



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
UNIVERSITY

Rankin School of Nursing
Bachelor of Science in Nursing

2021-22 Student Handbook



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SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

MISSION

A mission is an organization's reason for being, its purpose. The mission of the Rankin School of Nursing follows:

The St. Francis Xavier University Elizabeth and Thomas Rankin School of Nursing offers an innovative and responsive program that educates competent, safe, caring, evidence-informed, critical thinking baccalaureate-prepared nurses dedicated to promoting health, social justice, cultural safety, and equity.

VISION

A vision statement provides an inspiring description of what an organization hopes to be in the future. The 2021 vision for the Rankin School of Nursing appears below:

The St. Francis Xavier University Elizabeth and Thomas Rankin School of Nursing is an innovative leader in nursing education, research, community engagement, and collaborative partnerships locally, provincially, nationally, and globally. The vision provides the Rankin School of Nursing with direction over the next five years.

VALUES

As articulated in the StFX Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022: The Way University is Meant to Be, the Rankin School of Nursing is committed to excellence, equity, service, and dignity. As part of the StFX Faculty of Science, we believe in:

1. Interdisciplinary teaching, research, and collaboration that enriches academic learning, and,
2. High-quality interactions between students and all members of the Faculty of Science. The Rankin School of Nursing is dedicated to participating in and supporting all StFX initiatives designed to embrace and foster diversity. As a professional school, the Rankin School of Nursing also values:
3. Building collaborative partnerships among the School of Nursing and practice and research environments to enhance research and the teaching-learning process
4. Education that prepares safe and competent baccalaureate-prepared nurses to provide leadership related to current and future health care trends
5. Baccalaureate education that embodies best practices, College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia entry level competencies, standards of practice for registered nurses, and the Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE TO THE RANKIN SCHOOL OF NURSING

The St. Francis Xavier University Rankin School of Nursing (StFX) is one of the major legacies of the Sisters of Saint Martha who founded hospitals and nursing education in eastern Nova Scotia and elsewhere in the early 20th Century. The StFX School of Nursing began as a Department of Nursing, established in the 1920s which gave Registered Nurses the opportunity to complete courses towards a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. The integrated BScN program began admitting high school graduates to a 4-year program in the 1960s. Many of the early faculty members were Sisters of Saint Martha. The Sisters contributed immensely to a foundation for Nursing Education at StFX based on a philosophy of service to society grounded in compassion and humanitarian ethics, appreciation of the dignity of the human person, respect for life in all its stages, and principles of inquiry based on a search for truth.

Sister Simone Roach, who led the BScN program in the 1960s and 1970s, was the original author of the Canadian Nursing Association Code of Ethics (Storch, 2007) and a recipient of the Order of Canada in 2010 for her work in Ethics in health care.



When Sister Simone died in 2016 at the age of 93, she left a powerful legacy through her contributions to the CNA Code of Ethics, her many publications about the nature of caring in health care, and in the many people touched by her work. The imprint of Sister Simone's philosophical scholarship and wisdom continues to be a 'blueprint' (Roach, 2002) to inform our curriculum, indeed "enduring values in changing times" (Storch, 2007).

In September 2016 the StFX School of Nursing was renamed the Elizabeth and Thomas Rankin School of Nursing. The Rankin School of Nursing was named in honour of Tom and Elizabeth's long legacy of giving back, and in particular, their support of health care.

PHILOSOPHY

The Rankin School of Nursing (SON) strives to provide the highest quality nursing educational experience in Canada in an environment where the student comes first.

In its commitment to excellence, the SON desires to enhance the intellectual, social, spiritual, cultural, and personal development of its constituents by integrating innovative teaching, rigorous research, holistic practice, and creative community outreach programs.

The SON endeavors to search for truth through the processes of professional caring, critical inquiry, reflection, and life-long learning.

The SON develops, advances, and disseminates nursing knowledge as well as proactively influences public policy that impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, groups/populations, and communities, including the global community.

The SON actualizes the values of academic freedom, academic honesty, and academic integrity while cultivating a culture of scholarship that includes the scholarship of discovery, teaching, application, and integration.

The SON aspires to uphold those spiritual values and principles that are integral to the dignity and worth of every human being.

The SON recognizes students, faculty, nurse educators, and staff from diverse backgrounds and respects the ideals of social justice, inclusivity, and equity.

Students, faculty, nurse educators, staff, alumni, and partners in the community and health care sector collaborate to support the mission and values of the school.

The call for ethical care and the primacy of caring has evolved towards greater inclusion in the curriculum about the importance of health care based on an appreciation of human rights. The school is guided by a philosophical focus on individuals, families, groups, and communities and within the last decade there has been an emphasis on population health and cultural diversity.

References

Roach, M.S. (2002). *Caring: The human mode of being. A blueprint for the health professions.* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Hospital Association.

StFX SON (2017). *The StFX Elizabeth and Thomas Rankin School of Nursing Strategic Plan 2017-2021.* Antigonish, NS: Author.

Storch, J.L. (2007). Enduring values in changing times: The CNA Codes of Ethics. *Canadian Nurse*, 103(4), 29-37.

SECTION TWO: CURRICULUM

2.1 STATEMENT OF PROGRAM PURPOSE AND GOALS

The School of Nursing began offering a curriculum in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in September 2016. The programs are founded on a new integrated concept-based and competency-based curriculum that supports best practice pedagogies and practice experiences. There are two options for completion of the BScN in the new curriculum:

1. The Traditional Four-Year option is completed over four academic years (Sept-Apr) and includes eight semesters of study. This option primarily targets students entering from high school. During semesters one (Sept-Dec) and two (Jan-Apr), students in the four-year option will complete the required 30 credits of arts and science. During semesters three through eight, the students will be primarily immersed in nursing courses, with the exception of semesters six and seven, when students have the option to take six credits of either nursing or non-nursing electives. The four-year option gives students the choice to seek employment during summer breaks and provides flexibility to participate in extracurricular university activities scheduled throughout the academic calendar year (i.e., service learning opportunities, athletics, student union, etc.).
2. The Accelerated Two-year Program primarily targets students who have completed the university-level entrance requirements for nursing. Students in this option began in January 2017 and will complete six continuous semesters over 24 months, with two-three week breaks between semesters. Students are immersed in nursing courses during semesters three through eight, with the option to take six credits of either nursing or non-nursing electives during semesters six and seven. Graduation is at the December ceremony.

The SON concept-based program at StFX delineates the curricular elements for building the baccalaureate nursing curriculum including curricular themes, leveled competencies, corresponding concepts, concept scopes, attributes, and theoretical links, location in the curriculum and exemplars. The key curricular themes were derived from our Graduate Attributes and align with recommendations from key regulatory and nursing leaders (e.g. Nova Scotia College of Nurses, the Canadian Nurses Association, Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, and Institute of Medicine) and from landmark documents related to core knowledge, judgment, skills and attributes (attitudes, values, and beliefs) expected of entry-level nursing graduates.

2.2 PROGRAM GOALS

1. Provides a nursing curriculum that builds on the StFX values and its academic mission
2. Provides a unified, evidence-informed, meaningful nursing curriculum that meets Provincial and national standards (i.e., accreditation standards, Code of Ethics, regulatory competencies)
3. Provides a curriculum that is founded on nursing knowledge, in conjunction with a liberal education and consideration of previous learning that prepares learners to enter practice with broad knowledge and competencies.

4. Provides a curriculum that supports a collaborative model of undergraduate nursing education in the province of Nova Scotia that facilitates Nursing students to move more effectively through the educational system
5. Supports educational and practice partnerships that are key to inform and sustain a current and relevant curriculum.
6. Provides opportunities for student voice in curricular issues
7. Provides a curriculum that flexible, based on evidence of current health and societal needs, and provides progressive opportunities for learners to develop personally and professionally as nurses through engagement in activities that apply knowledge
8. Prepares safe and competent graduate nurses that achieve successful pass rates on national exam to practice and who are responsive to current and future health care trends, population health issues, and 21st century nursing practice demands.
9. Meets standards for nursing education as set out by the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia (CRNNS, 2012b) and the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN, 2014a).

2.3 GRADUATE OUTCOMES

1. Have a strong conceptual base and specialized knowledge, skill, and attributes to provide safe, competent, and compassionate person/client/patient-centered nursing care.
2. Exhibit a strong sense of personal and professional identity and deliver nursing care that is consistent with moral, altruistic, legal, ethical, and regulatory standards/principles.
3. Apply critical thinking including clinical reflection, clinical reasoning, and clinical judgment to arrive at decisions about what is most relevant and salient to person/client/patient care.
4. Committed to evidence-informed practice through action to enhance professional competence and motivation for continued critical inquiry, curiosity, creativity, scholarship, and life-long learning.
5. Engage in collaborative leadership that is essential to enhanced person/client/patient outcomes, effective health system functioning, and health and social reform.
6. Engage in relational practice, communicate effectively within various professional roles, and use informational and communication technologies to manage nursing and patient care.
7. Apply the principles of primary health care, population health promotion, and social justice to address inequities and determinants of health affecting persons, families, groups, communities, and populations.
8. Demonstrate compassionate, culturally safe, relationship-centered care with indigenous, Black, immigrant, refugee, and other marginalized populations
9. Be prepared as generalists with knowledge, skills, and attributes for innovation within evolving health, health systems, and nursing scopes of practice.

2.4 KEY FEATURES OF THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The following provides an explanation of the key features of the new curriculum followed by an overview of the curriculum framework and the sequencing of courses. The nursing courses

required in Semester 3 through 8 are primarily delivered by nursing faculty. The following section provides an overview of the structure of the integrated concept-based and competency-based curriculum. For more details see Appendix B.

Key Features:

1. Progression through Health-Illness Continuum Across the Life Span
 - The curriculum is designed to begin with learning about supporting health and wellness and the care of care of clients and families in transition, progressing to the care of clients experiencing acute, episodic, and life-threatening, and advancing to the care of clients experiencing co-morbidities, chronic illness, end of life, and complex health challenges. Health and illness are examined at various developmental stages.
2. Working with Individuals/Families, Groups, Communities and Populations
 - The curriculum is designed to begin with learning about a broad understanding of health and wellness of communities and populations (and what influences health), progressing to a focus on the health of individuals and families, and advancing to population/public health/global health and health system issues.
3. Vertical and Horizontal Integration of Nine Curricular Themes and Corresponding Concepts
 - The curriculum is underpinned by nine core curricular themes. Each curricular theme has several corresponding concepts. The curricular themes are:
 1. Professional & Ethical Practice
 2. Theoretical Understanding & Application
 3. Critical Thinking
 4. Inquiry & Scholarship
 5. Communication & Informatics
 6. Leadership & Collaboration
 7. Local & Global Citizenship
 8. Health-Illness Body & Structures
 9. Practice Competencies
 - The curricular themes provide the organizational framework and structure for the curriculum and are the foci within courses/modules. Concepts are taught through the use of exemplars.
 - The curricular themes are integrated both horizontally (across all years of the program) and vertically (within each semester), and loosely tied to four broad concentrations of study (see description of concentrations of study below)
 - There is flexibility in mapping the concepts, whereby concepts can be applied to various areas of nursing focus or exemplars (e.g., fluid and electrolyte imbalance can be introduced when discussing childbirth or acute illness). The main goal is to ensure that all concepts are introduced, with the expectation that the application of knowledge and skills learned are carried forward.
 - Exemplars that are selected will represent individuals across the life span and in various settings to allow students to apply concepts in a variety of client/patient contexts.

Incidence and prevalence will serve as one criterion for selecting exemplars (e.g., high prevalence of cancer and heart disease warrants their inclusion as exemplars). Context and opportunity will also serve as a basis for selecting exemplars (e.g., given StFX SON geographics and population, rural and Aboriginal health would be an applicable exemplar).

4. Integration of Four-Broad Concentrations of Study

- Courses within each 15-credit semester are divided among four-broad concentrated areas of study.¹
- **The Discipline & Professional Practice (Yellow)**: this area of focus includes standards, ethics, jurisprudence/legalities; evidence-informed practice; and collaboration. The four curricular themes that are introduced and then gradually integrated into areas of increasingly complex nursing practice situations include:
 - Professional & Ethical Practice
 - Critical Thinking
 - Inquiry & Scholarship
 - Leadership & Collaboration
- **Supporting Health (Blue)**: this area of focus includes attention to broad cognitive and psychomotor skills necessary to provide care to various clients along the health-illness continuum. This area complements the concepts and competencies learned in the “science of health & nursing section”. The three curricular themes that are introduced and then gradually integrated into areas of increasingly complex nursing practice situations include:
 - Communication & Informatics
 - Health-Illness Body Structures & Functions
 - Practice Competencies
- **The Science of Health & Nursing (Pink)**: this area of focus includes theory and principals and their application related to clients experiencing diverse degrees of health and wellness; acute, episodic, and life-threatening challenges; and co-morbidities, chronic disease, and end of life in diverse settings. The two curricular themes that are introduced and then gradually integrated into areas of increasingly complex nursing practice situations include:
 - Theoretical Understanding & Application
 - Local & Global Citizenship
- **Integrating Nursing Roles & Practice (Green)**: this area of focus includes the application of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills gained from the other areas of focus and requires the integration of all curricular themes. Application occurs through simulated and practice setting experiences. **Table 3** provides an Overview of Courses and Their Sequencing in the Proposed New 8-Semester Program.

***NOTE:** Some concepts are introduced then carried forward to the other concentrated areas of study for application.

¹ The curriculum design builds on the University of Calgary’s successful integrated undergraduate nursing curriculum framework (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/nu-4-1.html>)

2.4 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Competence: Refers to the integrated knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities and judgment required to practice nursing safely and ethically (Adapted from CRNNS, 2013a; Tuning Project, 2007). Competences in this nursing curriculum are based on Bloom's behaviorist philosophy to describe learning in three learning domains that include: (1) Cognitive Domain: that includes mental skills or knowledge - defined as facts and ideas relevant to nursing practice (Bloom's Taxonomy; Fater, 2013); (2) Affective Domain: that includes the manner in which one deal with things emotionally including attitude. Attitudes entails beliefs & values to act consistently in professional nursing practice; (Bloom's Taxonomy; Fater, 2013); and (3) Psychomotor Skills that is defined as the ability to carry out nursing practice activities and includes physical movement, coordination, & use of motor-skills indicated through speed & precision in the execution of procedures or technique. Entry-level competences expected of students at the point of their graduation are identified by the CRNNS and include: (1) Professional Responsibility and Accountability; (2) Knowledge-Based Practice; (3) Ethical Practice; (4) Service to the Public; and (5) Self-Regulation.

Competency: The ability of the student to demonstrate a competence. Example competency statements are listed in the CRNNS (2013) Entry-Level Competencies document. Additional entry-level competencies related to specialty fields are also identified by the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN). These competencies reflect the regulatory body's entry-to-practice but are more detailed and specific in specialty fields to offer greater guidance to students and nurse educators. CASN entry-level competencies are available for palliative care (CASN, 2011); Entry-level competencies for informatics (CASN, 2012); Entry-level competencies for public health (CASN, 2014); and Entry-level competencies for mental health and addictions (CASN, 2015). Competencies reflect a progression of learning from a basic (beginning), to an intermediary, to a final advanced level that reflects what is expected as an entry-level graduate.

- **Basic:** Refers to preliminary or beginning knowledge, skill, and attributes expected of nursing students. Students at a beginning level are expected to recognize the relevant aspects of a situation, and have and apply knowledge, skills, and attributes in routine and predictable situations. Students require guided support.
- **Intermediary:** Students at an intermediary level are able to recognize the relevant aspects of a situation and anticipate potential complications. Students are expected to have and apply knowledge, skills, and attributes in increasing complex situations and take action in the face of unforeseen events. Students practice with increased autonomy and require support for situations that are not routine and predictable.
- **Advanced:** Students at an advanced level consistently recognize relevant aspects of a situation and anticipate potential complications. Students are expected to have and apply knowledge, skills, and attributes in in a complex situations in a broad range of

contexts and for situations that are unpredictable. Students practice with increased autonomy and responsibility, seeking guidance as necessary.

Concept-Based and Competency- Based Curriculum. For the purposes of this curriculum, a concept-based and competency-based curriculum refers to the use of concepts as an organizing framework for curriculum and courses. Concepts represent categories of principles or mental constructions that contain defining attributes of nursing graduates derived from an analysis of population and societal needs and nursing scope of practice. Concepts are integrated both vertically and horizontally throughout the curriculum and are taught through the use of exemplars. Competencies derive from the concepts and define the knowledge, judgment, skills and attributes (attitudes, values, and beliefs) expected of graduates from the StFX nursing program.

Graduate Profile Goals: Refer to general/broad statements of intent, aspiration, or attributes. Provides a framework that describe the educational designation to be reached by graduating students (“what the graduate will look like”).

Leveled Learning Competencies: Leveled learning competencies in this nursing curriculum are based on Bloom’s behaviorist philosophy to describe learning within three domains: cognitive, affective, & psychomotor. The leveled learning competencies provide a guiding framework to describe a progression of learning from a basic, to an intermediary, to a final advanced level that reflects what is expected as an entry-level graduate.

- **Basic:** Refers to preliminary or beginning knowledge, skill, and attributes expected of nursing students. Students at a beginning level are expected to recognize the relevant aspects of a situation, and have and apply knowledge, skills, and attributes in routine and predictable situations. Students require guided support.
- **Intermediary:** Students at an intermediary level are able to recognize the relevant aspects of a situation and anticipate potential complications. Students are expected to have and apply knowledge, skills, and attributes in increasing complex situations and take action in the face of unforeseen events. Students practice with increased autonomy and require support for situations that are not routine and predictable.
- **Advanced:** Students at an advanced level consistently recognize relevant aspects of a situation and anticipate potential complications. Students are expected to have and apply knowledge, skills, and attributes in in a complex situations in a broad range of contexts and for situations that are unpredictable. Students practice with increased autonomy and responsibility, seeking guidance as necessary.

Person/Client/Patient: For the purposes of this curriculum, person/client/patient refers to recipients whom health-care providers establish a relationship for the purposes of partnering for health. The term person is inclusive of the following: individual, client, patient, resident, consumer, families, groups, communities, and population. (Adapted from RNAO, 2015).

Attribute: A quality or characteristic that is associated with the concept that helps to clarify or confirm a concept (Giddens, 2017, p. 463)

Concept: An organizing principle or mental construction representing categories of information that contain defining attributes of nursing graduates. Concepts are taught through the use of exemplars.

Curricular Theme: Represents overarching subject matter or area that comprises the StFX SON curriculum. The themes are organized into key concepts that support the development of knowledge, skills, judgment and attributes within a theme that will be acquired by students as part of nursing education program.

Exemplar: Health related issue serving as a model or example in the context of the client/patient for the purpose of learning about a concept. For example, asthma would be an exemplar for the concept of oxygenation.

Scope: The extent of the area of the subject matter to be covered. References to scope is leveled indicates that part of the scope of a concept is continued in another semester

Theoretical Links: Refers to the theories, models, frameworks, and principles that serve as the lens to view the concept

SECTION THREE: GUIDELINES FOR THE BScN WITH ADVANCED MAJOR N499

Description:

The N499 Advanced Major 3 credit course permits students to pursue a program of study in a clinical practice setting (exploratory placement - N409) guided by a concept-based approach. Students apply nursing knowledge, as well as knowledge from related disciplines, in a clinical practice experience. The Advanced Major learning experience requires a School of Nursing advisor, and a preceptor from the clinical practice settings. The Advisor facilitates the student to demonstrate developing competence in self-directed learning and reflective practice, scholarly writing, critical thinking, knowledge translation, and standards of nursing practice. The Preceptor is a resource for standards of nursing practice, evidenced informed nursing practice, clinical references, resources, and strategies to meet the student's learning objectives, and a role model for clinical practice expertise, collaborative practice and leadership skills. Students must meet the admission requirements (see below). Students must apply to the School of Nursing Coordinator of the BScN Advanced Major program by October 1st, of Semester Five.

Admission Requirements:

To qualify for admission, students must have:

- A minimum average of 65% in Semester One – Two
- A minimum average of 80% in Semester Three – Four.
- A minimum grade of 75% in each nursing course.
- Demonstrated acceptable performance in nursing practice.

While in the Advanced Major Program, candidates must maintain:

- A minimum average of 80%.
- A minimum grade of 75% in each nursing course.
- Demonstrated acceptable performance in nursing practice.

To graduate with the advanced major declaration, candidates must have:

- A minimum average of 80%
- A minimum grade of 75% in each nursing course
- Demonstrated acceptable performance in nursing practice
- Fulfilled the course requirements of the School of Nursing
- Fulfilled the additional requirements associated with the option chosen (see BScN Advanced Major N499 Course Description).

Exceptions to these requirements need the approval of the Dean of Science and the Assistant Director of the School of Nursing.

Application Process:

1. By October 1st of Semester Five, potential candidates must submit the declaration form (Available from the Dean of Science Website, Undergraduate Student Resources, Declaration Forms –

http://sites.stfx.ca/dean_of_science/sites/sites.stfx.ca.dean_of_science/files/BSC%20NURS%20AM.pdf) and a copy of your Unofficial transcript to the Advanced Major Coordinator.

2. The School of Nursing reviews all applications. The Assistant Director the Rankin School of Nursing signs the applications from candidates who fulfill requirements, and forwards applications to the Dean of Science.
3. The Office of the Dean of Science carries out the final decision and will notify the candidate of the decision.
4. Accepted candidates must register in N499 in Semester Seven.

Appendix G - N499 BScN Advanced Major.

SECTION FOUR: GUIDELINES FOR THE BScN WITH HONOURS

Students wishing to apply for an honours program are advised to consult with the School of Nursing Chair as early as possible to facilitate course selection. Students must apply to the Dean of Science for admission to the honours program by March 31 of their sophomore year. The completed application must be signed by the SON Chair prior to submission. Qualifying students will be notified in the summer following submission.

To qualify for admission, students must have:

- A minimum average of 75% in both their freshman and sophomore years.
- A minimum grade of 70% in each nursing course.
- Demonstrated acceptable performance in nursing practice (i.e., no nursing practice alert).

To advance from the junior to the senior year of the honours program, candidates must have:

- A minimum average of 75%.
- A minimum grade of 70% in each nursing course.
- Demonstrated acceptable performance in nursing practice (i.e., no nursing practice alert).

To graduate with the honours declaration, candidates must have:

- A minimum average of 75%.
- A minimum grade of 70% in each nursing course.
- Demonstrated acceptable performance in nursing practice (i.e., no nursing practice alert).
- Fulfilled the course requirements of the School of Nursing, including Nurs/Soci 300, Nurs 496, and Nurs 498.
- Fulfilled the additional requirements associated with thesis completion.

Candidates who fail to meet the requirements for the degree for which they have applied may be eligible for another degree, provided those requirements are met. Exceptions to these requirements need the approval of the Dean of Science and the School of Nursing Chair.

In the next three pages the deadlines for the BScN Honours program are outlined for the academic year. As such, the dates will fluctuate in subsequent years. That being said, the process and timeframe required for thesis completion will not change.

Procedure for Selecting a Thesis Supervisor and Second Reader

In October of the students' junior year, the honours coordinator will meet with honours students to discuss the program requirements and expectations. The honours coordinator will provide students with a copy of the research interests of the School of Nursing members. Honours students may work on a component of a Faculty or Nurse Educator's current research program or select a topic that she/he is interested in pursuing. The students will be encouraged to meet with potential thesis supervisors to discuss their proposed research ideas after the initial meeting with the honours coordinator. Honours supervisors must be a full time Faculty or Nurse Educator in the School of Nursing and have a minimum of a master's degree. Once a Faculty or Nursing Educator agrees to be the thesis supervisor, the supervisor and student will, together, select a second reader. The second

reader may be either someone from the School of Nursing or who works in another department in the university or in a health care setting with substantive expertise in the area of study. The student and thesis supervisor must inform the honours supervisor about whom they have selected for second reader by February of their junior year.

Note: If students are working on an existing research project, the dates below will be determined in consultation with the supervisor and second reader. There will also be ongoing communication with the Honours Coordinator regarding the dates and progress of the student (s) during this time