

**UNIFORM ARTICULATION AGREEMENT**

**BETWEEN**

**NORTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENT**

**COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

**RN TO BSN PROGRAMS**

**AND**

**NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM ASSOCIATE**

**DEGREE NURSING PROGRAMS**

Approved by the State Board of Community Colleges on February 16, 2018

Approved by Board of NCICU on February 9, 2018

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## I. Purpose and Rationale

A common list of required courses acceptable to both signatory NCICU campuses and the North Carolina community college system would facilitate the educational pathway for RNs who have earned associate degrees in nursing in North Carolina and wish to complete undergraduate nursing degrees through North Carolina independent college and university RN to BSN programs.

This document presents a uniform academic progression agreement that will promote educational advancement opportunities for registered nurses moving between North Carolina community colleges and the signatory NCICU campuses in order to complete BSN degrees. It describes a progression degree plan that includes required general education and nursing prerequisite courses that are acceptable to all signatory RN to BSN programs. Students who follow the progression degree plan will meet the entrance requirements at all signatory NCICU RN to BSN programs. Nurses may then apply to any of these programs without taking additional and sometimes duplicative courses. This enables students to plan with confidence that their block of courses will both transfer as intended and satisfy requirements of signatory NCICU campuses.

This proposal supports the mission of the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges and reduces barriers that currently exist for associate degree prepared nurses who wish to earn baccalaureate degrees by creating a more seamless and rational transfer process for community college nursing students. This coordinated approach should increase RN to BSN graduation and retention rates for Registered Nurses who enroll in signatory NCICU RN to BSN programs.

This proposal also serves state workforce needs as described in the 2010 Institute of Medicine report *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* and in the 2013 North Carolina Chief Nursing Officer Survey completed by the North Carolina Future of Nursing Action Coalition. According to the coalition, increasing the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate or higher degree to 80% by 2025 should:

- Improve health outcomes for North Carolinians through a higher educated nursing workforce;
- Expand consumer access to primary care through an increased number of advanced practice nurses; and
- Increase the critical pipeline of faculty to prepare an adequate nursing workforce for the future.

## II. Policies

The Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing Articulation Agreement (RN to BSN AA) is made between the State Board of the North Carolina Community College System and the NCICU campuses signing the agreement (signatory institutions). For the list of signatory programs, see Appendix A.

The RN to BSN AA applies to all community college nursing students who successfully complete an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree in nursing at those community colleges

on or after the effective date of this agreement. The RN to BSN Transfer Committee (RNBSNTC) oversees refinements of and changes in the regulations.

### **A. RN to BSN Transfer Committee (RNBSNTC)**

Authority to interpret and make changes in the RN to BSN AA rests with the RNBSNTC. The RNBSNTC is an eight-member co-chaired committee appointed by the Presidents of the North Carolina Community College System and North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities. Questions concerning the RN to BSN AA should be directed to the committee with an explanation of the institutional policy that may (appear to) be in conflict with RN to BSN AA policy.

### **B. Transfer Credit Appeal**

If an RN to BSN student perceives that the terms of the RNBSNTC have not been honored, he or she may follow the RN to BSN Transfer Credit Appeal Process as outlined in Appendix D. Each signatory NCICU campus and community college nursing program covered by this agreement will provide a link to that Appeal Process on its web site.

## **III. Regulations**

### **A. Transfer of Credits**

The RN to BSN AA establishes the procedures governing the transfer of credits for students who graduate from North Carolina Community College AAS programs and apply to RN to BSN programs at signatory NCICU campuses. The RN to BSN AA does not address admission to a specific institution or an RN to BSN program within an institution, nor does it address the transfer of credits for students completing their RN programs prior to the effective date of the agreement.

#### **1. Eligibility**

To be eligible for the transfer of credits under the RN to BSN AA, an applicant must complete a community college nursing program on or after the effective date of this agreement and must earn an AAS degree in a North Carolina Community College with a GPA of at least 2.0 and a grade of C or better in all RN to BSN AA courses. For purposes of this agreement, a “C-minus” is not a “C or better” although individual institutions may decide to provide credit. All other applicants to RN to BSN programs at signatory NCICU campuses are eligible to transfer credits on a course-by-course basis.

#### **2. Definitions of General Education Courses, Pre-major Courses and Major Courses**

The AAS Degree in Nursing at North Carolina Community Colleges requires a maximum of 76 hours of credit for graduation. These credits cover three areas of study:

- **General education requirements** that represent the fundamental foundation for success and include study in the areas of English composition, humanities/fine arts, natural sciences/mathematics, and social/ behavioral sciences.

- **Courses in the nursing major** that prepare the student to pass the NCLEX-RN and ensure that the programs meet state Board of Nursing accreditation requirement. These include classroom and clinical experiences working with patients across the lifespan in hospital and community settings and cover a wide range of health and illness concepts.
- **Additional courses** that support later learning within the major. These include additional natural and social sciences course and additional electives.

In order to use the RN to BSN AA effectively, students should follow the prescribed five block course list. (Appendix E) These courses are drawn from the Universal General Education Transfer Component and Transfer Course list.

### **3. Procedures governing transfer of Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Nursing degrees.**

- a. The RN to BSN AA enables registered nurses who have graduated from North Carolina community college AAS nursing programs to complete a common list of courses that meet the entrance requirements at all of the RN to BSN programs at signatory NCICU campuses.
- b. A student who completes an AAS in Nursing with a GPA of at least 2.0 and a grade of C or better in the RN to BSN AA courses listed in Appendix E Blocks one through three and who holds a current unrestricted license as a Registered Nurse in North Carolina will have fulfilled the signatory NCICU campus lower-division general education requirements as well as nursing program entry requirements. However, because nursing program admissions are competitive, no student is guaranteed admission to the program of her or his choice.
- c. These students will receive at least 58 semester hours of academic credit upon admission to a signatory NCICU campus.
- d. Additional credit for nursing course (NUR) content taken as a part of the AAS degree program is awarded by a signatory NCICU campus after an RN student has successfully completed a minimum of one and maximum of two university level nursing courses. For details, see Appendix E Block 4.
- e. Individual nursing programs may require a maximum of two courses or six credits to meet school specific degree requirements that are not a part of the RN to BSN AA. In no case, will these additional requirements necessitate completing more than 128 credits in order to earn a BSN. Each signatory NCICU RN to BSN campus will develop, publish, and maintain on their website a RN to BSN degree plan that identifies specific degree requirements that are not part of the RN to BSN AA.
- f. The fact that a student may have earned less than a C in a course that is beyond the listed semester hours of credit included in the transfer five block degree plan will not negate the provisions of the RN to BSN AA.
- g. Registered nurses who earn AAS degrees in Nursing and who complete RN to BSN AA designated courses that are included in this five-block degree plan will receive credit for all courses completed with a grade of "C" or higher.

#### **4. Certification of Transfer Component Courses and Associate in Applied Science degree completion**

Certification of completion of the Associate in Applied Science degree in Nursing is the responsibility of the community college at which the courses were completed. Transcript identification of the Universal General Education Transfer Component Courses is also the responsibility of the community college at which the courses were completed. Students who have not completed an Associate in Applied Science degree in Nursing are not covered by the RN to BSN AA and must complete the receiving institution's general education requirements and have their transcripts evaluated on a course by course basis.

#### **5. Transfer of Courses not originated at North Carolina Community Colleges**

Transfer courses that do not originate in a North Carolina Community College or signatory NCICU campus may be used under the RN to BSN AA with the following stipulations:

- a. Courses must be completed at a regionally accredited institution of higher education;
- b. Courses must meet general education requirements; and
- c. Courses may total no more than 14 hours of general education course credit.
- d. If the courses are used to complete the AAS degree, the courses will transfer as a part of the degree.

#### **6. Transfer of Advanced Placement (AP) course credit**

Advanced Placement (AP) course credits, awarded for a score three or higher, may be acceptable as part of a student's successfully completed AAS degree under the RN to BSN AA. If a signatory NCICU institution requires a score higher than a 3 for a specific course, it will be clearly noted on the institution's website to facilitate the student's ability to plan.

### **B. Impact of the RN to BSN AA on other articulation agreements**

The RN to BSN AA takes precedence over bilateral articulation agreements established between signatory NCICU campuses and the North Carolina Community College System but does not necessarily preclude such agreements. Institution-to-institution articulation agreements that fall within the parameters of the RN to BSN AA and enhance transferability of students from community colleges to senior institutions are acceptable. Institutional agreements conflicting with the RN to BSN AA are not permitted.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Signatory Programs

#### NCCCS Associate Degree Nursing Programs

Alamance Community College	Fayetteville Technical Community College
Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College	Forsyth Technical Community College
Beaufort County Community College	Gaston College
Bladen Community College	Guilford Technical Community College
Blue Ridge Community College	Halifax Community College
Brunswick Community College	Haywood Community College
Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute	Isothermal Community College
Cape Fear Community College	James Sprunt Community College
Carteret Community College	Johnston Community College
Catawba Valley Community College	Lenoir Community College
Central Carolina Community College	Mayland Community College
Central Piedmont Community College	McDowell Technical Community College
Cleveland Community College	Mitchell Community College
Coastal Carolina Community College	Nash Community College
College of The Albemarle	Piedmont Community College
Craven Community College	Pitt Community College
Davidson County Community College	Randolph Community College
Durham Technical Community College	Richmond Community College
Edgecombe Community College	Roanoke-Chowan Community College
	Robeson Community College

Rockingham Community College	Surry Community College
Rowan-Cabarrus Community College	Tri-County Community College
Sampson Community College	Vance-Granville Community College
Sandhills Community College	Wake Technical Community College
South Piedmont Community College	Wayne Community College
Southeastern Community College	Western Piedmont Community College
Southwestern Community College	Wilkes Community College
Stanly Community College	Wilson Community College

### **NCICU Signatory Campuses RN to BSN Programs**

Barton College  
Cabarrus College of Health Sciences  
Catawba College  
Gardner-Webb University  
Lees-McRae College  
Lenoir-Rhyne University  
Mars Hill University  
North Carolina Wesleyan College  
Pfeiffer University  
Queens University of Charlotte  
University of Mount Olive  
William Peace University  
Wingate University

## **Appendix B:** **RN to BSN Transfer Committee Procedures**

Articulation between the North Carolina Community College System and signatory NCICU campuses is a dynamic process. To ensure the currency of the RN to BSN AA, occasional modifications to that agreement may be necessary. These modifications may include the addition, deletion, and/or revision of courses on the transfer list. The RNBSNTC will receive requests for modification only upon the recommendation of the chief academic officer of the NCCCS or the president of NCICU. Additions, deletions, and modifications may be subject to faculty review under the direction of the RNBSNTC. Because the modification process involves faculty and administrative review, this process may require up to 12 months for final action. Decisions made by the RNBSNTC will be consistent with all pertinent accreditation standards.

### **Addition of Courses to the Transfer List**

All additions to the RN to BSN AA transfer list must be drawn from the Independent Comprehensive Articulation Agreement in effect at the time that the request for the addition is made. Such additions may be recommended by a participating institution through the following process:

1. The Director of a nursing program at any one of the participating colleges or universities makes a written request for inclusion of a specific course as a general education, a pre-major or elective to the CAO of their college or university. That CAO submits a written request for inclusion on the transfer list to the president of the NCICU. That individual will consult with the CAO of the North Carolina Community College System
2. The NCICU and the NCCCS will then seek feedback and endorsement about whether to pursue the change from their respective campuses. A two-thirds favorable response is required for the change to be pursued.
3. The CAO or President of either system may submit the request for action to the RNBSNTC a minimum of thirty days prior to the next RNBSNTC meeting.
4. The RNBSNTC reviews the request. For all courses that are approved, the Committee records their action and rationale of action.
5. The NCCCS Office or the NCICU will distribute notification of action to all the participating colleges or universities.

### **Deletion of a Course from the Transfer List**

The director of a nursing program at any one of the participating colleges or universities may request that a course be removed from the RN to BSN AA transfer list by following similar procedures as outlined in items 1-5 in the *Addition of Courses to the Transfer List*.

## Change in the Designation of a Course

The director of a nursing program at any one of the participating colleges or universities may request a change in the designation of a course in the RN to BSN AA (i.e. Elective to General Education or Pre-Major) by sending the request and rationale to the CAOs of the two systems. Either of the system CAOs may submit the request to the RNBSNTC for action.

### Appendix C

#### **RN to BSN Transfer Committee Membership**

RNBSNTC members shall serve three-year, staggered terms. An individual may serve no more than two consecutive terms. Some initial appointments may be for 1 or 2 years to allow for staggering of terms

RNBSNTC shall have co-chairs, one from the NCCCS members, and one from the NCICU signatory campuses. Co-chairs shall be elected by the membership, and shall serve staggered terms.

#### *NCCCS:*

- Four representatives including
  - One representative from the NCCCS administration
  - Three representatives from the community college member schools. These three members will be nominated by their peers and reviewed for approval by the CAO of the NCCCS. Self-nomination with endorsement by peers is permitted.

#### *NCICU:*

- Four representatives including:
  - One representative from the NCICU office.
  - Three representatives from the NCICU signatory campuses. These members will be nominated by their peers and selected by the president of NCICU. Self-nomination with endorsement by peers is permitted.

### Appendix D

#### **RN to BSN Articulation Agreement Transfer Credit Appeal Procedure**

**Guiding Principle:** If a student from a North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) college believes the terms of the RN to BSN AA have not been honored by a participating NCICU campus, the student may invoke the RN to BSN AA Transfer Credit Appeal Procedure.

#### **Steps in Filing an Appeal**

##### **Step #1:**

- **By the last day of classes of the first semester for which admission is offered**, the student must submit an RN to BSN Transfer Credit Appeal Form along with any supporting documentation to the Director of Admissions or other campus designee at the participating NCICU campus. Students first enrolling at the senior institution

in a summer session must submit their appeal by the end of the subsequent fall semester.

- **The student must specify on the appeal form the specific RN to BSN AA language that is in contention. Appeals that lack this information will not be considered.**
- The Director of Admission or other campus designee will review the appeal and respond in writing (email or letter) to the student within 15 business days.

**Step #2:**

- If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Director of Admission or other campus designee, he/she may appeal on the same form to the Chief Academic Officer of the specific signatory NCICU campus within 15 days of written notice of the director's decision.
- The Chief Academic Officer will review the appeal and respond in writing (email or letter) to the student within 15 business days of receiving the student's appeal.

**Step #3**

- If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Chief Academic Officer, he/she may appeal directly to the RNBSNTC. The student must submit the appeal to the subcommittee within 15 days of the receipt of the Chief Academic Officer's decision. The appeal to the RNBSNTC subcommittee should be sent to: Associate Director of Academic Programs, Health Sciences, 5016 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-5016.

After concurrence by both the system office and the NCICU, the student will be notified in writing of the decision.

## RN to BSN Transfer Credit Appeal Procedure

### Participating NCICU Campus/North Carolina Community College System

#### Section 1: Student Information *(to be completed by the student submitting the form)*

- The completed form and any supporting documentation **must be submitted to the participating NCICU campus Director of Admission (or other designated official) by the last day of classes of the first semester for which admission is offered or by the end of the subsequent fall semester for students enrolling in the summer.**
- You must specify the nature of the appeal and cite the specific RN to BSN AA language that is in contention. Appeals that do not include this information cannot be considered.

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please print or type)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
                     (Number and Street)                      (City)                      (State)                      (Zip)

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
                     (Area code/Number)

Community College from which AAS was earned: \_\_\_\_\_

Participating NCICU campus: \_\_\_\_\_

Enrollment period beginning (semester/yr) \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 2: Basis for your appeal:** State your concern(s), citing specific language in the RN to BSN AA that is applicable to your contention. Attach RN to BSN AA supporting documents.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E:**  
**Five Block Degree Plan with Transfer Course List**

**Block 1 (23 course credits)**

- Consists of certain prerequisite nursing courses that are taken as a part of all North Carolina community college AAS nursing programs. The courses are:

<b>Course Category</b>	<b>Transferable courses</b>	<b>Credits</b>
English Composition	Select two: ENG 111, 112, 114	6 (3,3)
Human Anatomy and Physiology with lab	BIO 165&166 or 168 & 169	8 (4,4)
Humanities/Fine Arts	Select one from the following: ART 111, ART 114, ART 115, MUS 110, MUS 112, PHI 215, PHI 240, HUM 115	3
Psychology	PSY 150, PSY 241	6 (3,3)

**Block 2 (18-19 credits):**

- Consists of additional participating NCICU campus general education requirements that are not a part of an AAS degree but are required to earn a BSN.
- These general education requirements will be met by completing one listed course in each of the first four categories and two in the last.

<b>Course Category</b>	<b>Transferable courses</b>	<b>Credits</b>
English Literature	ENG 231,232	3
History	HIS 111, 112, 131, 132.	3
Fine Arts	<u>Select one additional course not taken in Block 1</u> from the following: ART 114, ART 115, MUS 110, MUS 112	3
College Transfer Math	MAT 143 or MAT 171	3 or 4
Sociology	SOC 210 and one of the following: SOC 213, SOC 220, SOC 225, SOC 230, SOC 240	6(3,3)

**Block 3 (17-18 credits):**

- Consists of additional nursing or other requirements that are not a part of an AAS degree but are required to earn a BSN. These courses are:

<b>Course Category</b>	<b>Transferable courses</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Statistics	MAT 152	4
Microbiology with lab	BIO 175 or 275	3 or 4
Chemistry with lab	CHM 151 or CHM 130 and CHM 130A or CHM 131 and 131A	4
Social Science/ Elective: Select 2 from either category or one from each.	ECO 251, ECO 252, POL 120. Suggested electives include but are not limited to foreign language, speech, culture, and computer science. Electives must be selected from the Transfer Course List in the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement.	6 (3,3)

*Note: Individual nursing programs may require a maximum of two courses or six credits to meet school specific degree requirements that are not a part of the RN to BSN AA. In no case, will these additional requirements necessitate completing more than 128 credits in order to earn a BSN. Each participating NCICU RN to BSN campus will develop, publish, and maintain on their website a RN to BSN degree plan that identifies specific degree requirements that are not part of the RN to BSN AA.*

**Block 4 (normally 30-34 credits but may vary depending on credit allocation in block 5):**

- Consists of credit awarded by the participating NCICU campuses for nursing course (NUR) content taken as a part of the AAS degree program.
- These credits are awarded only after an RN student has successfully completed one or two initial nursing courses.

**Block 5 (remaining credits, normally 30-34 but may vary depending on credit allocation in block 4):**

- Consists of participating NCICU campus-based courses that are taken as a part of the RN to BSN program.
- The number of awarded credits in blocks 1 through 5 must total between 120 and 128; the number of credits required to earn a BSN at the participating NCICU campus RN to BSN Programs.