencies and are expected to park in designated areas only. If a violation occurs, the car may be towed at the student's expense. Charter Oak State College is not responsible for travel, parking, towing expenses or injury to property sustained at a practicum site.

Dress Code

Student apparel and grooming during practicum experiences must conform to health, sanitation, safety, professional standards, and practicum agency policies. Professional attire should also be worn when attending Charter Oak State College sponsored activities/events. Unless specific requirements are in place by the practicum site, COSC RN-BSN students should choose business casual attire for the experience. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be donned if appropriate per practicum site policies.

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APPENDIX A

CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE (COSC)
REGISTERED NURSE (RN) - BACCALAUREATE IN NURSING (BSN)
PROGRAM

Faculty Recommendation Request Form

Date: _____ Name of Faculty Requested for Recommendation: _____

Title: _____

Name of Student Requesting Recommendation: _____

Student ID Number: _____

Student Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Would you like a copy of the recommendation sent to you? Yes No

Reason requesting Recommendation: _____

Position Applied For: _____

Name of Organization Applied to: _____

Address to Send Recommendation: _____

Signature of Student: _____

By signing and completing this form, you are authorizing the above-mentioned faculty to release your student records. The faculty has the option to decline a request for recommendation.

FOR FACULTY USE ONLY

Recommendation Written: Yes No

If no, please explain:

Date Recommendation Was Sent: _____

Faculty Signature: _____

Please retain a copy of the recommendation for your files.

Appendix B

Personal Technology Guidelines for COSC RN-BSN Students

Personal technology plays an important role in the current higher education environment. To enable participation in an online program, it is a requirement for students to own a personal computing device and have access to broadband internet.

The recommended device is a laptop or desktop computer. Netbooks and tablet computing devices do not have the computing power of a normal laptop or desktop computer, for this reason they are not recommended for use as a primary computing device.

All Connecticut State College and University (CSCU) students have access to the full Office 365 Professional suite of applications which requires one of the following operating systems for installation:

- ✓ Windows 10 (Professional, Education, Enterprise, or Home)
- ✓ macOS 10.14 (Mojave) or higher

These operating systems can only be run on a full laptop or desktop computer.

Hardware recommendations for laptop or desktop		
Component:	Recommended	Preferred (or higher)
Processor (CPU)	Intel Core i5 / AMD A8, A10	Intel Core i7 / AMD Ryzen
Memory (RAM)	8 GB	16 GB
Hard Drive	256 GB SSD	512GB SSD
Display	1920 x 1080 (1080p)	1920 x 1080 (1080p)
Webcam	720p	1080p
Audio	Headset or Speakers & Microphone	Headset or Speakers & Microphone

Internet Access

High speed (broadband) internet access is also a requirement for the use of personal technology and access to online courses. Although some internet service providers (ISPs) label all their offerings as high speed, some of these services fail to meet the throughput requirements necessary for the online activities required for your courses. At this time, connection speeds of 6 – 10 Mbps (or higher) are suggested for typical educational activities like video streaming, teleconferencing, and file downloading (<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/broadband-speed-guide?contrast=>). Additionally, if using cellular wireless for data connectivity you should consider a plan with higher data caps (6 GB to unlimited monthly).

Web Browsers

Any of the web browsers below are suitable for use, although some websites may have specific requirements. In addition to their default browser, all students should have a secondary browser loaded for troubleshooting issues when they occur.

Suitable Browsers & their Current Versions at the Time of Publication			
Chrome 81.0.4044.138	Edge 81.0.416.72	Firefox 76.0.1	Safari (macOS) 13.1



RN-BSN Program

Special Guidelines for Practicum Experiences within a Current Employer Setting

There are both benefits and challenges for a student completing a practicum within the setting in which they are currently employed. The faculty and program director of the RN-BSN program believe that the benefits outweigh the challenges. For instance, a student would have a high degree of familiarity within their employer's organization and may be able to negotiate a practicum arrangement with an employer with ease. Such an arrangement can benefit both the student and employer.

However, there are challenges in undertaking the practicum experience in the student's place of employment. For instance, a conflict of interest may result if an individual is functioning as a student and a paid employee at the same time.

- A student may be pulled from practicum activity to staff their work setting or perform tasks that fall within their regular employment. For example, a student who engages in practicum activities may be directed to set the practicum work aside to function in their usual staff role
- A student may have difficulty being viewed as a "student" in their own work unit. Other staff may be confuse the role of the student vs employee
- Patients may be confused by a staff member who moves in and out of a student role on the same unit or setting
- A practicum mentor may lack objectivity in mentoring and evaluating a student who is also a coworker on the same unit.
- A practicum mentor who is also a fellow employee may feel reluctant to offer constructive criticism, guidance, or honest evaluations of a student's work or verification of his/her hours.
- Any tension in the mentor/student relationship may affect the work environment of each.

The following guidelines are designed to help avoid conflicts of interest or circumstances that could cause the student to be unable to meet all the requirements of the practicum. Students may arrange to do their practicum within their employer's organization, but with these specific guidelines:

- Preferably, students should try not plan to conduct their practicum on the same unit where they are employed. Students should make every effort to engage in a practicum in a different unit or setting within their employer's organization.
- Students may not conduct their practicum activities when they are being paid by the employer for their customary work. Students CAN design their practicum hours to occur outside of their paid work hours.
- Students must clearly identify as students during their practicum activities and may not function as employees during practicum hours. For example, a student who is engaged in practicum hours cannot "fill in" for absent staff at the practicum site, carrying out the duties of the absent staff member versus engaging in their student learning objectives.

Students who are considering their employer's organization as a practicum site should seek guidance and assistance from COSC RN-BSN faculty and/or the program director as needed.

Appendix D

CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE (COSC) REGISTERED NURSE (RN) - BACCALAUREATE IN NURSING (BSN) PROGRAM

Confidentiality Agreement for Practicum Experiences

I hereby acknowledge that as a student in the Charter Oak State College RN-BSN program I will have access to Protected Health Information while engaged in practicum experiences at practicum clinical and community-based sites for educational purposes.

Protected Health Information is information about any person's health or treatment that identifies a person (as defined under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, "HIPAA"). I understand that Federal and State laws prohibit my use or disclosure of any such information that I may encounter while a student at any practicum site.

Furthermore, I understand and agree that I must maintain the confidentiality of all matters related to patients, the Health System/Organization, community-based sites/organizations and its employees, students, or volunteers. Specifically, this includes, but is not limited to, refraining from looking-up, disclosing, copying, altering or modifying any business, employee, volunteer, or patient records, materials, computerized data or any other form of information unless authorized to do so. I further understand and agree not to access and not to try to access any information other than that information which I have authorized access to and a need to know given my role in the course/program.

I understand that if I fail to abide by the terms of this Agreement and the applicable Federal and State laws and regulations protecting confidential information, I may be subject to disciplinary action, termination from the program and/or legal action.

I understand that I may direct to the related offices of Health System/Organization, community based site/organization HIPAA Privacy Office, and/or the Charter Oak RN-BSN program faculty or program director any questions I have about my obligations under this Confidentiality Agreement or under any of the Health System/Organization, community based sites/organizations policies and procedures and applicable laws and regulations related to confidentiality.

Student Name (Print): _____

Student ID Number: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E
COVID-19 ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

I, _____, presently a student at Charter Oak State College wish to participate in practicum experiences in the RN-BSN program. I understand that, as a condition of such participation, I am being asked to sign this COVID-19 Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability and that my doing so is an act of my free will.

By signing this document, I understand and agree to the COVID-19 requirements set forth below:

- Students are strongly urged to continue to follow the CDC guidelines that can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html
- Students are strongly urged to avoid high-risk environments where they may be exposed to COVID-19 including large crowds (malls, planes, trains, buses, movie theaters), restaurants and bars, and gyms.
- Students are strongly urged to practice frequent handwashing followed by an alcohol-based gel/foam hand sanitizer such as Purell. Students who travel may require screening and a mandatory quarantine of 2 weeks following return.
- If you are feeling sick, please do NOT come to the Activity. If you are exhibiting signs of COVID-19, please notify your healthcare provider immediately and get tested.

I am aware of and understand the symptoms and risks of COVID-19. I also understand that there are risks and hazards directly or inherently involved in the Activity that may be present and may increase my risk of contracting COVID-19 despite taking all prescribed precautions. Despite these and other risks involved in participation in the Activity, I voluntarily choose to participate. I knowingly and freely assume all such risks, both known and unknown, even if arising from the negligence of Charter Oak State College, and agree to all requirements for returning.

In consideration for Charter Oak State College, permitting me to participate in the Activity, I hereby assume all the risks associated with such participation and I agree to hold the State of Connecticut, the Board of Regents for Higher Education, the Charter Oak State College, their employees, agents, representatives and volunteers harmless from any and all liability, actions, causes of actions, claims or demands of any kind and nature whatsoever, including those arising from the negligence of Charter Oak State College, which may arise by or in connection with my participation in any events related to the Activity and COVID-19. The terms herein shall serve as a release and assumption of risk for my heirs, estate, executor, administrator, assignees, and for all members of my family.

I have read the foregoing and fully understand its contents. I understand that by signing this COVID-19 assumption of risk and release of liability agreement, I will be giving up substantial rights and I sign this document freely and voluntarily without any inducement.

This document shall be construed in accordance with the laws of Connecticut, without regard to its principles of conflicts of laws.

Name of Student

Name of Witness

Student's Signature

Witness's Signature

Date

Date

Appendix F

CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE (COSC) REGISTERED NURSE (RN) - BACCALAUREATE IN NURSING (BSN) PROGRAM

Nursing Program Student Handbook Acknowledgement of Receipt and Agreement to Comply

COSC RN-BSN students are responsible for reading and complying with the information that appears in the current *Charter Oak State College Official Catalog*, and the 2020-21 *Nursing Program Student Handbook*. Students must complete an orientation to the RN-BSN Program either live or online. The *COSC Nursing Program Student Handbook* is a guide to specific practice standards for the nursing program of study. Failure to comply with nursing program standards and practices will lead to a review of student behavior and possible disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program.

Charter Oak State College reserves the right to modify any statement in the 2020-21 *Nursing Program Student Handbook*. If changes are made, they will be provided to students through a *Nursing Program Student Handbook Addendum*. Regardless of entry date, students must abide by the COSC RN-BSN Program Standards and Practices in accordance with the most recent edition of the *Nursing Program Student Handbook*.

I, _____, acknowledge receiving and reading the 2020-21 Nursing Student Handbook, and completing the orientation to the RN-BSN Program either live or online.

I agree to comply with the standards and practices stated in the *Nursing Program Student Handbook*.

I acknowledge that prior to signing I have been provided the opportunity to seek further clarification.

I understand this statement will be placed in my nursing program student record.

Student Name (Print): _____

Student ID Number: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____