

LEARNER HANDBOOK FOR RN BRIDGING/RE-ENTRY PROGRAM (RNBRP)

Please retain this booklet for reference during your program

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Disclaimer:

The Nova Scotia Health Learning Institute for Health Care Providers programs are designed to prepare health care providers for real-world health care practice. Program content should never replace specific decisions for individual persons in care and does not substitute for the shared decisions between any person and their health care professional, which are unique to each circumstance.

The Learning Institute and the program reviewers have exerted every effort to ensure that the information in programming is consistent with recommendations and practice at the time of publication. However, in view of ongoing research, changes in governmental regulations and the constant flow of information relating to the practice, the reader is urged to check additional practice reference sources.

While every attempt is made to update the learner handbook, any alterations to current policies and procedures will supersede what is in print in this handbook. Learners will be given prior notice of any changes to the policies or information provided in the handbook.

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Nova Scotia Health Learning Institute for Health Care Providers

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General Information

Welcome to Nova Scotia Health Learning Institute for Health Care Providers (Learning Institute)

The Learning Institute, formerly known as the Registered Nurses Professional Development Centre (RNPDC), was established in April 2003 as the result of a strategic assessment and repositioning of the former Post RN Specialty Education Program unit. The Learning Institute is provincially funded by the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) and is broadly supported by health care professionals in the province. The Learning Institute is operated by Nova Scotia Health and is housed in the Bethune Building at the VG Site, Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax, with physical locations across the province to support provincial lab delivery.

The <u>Learning Institute staffing</u> is comprised of Managers, Interprofessional Educators, Nurse Educators, Clinical Practice Educators, Nursing Instructors, Simulation Specialists, Administrative Support staff, and staff who support content development, evaluation, and project management. The Learning Institute reports up through the director for learning and education resources under the Interprofessional Practice and Learning (IPPL) portfolio at Nova Scotia Health.

The Learning Institute offers a variety of programs, courses, workshops, and services across the continuum of nursing and interprofessional education. The Learning Institute is committed to developing and maintaining competency in nursing and other health care providers through the delivery of post-licensure specialty certificate programs, an RN Bridging/Re-Entry program and through continuing professional development courses and workshops.

RN Bridging/Re-Entry Program

The RN Bridging/Re-Entry Program (RNBRP) is offered to:

- Internationally educated nurses (IENs) who wish to practice in Canada
- Canadian-educated nurses who:
 - wish to re-enter nursing practice or
 - have performance or competence issues requiring remediation

The RNBRP is based on entry-level nursing competencies set by the registered nursing regulatory body in Nova Scotia. The Program has received approval as an RN Bridging/Re-Entry Nursing Program by the Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN).

Currently, the RNBRP is facilitated through online learning, online classroom sessions, lab practice and clinical practicums. Some courses are delivered entirely online, while others have a blended approach (e.g., online, and face-to-face components).

RN Bridging/Re-Entry Program Courses

Learners who are required to participate in the Program must successfully complete the courses as indicated in their referral and acceptance letters.

For full details about each course, including course outlines and program costs (if required), please refer to the Learning Institute website.

Core Courses:

- Professional Nursing in Canada: Online learning + online classroom sessions
- Professional Communication: Online learning + face-to-face lab sessions
- Health Assessment: Online learning + face-to-face lab sessions
- Changes in Health and Therapeutic Interventions I: Online learning + online classroom sessions
- Medication Administration: Online learning + face-to-face lab session
- Pharmacology: Online learning + online classroom sessions
- Changes in Health and Therapeutic Interventions II: Online learning + online classroom sessions + face-to-face lab sessions
- Clinical Nursing Skills: Online learning + face-to-face lab sessions
- Clinical Course Medical-Surgical: Instructor-led clinical (160 hours) + preceptor-led clinical (160 hours)

Note: Canadian-educated/licensed Re-Entry learners only complete the preceptor-led clinical. Those with performance or competence issues requiring remediation may be required to complete both instructor-led and preceptor-led clinical.

Specialty Courses:

- Perinatal Nursing: Online learning; Clinical: 80 hours
- Child Health Nursing: Online learning; Clinical: 80 hours
- Mental Health and Addictions Nursing: Online learning; Clinical: 80 hours

Registration Considerations

1.0 Accommodation

As per our obligations under human rights legislation, the Learning Institute affirms our moral duty to make reasonable efforts to provide academic accommodation for learners experiencing a barrier due to a disability.

Learners who require academic accommodation for completion of course work make their request upon enrollment into a program to the Learner Progression and Support Committee. To the point of undue hardship, the Learning Institute is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to learners with identified and duly assessed disabilities. Learners seeking accommodation should inform their respective faculty of same upon initial registration in the program/course.

For RNBRP programming, accommodations can come directly from NSCN.

1.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

For learners referred by NSCN to the RNBRP, prior professional experience was assessed by NSCN for the referral to the Learning Institute and has determined each learners' required courses. For learners referred by NS Health, an employer assessment determined the need for a referral to the RNBRP.

1.2 Forms

There are several forms that must be completed to confirm your seat in the program. Initial forms required upon acceptance will be emailed to you with instructions on how to complete/submit.

Additional forms will be required after the program begins for learners required to complete clinical placements. These will be explained and available through Brightspace.

Failure to submit forms in a timely fashion can affect both your enrollment and progression in a program.

1.3 Computer Requirements for Brightspace/Respondus

Brightspace: Program materials for your program/course can be accessed on the Learning Institute's Learning Management System - Brightspace. It is a webbased learning environment that can be accessed using a web browser. All learners will be provided with a username and password upon enrollment. Please record your password and ensure it is kept confidential.

The link below reviews the internet browser and other computer software that learners must have installed on their computers to use Brightspace. If you are in doubt about your computer/software, a System Check is available within the Brightspace learning environment. It is expected that you complete the system check at least 48 hours prior to the program/course start to resolve any issues prior to beginning your program.

https://community.d2l.com/brightspace/kb/articles/5663-browser-support

Note: Mac users must use a Windows compatible file format when uploading to Brightspace, e.g., .doc, .docx or .pdf.

Respondus: Respondus Monitor® is an automated proctoring system that eliminates the need for onsite examinations and proctors. The Learning Institute uses Respondus Monitor® with most program exams, which consists of:

- Lockdown Browser: Custom browser that locks down the testing environment within a learning system. Learners cannot print, copy, access other applications, or search the internet during an online exam.
- Respondus Monitor: Learners use a webcam to record themselves during the online exam. After the exam is completed, the instructor reviews the video recording for milestones (e.g., pre-exam set up, environmental scan, etc.) and any flags/problems identified by the system (e.g., poor internet quality, webcam was disconnected, etc.).

The computer that you use with Respondus must have a functioning webcam, microphone and broadband or wired internet connection. If unable to use a wired internet connection, we recommend close proximity to a Wi-Fi router. Chromebooks, cellphones, and NSH/IWK computers are not compatible devices with Respondus Monitor® at this time.

iPads can be used but require faculty approval and additional set up steps from learners.

1.4 Active Directory

Learners registered in the RNBRP obtain an Active Directory (AD) account with a username and a password upon completion of the Nova Scotia Health (NSH)/Izaak Walton Killam (IWK) **Privacy and Cybersecurity** training module. Instructions were sent out with your acceptance letter. These credentials give users access to NS Health computers, networks and library services, **without**

which the clinical course cannot be completed. Learners must submit their completed *NS Health Pledge of Confidentiality* form via email to the applicable zone RNBRP email address for their program as soon as possible. AD credentials will be sent out to learners after they begin their first course.

All learners are responsible to keep their account active and up-to-date, as passwords expire every 90 days.

Information on how to use Library Services can be found under the Resources section on the RNBRP Brightspace homepage.

1.5 Textbooks

At the beginning of each course learners are provided information regarding any required textbooks. For required readings provided online, learners may print their materials at home or at an external printer service provider. A permission letter for printing at external printing service providers is available in Brightspace.

For a full list of required program textbooks and how to obtain textbooks, please see **Appendix A**.

2.0 Learning Institute Progression Policies and Guidelines

Related policies can be found on the Learning Institute's website.

2.1 Learner Progression and Support Committee

The Learner Progression and Support Committee makes decisions on learners' progression in relation to assessment or re-assessment of learners' knowledge, skills, and performance and adherence to the Academic Code and Professional Code of Conduct for all Learning Institute programs. These decisions may include remediation, continuation in the program, disqualification and/or recommendations for acceptance into future programs. A learner who disagrees with any decision by the Learner Progression and Support Committee is provided an opportunity to seek review of that decision.

2.2 Academic and Clinical Progression

To attest that a learner has met a program's competencies or course outcomes, the learner must meet all the assessment criteria for knowledge, skills, and performance at predetermined assessment points. Each program has multiple assessment points that are communicated to the learner in advance in the syllabus. Failure at a component (knowledge or skill) will result in remediation and reassessment as follows:

- A. Repeat knowledge assessment will be a supplemental exam or assignment. Only one knowledge re-assessment is permitted per course. Please note that failure on a knowledge exam will result in a review of the concepts covered in the exam but not individual exam questions.
- B. Repeat skill assessment will be a re-assessment of the skill. Only one reassessment per skill is permitted per course.
- C. Repeat clinical performance assessment will be a re-assessment of the competency. Only one re-assessment per competency is permitted per course. If the learner requires re-assessment on more than 50% of the competencies, they will be ineligible for re-assessment.

The program reserves the right to disqualify a learner for failure to meet the requirements for either academic or clinical progression. The Learner Progression and Support Committee makes this decision based on evidence presented by faculty.

2.3 Academic Code

An academic code describes expectations that promote a high standard of honesty and integrity while participating in an educational program. Learners in a Learning Institute program must have a commitment and obligation to adhere to the Learning Institute Academic Code. Learners must be committed to:

- doing their own work
- citing others' ideas and words
- participating in all scheduled learning experiences (i.e., orientation, learning labs, clinical practicum)
- being responsible/accountable for their own actions

Adherence to the Learning Institute's Academic Code is assessed throughout the program and contributes to successful completion of the program. Clear educational expectations are provided so that learners understand what they must accomplish to fulfill program requirements. Violation of the Academic Code results in disciplinary action ranging from a warning to program disqualification.

The following list provides examples of actions that violate the Academic Code. This list is not inclusive and should be used only as a guide. Omission of a misconduct action from this list does not prevent the Learning Institute from investigating any alleged incident and carrying out disciplinary actions as required.

- Falsification of data/misrepresentation: Impersonation of another candidate in an exam/assignment; forging an academic record; fabricating data (i.e., falsification of province of residence)
- Plagiarism: Presenting work done by someone else as if it were one's own; presenting direct quotes or large sections of materials without acknowledging the author and source (i.e.: internet site, journal, textbook). Follow this link for more information on copyright and plagiarism:

<u>Writing & Citing Sources - Copyright - LibGuides at Nova Scotia</u> Health (nshealth.ca)

 Misuse of test/assignment materials: Copying from another's work; allowing someone else to do assigned work (i.e., assignments); submitting work done in part or in whole by someone else; taking or using test materials without faculty permission (e.g., accessing an online exam without permission or at a non-designated writing time)

- Receiving/giving unauthorized assistance: Copying from another learner; making information available to other learners; having unauthorized books, papers, and/or electronic computing, data storage or communication devices during an assessment (examination/assignment, skill testing, clinical performance).
- Theft of materials

Once an alleged academic violation is suspected, the incident is forwarded to the Learner Progression and Support Committee. The case is investigated, and the Learner Progression and Support Committee will decide to either dismiss the case or recommend disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions may include:

- A written warning
- Temporary suspension of progression in the program, thus providing time to discuss the incident at the Learner Progression and Support Committee
- A grade of 'Unsatisfactory' or 'Fail' or 'Zero' depending on the assessment point (checklist or exam/assignment)
- A probationary period with the term of probation being determined by the Learner Progression and Support Committee
- Disqualification from the program

2.4 Professional Code of Conduct

The Learning Institute values and promotes a professional learning environment. Institute learners are health professionals whose accountability and responsibility includes adherence to their professional standards and codes of ethics.

While enrolled in a Learning Institute program, a learner is expected to adhere to a professional code of conduct. This includes adherence to one's own professional standards and all program guidelines when participating in any learning experience in the program. Adherence to the Professional Code of Conduct is assessed throughout the program and contributes to successful completion of the program. Violation of the Professional Code of Conduct results in disciplinary action ranging from a warning to program disqualification.

The following list provides examples of some behaviors demonstrating adherence to the Professional Code of Conduct. This list is not inclusive and should be used only as a guide.

1. Precedence for client/patient welfare over learner educational objectives.

- a. The learner's primary responsibility is the welfare of the client/patient
- b. The learner consults with faculty, the preceptor, and/or the attending physician regarding client/patient management
- 2. Maintenance of client/patient privacy and confidentiality during educational experiences.
 - a. The learner respects the client/patient's privacy and dignity
 - b. The learner maintains client/patient confidentially in discussions and assignments
- 3. Respectful of the contribution of other individuals to one's learning.
 - a. The learner demonstrates respect when interacting with other learners, faculty, staff, preceptors/peer reviewers and other health care professionals
- 4. Exhibits effective interpersonal skills in all interactions.
 - a. The learner demonstrates respectful verbal and non-verbal communication behaviors when interacting with other learners, faculty, staff, preceptors/peer reviewers and other health care providers

Once an alleged violation of the Professional Code of Conduct is suspected, program faculty forwards the incident to the Learner Progression and Support Committee. The case is investigated, and the Learner Progression and Support Committee will decide to either dismiss the case or recommend disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions may include:

- A written warning
- Temporary suspension of progression in the program, thus providing time to discuss the incident at the Learner Progression and Support Committee
- A probationary period with the term of probation being determined by the Learner Progression and Support Committee
- Disqualification from the program

2.5 Review Process

Learners who disagree with an assessment or re-assessment decision for knowledge, skill, and performance and/or a decision concerning violation of the Academic Code and/or Professional Code of Conduct are provided an opportunity to seek review of that decision. The learner's request for a review must be submitted in writing to the Managers of the Learning Institute within five (5) working days of the receipt of the decision in question and must outline, in writing, the reason for requesting the review and any other submissions that the learner wishes the Stage I Review Committee to consider.

2.6 Course Extension

A course extension is typically defined as a delay in the regularly scheduled completion date for a program of study. This extension must be requested by the learner and approved by the program faculty. A course extension is typically considered up to 2 weeks past a course's expected end date. Further extension beyond this date must be presented to Learner Progression and Support Committee.

Reasons for a course extension may include:

- Illness/pregnancy of learner (medical documentation may be required)
- Illness or death of family member/significant other
- lob related reasons
- Difficulty balancing program requirements/work life
- Other

A course extension requires an amended timeline that includes a written work plan that has been agreed to by the learner and faculty.

2.7 Learner Initiated Modification of Study

Learners in Learning Institute educational programs are supported to initiate a modification of study due to individual circumstances related to personal choice, career path, health, family, and other life events. The modification could involve withdrawal, transfer between study options, transfer between programs or a program interruption.

Learners who wish to discuss or initiate a modification of study should contact faculty, review the policy, and submit the required form.

2.8 Non-Communication of a Learner

When faculty has not received any correspondence from a learner over a reasonable period of time (as determined by program faculty), faculty will make three documented attempts, either verbally and/or in writing, to contact the learner. A learner is defined as non-communicative who has not responded to three consecutive attempts by faculty to communicate with the learner during the program duration. Learners who are non-communicative will be disqualified from the program of study.

2.9 Program Completion/Graduation Requirements

Upon program completion, learners will receive a program record when the following requirements have been met:

- Successful completion of the theory, lab, and clinical components of a program/courses. This includes completion and submission of all required documents, such as assignments, skills checklists, and clinical tools in Brightspace.
- All outstanding Learning Institute fees have been paid.
- Submission of Intent to Graduate Form three weeks prior to graduation date.

Once a program record is issued, NSCN or NS Health will also be notified of successful completion of requirements.

2.10 Requests for Transcript of Program Records

Learners who wish to obtain an additional copy of their transcript of program record for personal use or to be forwarded to another organization may submit an electronic request to administrative support. An administration fee of \$20.00 is required for all these requests.

3.0 Program Delivery Information

Related policies can be found on the Learning Institute's website.

3.1 Attendance

It is the responsibility of the learner to attend all mandatory online or in-person orientation, classes (in-person/virtual), tutorials, learning labs (Skills/Objective Structured Clinical Examination [OSCE]), simulations, and clinical experiences as scheduled. If a class, lab/simulation, or clinical shift is missed due to an exceptional circumstance (e.g., health or family crisis) the learner must inform faculty, preceptor, and their manager (if being sponsored) and may be required to complete additional assignments or make-up the clinical experience.

3.2 Dress Code

Learners are required to always present a professional image. Uniforms are required in lab settings and practical exams. Learners are required to comply with dress requirements in accordance with the Learning Institute Professional Code of Conduct. It is a requirement to wear uniforms and Nova Scotia Health/IWK ID badges during clinical.

Please refer to Nova Scotia Health's Policy <u>AD-HR-015 Dress Standards</u> for general guidance regarding uniform, footwear, jewelry/piercings, and grooming (hygiene, hair, beard, fingernails). If you have further questions, please contact your program faculty.

3.3 Electronic Communication

Learners are not permitted to use wireless electronic communication devices (e.g., smart phones) for personal reasons while providing direct client/patient care. It is expected that during class/tutorial/learning lab time learners will refrain from using wireless communication devices for personal use and focus on the learning at hand. Learners are to ensure that the confidentiality and privacy of persons in care, patients, families, and other health care providers are maintained at all times. No photographs or video recordings are permitted in the clinical setting. If a wireless electronic communication device is used in the clinical setting for access to course or work-related resources or tools, learners are responsible to ensure that proper infection prevention and control strategies are implemented.

3.4 Cancellation of Scheduled Learning Experiences

Cancellation of scheduled learning experiences (including class, lab/simulation, or clinical) may occur due to a severe inclement weather (e.g., a winter storm). A scheduled learning experience is facilitated by a faculty, instructor, proctor, or preceptor; this does not apply to self-directed study. It includes online or inperson orientation, examinations, classes, tutorials, learning labs/simulation, and clinical experiences. Faculty will notify learners as soon as the decision to cancel is made, and within a minimum of 2 hours prior to the scheduled start time. How faculty communicates cancellation of scheduled learning experiences will be reviewed in program orientation.

3.5 Examinations

The Learning Institute uses Respondus Monitor® with most program exams as outlined above section outlining Computer Requirements for Brightspace/Respondus.

Examination writing will have parameters. For instance, in a condensed program iteration (e.g., 16 weeks), you may be required to write the examination during a finite time frame, i.e., Monday from 9am to 11am. Other learners in more extended program iterations (part-time offerings), may be provided a more extended time frame to write examinations (i.e., during business hours on either Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday). Regardless of program iteration, learners will only be provided one attempt at the examination and will have the same amount of time granted to complete the assessment. Faculty will review process for examinations during program orientation. Please refer to the examination policy for details and, if required, submit examination approval form by the deadline date indicated by faculty.

3.6 APA Format for Assignments

Some educational programs at the Learning Institute require 7th Edition (2019) APA Style® format when submitting assignments. The link below provides a tutorial designed specifically for those who have no previous experience with basic APA Style®. It shows how to structure and format work, ways to reduce bias in language, how to avoid plagiarism, and how to appropriately cite references using APA Style®. https://apastyle.apa.org/index

For additional resources, please see Brightspace.

3.7 Program/Course Evaluation

In keeping with the Learning Institute's initiative for continuous quality improvement, online course, faculty, and lab evaluations are integrated in course design. We request that you participate in this evaluation process. These evaluations are anonymous. Thank you in advance for helping to improve the program. This ongoing evaluation enables faculty to revise the program on a regular basis, thus making the learning experience valuable and enjoyable for you and future program participants. Evaluation is critical throughout the program.

Learners are also encouraged to provide informal feedback to faculty during the course of study.

3.8 Clinical Courses

Medical/Surgical Clinical Placements:

Learners who are required to complete a medical/surgical clinical placement will be enrolled in the *Clinical Course: Medical Surgical* via Brightspace at the beginning of their program. This course in Brightspace contains important information related to pre-clinical requirements and the clinical experience. Payment for the course will not be due until closer to the start date of the learner's first clinical placement.

Clinical Course: Medical Surgical consists of two portions, Instructor-led and Preceptor-led:

- Instructor-led consists of 160 hours in a group placement with an RNBRP instructor. Shifts will be 12 hour day shifts (0700-1900).
- Preceptor-led consists of 160 hours in an individual placement with an assigned preceptor. Learners are expected to do all shifts with their assigned preceptor, including weekends, days and nights.

Note: Canadian-educated/licensed re-entry learners only complete the preceptor-led portion. Those with performance or competence issues requiring remediation may be required to complete both instructor-led and preceptor-led clinical to meet practice hours, as determined by NSCN or NS Health.

Specialty Clinical Placements:

Learners referred to complete a specialty clinical course, consisting of 80 hours, must first have completed the related specialty theory course. This is an individual, preceptor-led clinical placement. Efforts are made to obtain a preceptorship as close as possible to the learner's home.

Learners are required to always wear nursing uniforms to clinical. If required, learners are responsible for the costs and arrangements of their own travel and accommodations.

Please note, there is an extremely high demand for clinical placements due to large numbers of students and the retirement of many experienced preceptors.

The Learning Institute will strive to provide clinical course schedules to learners well in advance to allow learners to make arrangements with employers and family. However, given the current constraints in practice, units may not be able to confirm such information to us until very close to clinical start dates.

3.9 Pre-Clinical Requirements

Learners must successfully complete all educational requirements stipulated by NSCN or NS Health prior to being eligible to begin a clinical placement.

Learners required to complete any of the clinical courses must submit all preclinical documentation as soon as possible after starting their program, and no less than one month prior to the start of their first clinical placement. These requirements are set forth by the health care organizations and include such things as immunizations, criminal record checks and Basic Life Support certification.

Please note that immunizations may take months to complete.

For full details on pre-clinical documentation and submission instructions, please refer to Brightspace.

If you are a Nova Scotia Health (NSH) employee:

- HSPnet Student Consent Form
- NS Health Student/Learner Placement Agreement Form
- Student and Learner Placement e-Orientation Checklist
- Student and Learner Placement PPE Orientation Checklist

If you are NOT a Nova Scotia Health (NSH) employee:

- All the above documents
- NS Health Immunization & Infectious Disease Screening Form
 Your health care provider must complete the form. Do not submit

medical/laboratory documents.

- Criminal Records Check (CRC) with **Vulnerable Sector Search**: the CRC must be dated after your program start date, and will be valid for the duration of this program.
- Documentation of Basic Life Support (BLS) for Health Care Providers (HCP). If your BLS for HCP is set to expire while you are in the program you will be required to recertify **PRIOR** to the expiry date.

Note: All learners may be required to submit other placement specific documents. Learners will be notified about other applicable prerequisites via email. If you are unsure about your clinical placement or what forms to send in, please contact the applicable zone RNBRP email address for your program.

Appendix A: List of Required Textbooks

Core Courses:

Professional Communication:

Mallette, C., & Yonge, O. (2022). Arnold and Boggs's interpersonal relationships: Professional communication skills for Canadian nurses. Elsevier.

Pharmacology:

Sealock, K., & Seneviratne, C. (2021). *Lilley's pharmacology for Canadian health care practice* (4th ed.). Elsevier.

Health Assessment:

Jarvis, C., & Eckhardt, A. (2024). *Physical examination and health assessment*, (4th Cdn. ed.). Elsevier.

Specialty Courses:

Child Health Nursing:

Hockenberry, M. C., Rodgers, C. C., & Wilson, D. (2022). Wong's essentials of pediatric nursing (10th ed.). Elsevier.

Perinatal Health Nursing:

Keenan-Lindsay, L., Sams, C. A., & O'Connor, C. (2022). Perry's maternal child nursing care in Canada (3rd ed.). Elsevier.

Mental Health and Addictions Nursing:

Pollard, C. L., & Jakubec, S. L. (2023). *Varcarolis's Canadian psychiatric mental health nursing: A clinical approach* (3rd ed.). Elsevier.

Purchasing Course Textbooks

We recommend purchasing the electronic version of textbooks, as page numbers for required readings will align with the electronic version. E-book codes can be purchased from the Dalhousie Health Sciences Bookstore:

• Address: 6136 University Ave., Halifax, NS

• **Phone**: 902-494-3020

Visit the bookstore in person or order online.

You may also choose to buy from other bookstores or directly from the publisher:

• <u>Elsevier</u>