The California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) and the California Board of Licensed Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BLVNPT) require that our RN and LVN programs have a course challenge mechanism.

**Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) policy:**

*Section 2786.6 of the Nursing Practice Act provides, in part, the following.*

"The Board shall deny the application for approval made by, and shall revoke the approval given to, any school of nursing which:

(a) Does not give to student applicants credit, in the field of nursing, for previous education and the opportunity to obtain credit for other acquired knowledge by the use of challenge examinations or other methods of evaluation; or,

(b) Is operated by a community college and discriminates against an applicant for admission to a school solely on the grounds that the applicant is seeking to fulfill the units of nursing required by Section 2736.6......"

CCR section 1430 states that an approved nursing program shall have a process for a student to obtain credit for previous education or for other acquired knowledge in the field of nursing through equivalence, challenge examinations, or other methods of evaluation. The program shall make the information available in published documents, such as college catalog or student handbook, and online.

*Challenge may include, but is not limited to credit by examination and portfolio assessment, such as review of documents, evaluation of experience, non-collegiate sponsored courses, and standardized tests.

**Credit by examination (challenge)**

1) All transfer and credit by examination policies shall be in writing, readily accessible, and clearly communicated to the current and prospective students.

2) Objective counseling to clarify credit by examination option and procedure shall be available to all candidates.

3) Grading practices for the credit by examination option when given shall parallel criteria for course work.

4) Scheduling of the examination for credit shall take into account subsequent course enrollment for the unsuccessful candidate.

5) Students shall have available to them, in a timely fashion, the following as preparation for the examination for credit:

- course outline
- detailed course objectives
- bibliography and textbook list
- style and format of the examination
6) The examination for credit shall be designed for the purpose of evaluating knowledge and/or clinical skills necessary to meet course objectives. Nursing programs shall be able to demonstrate that the examination measures the course objectives. Non standardized examinations shall be available for BRN review.

**Board of Licensed Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT) Policy:**

*Licensed Vocational Nurse Practice Act, Section 2881.1. Credit for Previous Education*

The board shall deny the application for accreditation made by, and shall revoke the accreditation given to, any school of vocational nursing that does not give to student applicants credit, in the field of nursing, for previous education and the opportunity to obtain credit for other acquired knowledge by the use of challenge examinations or other methods of evaluation.

**In consultation with the consultants from both Boards, the following is understood:**
1. Challenge Exams are required – there is no way around it
2. Eligibility criteria are up to the program
3. We MUST use our course finals for the exams. Standardized exams are not allowed.
4. We MUST provide access to course packets, calendars, syllabi, etc - all course info prior to testing
4. Transfer is just that - transfer - challenge is not the same, nor does it take the place of
5. Equivalency means establishing that someone had equal equivalency to a course - for example - army medic
6. A paramedic or an LVN can challenge all of the courses if they meet our criteria for testing.
RN COURSE CHALLENGE/CREDIT BY EXAM POLICY

All RN nursing courses may be challenged by examination. In order to challenge a course, the student must have a waitlist number, an accepted criminal background check and LiveScan, and be enrolled in the RN Nursing Program. The student interested in challenging a course must complete the following:

1. Meet with the Director of Nursing and Health Occupations to discuss advanced placement options, challenge eligibility, and challenge procedures before the course begins.

Eligibility must be met through:
- Three letters of reference applicable to the course being challenged: one must be from a supervisor/manager in an area applicable to the course being challenged.
- 1,000 hours of work in a patient care area

Note: The student cannot be enrolled in the course to be challenged. The student should allow sufficient time to complete the challenge process. In the event that the student does not successfully complete the challenge process, the student must enroll in said course to progress through the program.

Eligible candidates will be provided with the course Syllabus/Syllabi. An instructor will be assigned to administer the challenge exam. The student must pay the registration fees for the course prior to administration of the challenge exam.

Students who are successful in challenging a course are admitted to the next course on a seat availability basis.

Enrollment in the next course in the program sequence requires meeting all course prerequisites of the courses preceding the successfully challenged course. Example: entering N23 following successful challenge of N22 requires the student pass N21, N10A and N10B and all other prerequisites as noted in the current College Catalog.

Students who receive a failing grade in a nursing course at College of the Redwoods or any other nursing program/school may not challenge the course to re-enter or enter the RN Nursing Program. Readmission/transfer policies must be followed.

Failing a challenge exam constitutes a course failure and constitutes one program attempt. The student will only be allowed to return one additional time for a program attempt on a space available basis.

Students are reminded that whatever grade is earned on the challenge exam (including a failing grade) is entered on the permanent college transcript.

2. The challenge examination for each nursing course will consist of:
   a. The student takes an NLCEX-format written exam of course content and must obtain at least 75% to pass. Note: Nursing courses are blended, meaning they consist of several areas of nursing such as pediatrics + obstetrics or medical/surgical + psychiatric nursing.
b. The student must take and pass the med math exam associated with the course being challenged.
   i. Students will be required to show their work.
   ii. Simple calculators may be used. Cell phones or advanced calculators may not be used.
   iii. The questions will reflect medication calculations that students in the course being challenged are required to perform.
   v. Answers must contain the appropriate unit of measure (ml/hr, units/hr, etc.).

c. The student must demonstrate competency in patient care and/or the skills required in the syllabus for the challenged course. A nursing faculty member who teaches the challenged course will evaluate these. A patient care (clinical) evaluation may be given in the practice laboratory (may include simulation) or in the clinical setting.

IMPLEMENTATION

Student needs to successfully complete clinical orientation for course, prior to the clinical portion of the challenge.

NURS 21
- Course Final
- Med Math Exam
- Skills competency (all skills normally tested in N21)
- Simulation + clinical documentation + written demonstration of use of the nursing process (plan of care/concept map)

NURS 22
- Course Final
- Med Math Exam
- Skills competency (all skills normally tested in N22)
- Simulation (two, Pediatrics and OB) + clinical documentation + written demonstration of use of the nursing process (plan of care/concept map)

NURS 23
- Course Final
- Med Math Exam
- Skills competency (all skills normally tested in N23)
- Simulation (med/surg) + standardized patient simulation for psych/mental health
- Clinical: Total patient care (demonstrating end-course competence) (12 hours of familiarization, 12 hours of evaluation) + clinical documentation + written demonstration of use of the nursing process (plan of care/concept map)

NURS 24
- Course Final
- Simulation (geriatric/home care + medical/surgical)
- Clinical: Total patient care (demonstrating end-course competence) (30 hours - 3 consecutive clinical days) + clinical documentation + written demonstration of use of the nursing process (plan of care/concept map)
LVN COURSE CHALLENGE/CREDIT BY EXAMINATION
POLICY

All LVN nursing courses may be challenged by examination. In order to challenge a course, the student must currently have a waitlist number, an accepted criminal background check, and be enrolled in the LVN Nursing Program. The student interested in challenging a course must complete the following:

1. Meet with the Director of Nursing and Health Occupations to discuss advanced placement options, challenge eligibility, and challenge procedures before the course begins.

Eligibility must be met through:
- Three letters of reference applicable to the course being challenged: one must be from a supervisor/manager in an area applicable to the course being challenged.
- 1,000 hours of work in a patient care area

Note: The student cannot be enrolled in the course to be challenged. The student should allow sufficient time to complete the challenge process. In the event that the student does not successfully complete the challenge process, the student must enroll in said course to progress through the program.

Eligible candidates will be provided with the course Syllabus/Syllabi. An instructor will be assigned to administer the challenge exam. The student must pay the registration fees for the course prior to administration of the challenge exam.

Students who are successful in challenging a course are admitted to the next course on a seat availability basis.

Enrollment in the next course in the program sequence requires meeting all course prerequisites of the courses preceding the successfully challenged course. Example: entering LVN 123 following successful challenge of LVN 122 requires the student pass LVN 121, LVN 110A and LVN 110B and all other prerequisites as noted in the current College Catalog.

Students who receive a failing grade in a nursing course at College of the Redwoods or any other nursing program/school may not challenge the course to re-enter or enter the LVN Nursing Program. Readmission/transfer policies must be followed.

Failing a challenge exam constitutes a course failure and constitutes one program attempt. The student will only be allowed to return one additional time for a program attempt on a space available basis.

Students are reminded that whatever grade is earned on the challenge exam (including a failing grade) is entered on the permanent college transcript.
2. The challenge examination for each nursing course will consist of:
   a. The student takes an NLCEX-format written exam of course content and must obtain at least 75% to pass. Note: Nursing courses are blended, meaning they consist of several areas of nursing such as pediatrics + obstetrics or medical/surgical + psychiatric nursing.

   b. The student must take and pass the med math exam associated with the course being challenged.
      i. Students will be required to show their work.
      ii. Simple calculators may be used. Cell phones, smart devices or advanced calculators may not be used.
      iii. The questions will reflect medication calculations that students in the course being challenged are required to perform.
      v. Answers must contain the appropriate unit of measure (ml/hr, units/hr, etc.).

   c. The student must demonstrate competency in patient care and/or the skills required in the syllabus for the challenged course. A nursing faculty member who teaches the challenged course will evaluate these. A patient care (clinical) evaluation may be given in the practice laboratory (may include simulation) or in the clinical setting.

   IMPLEMENTATION

   Assigned faculty, stipend for testing & clinical (lab, simulation, facility)
   Student needs to successfully complete clinical orientation for course, prior to the clinical portion of the challenge

   **LVN 121**
   - Course Final
   - Med Math Exam
   - Skills competency (all skills normally tested in LVN 121)
   - Simulation (med/surg + clinical documentation + written demonstration of use of the nursing process (implementation of interventions)

   **LVN 122**
   - Course Final
   - Med Math Exam
   - Simulation (Med/Surg) + clinical documentation + written demonstration of use of the nursing process (Implementation of interventions)

   **LVN 123**
   - Course Final
   - Med Math Exam
   - Simulation (two—Pediatrics and OB )
   - Clinical: Total patient care (demonstrating end-course competence) (30 hours - 3 consecutive clinical days) + clinical documentation + written demonstration of use of the nursing process (Implementation of interventions)