Howdy! I extend a warm welcome to you as a Texas A&M University College of Nursing graduate student! Congratulations on your admission!

As you enter the Master of Science degree program, I know that you will experience the core values of this great University among our faculty and current students. We take pride in our commitment to the Aggie Core Values: Respect, Excellence, Leadership, Loyalty, Integrity and Selfless Service. You are the future of nursing and a MSN from this College of Nursing will accelerate your career because of our outstanding program, our graduates who are highly sought after by employers, and our talented faculty and staff.

The Graduate Student Handbook is essential reading for your preparation and continuous enrollment in the College of Nursing. In this document you will learn about the College, the opportunities and responsibilities that you have as a student, important policies, and the tremendous resources that are available to you.

I am deeply honored to serve as Dean of the Texas A&M College of Nursing! I am committed to our mission of educational access, outreach, and research. We are leading nursing education and research in innovative ways and I know that you will be challenged and rewarded by your studies.

As part of Texas A&M University, we are committed to preparing Master of Science-prepared nurse leaders who will make a difference in the lives of their patients, organizations and communities. Our outstanding faculty and staff are dedicated to providing students with learning experiences that are meaningful and relevant for your future role as a nurse educator, family nurse practitioner or forensic nursing leader.

Our graduate nursing curriculum includes coursework that builds upon the BSN curriculum through advanced coursework and practicum experiences. The clinical learning resource center offers opportunities for safe practice in an environment that simulates the actual healthcare setting.

Students are our priority in the College of Nursing, and we are so proud that you chose to pursue graduate education at Texas A&M University. It is an exciting time and we look forward to working with you throughout your journey.

Nancy L. Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN
Dean and Professor
College of Nursing
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DISCLAIMER NOTE TO STUDENT

The provisions of this Graduate Student Handbook do not constitute a contract, expressed or implied, between any applicant, student, or faculty member and the Texas A&M System. Although every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of information in this publication, the Texas A&M System, the Texas A&M Health Science Center, and the College of Nursing reserve the right to change course offerings, fees, tuition, academic calendars, curricula, degree requirements, graduation procedures, and any other requirement affecting students. Changes will become effective whenever the proper authorities so determine and will apply to both prospective students and those already enrolled. The College, at all times, retains the right to dismiss a student who does not attain and maintain adequate academic or clinical performance or who does not exhibit the personal and professional qualifications required for the practice of nursing.

Detailed instructions on processes related to the Offices of the Registrar, Financial Aid and Student Business Services can be obtained by contacting the respective office or visiting their websites.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Texas A&M University provides equal opportunity to all employees, students, applicants for employment or admission and the public regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender
identity. Texas A&M will promptly investigate all complaints of illegal discrimination, sexual harassment, and related retaliation in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

The College of Nursing complies with Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and does not discriminate on the basis of an individual’s handicap in its admission, accessibility, treatment, and employment of students in its programs and activities. The College of Nursing provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to students with handicapping conditions, as defined under the law, who are otherwise qualified to meet the institution’s academic requirements. For additional information, contact the CON Office of Student Affairs at (979) 436-0110.

Publication Accuracy
Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of information in this publication. Nevertheless, the College of Nursing reserves the right to change without prior notice: admission and degree requirements, curriculum, courses, teaching personnel, rules, regulations, tuition, fees, and any other matter described in this handbook.

The handbook is published at the beginning of each academic year (prior to the fall term) and as warranted by policy changes approved by the College of Nursing. The Texas A&M University System administration and the College of Nursing reserve the right to make changes to policies and procedures without notice as necessitated by governing authorities or administrative needs. Changes are communicated to students through email. A log of all changes is viewable in the Learning Management System portal and on the public website.

About the University
Texas A&M University opened its doors in 1876 as the state's first public institution of higher learning. Today, we stand as a research-intensive flagship university dedicated to sending Aggie leaders out into the world prepared to take on the challenges of tomorrow. The University's purpose is to develop leaders of character dedicated to serving the greater good. Our purpose statement carries with it the responsibility, the traditions and the forward-thinking of Texas A&M exemplified by all who are associated with the university — our faculty and staff, and our current and former students.

This purpose can be defined by our six core values.

1. Excellence
2. Integrity
3. Leadership
4. Loyalty
5. Respect
6. Selfless Service
Located in the heart of the Houston-Dallas-Austin triangle and within a two-hour drive of 26 million of the state’s 28 million residents, Texas A&M’s main campus in College Station is home to more than 64,000 students. Another 5,200 are at the branch campuses in Galveston and Qatar and at the School of Law, Higher Education Center at McAllen, and Health Science Center locations across Texas.

About the College
Texas A&M University College of Nursing graduates are among the best-prepared baccalaureate and masters nurses in the nation, and they are highly sought after by prospective employers. The first-time passing rates on advanced practice certification board exams for M.S.N. Family Nurse Practitioner graduates have been significantly above the national average since the inception of the program in 2015. We have grown from 40 undergraduate students admitted in 2008 to approximately 450 graduate and undergraduate students enrolled at two campuses: Bryan and Round Rock as well as having many students enrolled in distance education programs. The college also has a resident recruiting presence in Lufkin and McAllen serving residents in East and South Texas for both undergraduate and graduate nursing students.

Vision
Our vision is to be a premier College of Nursing, educating and empowering a diverse population of nurse leaders who will transform health and health systems through service, discovery and knowledge.

Mission
The mission of the College of Nursing is to educate professional nurses of today and leaders of tomorrow through the provision of excellent educational programs in nursing. The College will identify, attract and graduate students of high potential, especially those from groups who have been historically under-represented in Texas health care. Furthermore, this mission will facilitate individuals, families, and groups in achieving the maximum state of well-being through education of highly skilled nurses, research and service. The mission of the College will be enhanced through faculty contributions to community service, leadership, practice and research.

Goals
In support of the vision and mission, the College of Nursing is committed to the following educational goals:

- Develop within the student the knowledge and skills necessary for beginning professional nursing practice, cultivating basic and specialized abilities needed to pursue a successful career in the nursing profession.
- Promote the concept of nursing as holistic caring, and facilitate attainment of a care delivery system sensitive to multicultural communities and their health values.
- Use technology to facilitate and enhance student learning outcomes both inside and outside of the classrooms.
- Offer individuals the opportunity to increase the breadth and depth of the theoretical base for nursing practice, enhance and expand competence, prepare for role specialization, and utilize new nursing knowledge.
- Provide an educational environment of respect within which students may evolve as broadly educated, responsible, and accountable professionals dedicated to the principles of lifelong learning.
- Serve the community as nursing experts, leaders and consultants in professional organizations, health promoters, providers of health care policy information, and advocates of ethical distribution and usage of resources.
- Provide educational opportunities that combine the expertise and skills of nursing students, medical students, future hospital administrators and public health professionals to promote collaborative partnerships and relationships on many levels.
- Contribute to the improvement of nursing education through innovation, evaluation, and participation in local to global nursing education activities.

**Philosophy**
The philosophy of the Texas A&M University College of Nursing (CON) reflects our beliefs about the role and the education of the professional nurse. This philosophy represents a blend of nursing theories.

**Professional Nursing Practice**
Nursing is a balance of both art and science. The art of nursing involves the concepts of caring that fosters respectful relationships and individual dignity and worth. The science of nursing is supported through inquiry, research and other scholarly activities and is manifested by evidence-based practice.

The professional nurse is a partner and an advocate for the health care consumer in an increasingly diverse and aging population. Professional nursing provides culturally competent care to individuals, families and groups within their environments. Care of the physical, psychosocial and spiritual needs is essential to the promotion, protection and maintenance of health.

The baccalaureate nurse functions in the roles of provider of care, coordinator of care, and contributor to the profession. Care is provided in and across all settings and health care systems, and uses a number of treatment modalities. As a provider of care, the nurse
contributes a unique blend of knowledge, skills, and caring. As a coordinator of care, the
nurse has the knowledge and authority to delegate nursing tasks to other health care
personnel and to supervise patient care outcomes. As a member of the profession, the
nurse conforms to the laws and code of ethics governing professional standards of nursing
practice. In all these roles, the professional nurse accepts personal responsibility for
lifelong learning.

**Professional Nursing Education**
Nursing education is a collaborative process among students, faculty, and the learning
environment. It draws from the fields of physical and social science and liberal arts to
support the acquisition of knowledge and skills essential for nurses to meet client, family,
organization, and system needs. Course and clinical experiences throughout the
curriculum are designed from simple to complex, beginning with foundational courses in
liberal arts and sciences which are then built upon in nursing classes.

**College of Nursing Goals**

**Goal 1: Students and Education**
Educate professional and advanced-practice nurses who exemplify excellence in clinical
practice, scholarship, service, leadership and personal growth.

**Goal 2: Research and Scholarship**
Advance knowledge, practice and pedagogy through the transformation of the College of
Nursing into a national leader in innovative research and scholarship.

**Goal 3: Outreach and Service**
Endorse and uphold the principles of cultural humility and sensitivity, and commit to
working in partnership with the communities we serve to co-create mutually beneficial
relationships and improve health outcomes.

**Goal 4: Faculty and Staff Excellence**
Foster a supportive environment, building upon our strengths and promoting a culture of
excellence that is the driving force in the achievement of our strategic goals.

**Goal 5: Identity and Visibility**
Achieve recognition as the nursing school of choice both in Texas and nationally for
students, faculty and employers.
Accreditation

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
Texas A&M University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate, master’s, doctoral, and professional degrees. While SACSCOC accredits the institution as a whole, many of the academic degree programs offered also undergo accreditation by specialized accrediting bodies. For more information, see the Office of the Provost webpage.

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)
The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education is an autonomous accrediting agency, contributing to the improvement of the public’s health. A specialized/professional accrediting agency, CCNE ensures the quality and integrity of baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs and of post-baccalaureate nurse residency programs. The baccalaureate and master’s degree programs in nursing at Texas A&M University College of Nursing are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street, NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001. Phone number (202) 887-6791. The baccalaureate programs received a 10 year reaccreditation in 2014. Initial 5-year accreditation of the new master’s degree program was in 2015 with a reaccreditation visit by CCNE planned for February 2020.

Texas Board of Nursing (TBON)
Approval of nursing education programs is one of the primary functions that the Texas Board of Nursing performs in order to fulfill its mission to protect and promote the welfare of the people of Texas. The Board has the responsibility and legal authority to decide whether a nursing education program can meet the Board’s established minimum standards for educational programs.
Chapter 1: General Information

Academic Calendar
The College of Nursing adheres to the Texas A&M University Academic calendar for class dates and holidays/vacation, available each semester from the University Registrar’s Office and at Academic Calendars.

Attendance, Absences & Makeups
Students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study, including material presented in the classroom, either face-to-face or online. Class participation is expected of each student as outlined in each course syllabus. If a student should miss a deadline for any class, assignment, or exam, he/she should email the faculty member as soon as possible. If the absence is anticipated such as due to illness or personal emergency, the student should notify the immediate faculty member prior to any deadline imposed for an assignment, class, or exam. See Student Rule 7 for more information regarding excused and extended absences.

The instructor reserves the right to request satisfactory evidence to substantiate the reason for absence for bereavement: death or major illness in a student’s immediate family. Immediate family may include: mother, father, sister, brother, grandparents, spouse, child, spouse’s child, spouse’s parents, spouse’s grandparents, stepmother, step-father, step-sister, step-brother, step-grandparents, grandchild, step-grandchild, legal guardian, and others as deemed appropriate by faculty member or student’s academic Dean or designee.

Awareness of and Respect for Diversity
Texas A&M University and the College of Nursing fully support an environment wherein individuals (i.e., students, staff, faculty, guests) can work as partners in achieving goals. While engaged in didactic learning and experiential rotations, students are required to behave and act in a manner that is expected in nursing and all health professions. Such behavior and actions are guided by respect for other students, faculty, staff, patients, and health care professionals who may have differences that include (but are not limited to) the following: religious beliefs and practices, nontraditional medical beliefs and practices, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, physical and emotional disabilities, racial background, intellectual capabilities, age, and cultural background. Respect is demonstrated by being considerate, courteous, and professional, and by maintaining confidentiality of patient information.
Communication: Email Account

Student Rule 61 rule establishes e-mail as an official means of communication (equivalent to the U.S. Postal Service) at Texas A&M University. It also establishes student responsibilities for use of official TAMU e-mail accounts and official e-mail correspondence. All use of e-mail will be consistent with Student Rules, Computing Services: Rules for Responsible Computing. Upon a student's admission to Texas A&M University, they will be assigned an active student e-mail account within five working days. It then becomes the responsibility of the student to access this e-mail account in a responsible and timely manner. Course documents are submitted through the Learning Management System assignment links. Do not submit assignments through email unless specifically directed to do so by faculty.

Computer Requirements

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that his/her computer has the required software installed upon admission and updated throughout his/her time as a student in order to access course information through the learning management system and other required systems/websites. At all times, the student’s computer should be capable of running the programs. Upon admission, students will be provided with detailed specifications for either a Mac or a Windows laptop. This information is also available on the CON website. Students will be granted access to an online orientation course with specific instructions and assignments in the learning management system Learning Management System to ensure their computers meet all technical requirements. Completion of the orientation course is required prior to being given access to the learning management system courses. If you have questions regarding any of the hardware or software required, please contact the OIT Helpdesk at 1-800-799-7472 and identify yourself as a Nursing student.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Students at Texas A&M University have the right of confidentiality under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. Directory information that holds student information may be made public unless the student desires to withhold any or all of this information. More information on this can be found in your New Student Guide which the college provided to you upon admission or you may contact the Registrar, at: registrar@tamhsc.edu or (979) 845-1031.

Identification Badge

All new students are asked to upload a photo in the CastleBranch compliance portal. This photo will be used to create a University Identification (ID) badge. Students will be issued a
second photo ID badge by the CON that must be worn to all practicums. Badges may be picked up at new student orientation. You are required to bring a government issued photo identification to pick up your student badges.

Legal Violations
Any student charged with a crime, with or without conviction, must notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs within 72 hours. Failure to disclose could result in disciplinary action. Some convictions such as fraud, abuse, or assault may result in being suspension of your registered nurse license. Each situation must be assessed for further action.

Religious Holy Days
As defined in the Texas State Law, a “religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation. The College of Nursing will excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student who is absent from classes for the observation of a religious holy day will be allowed to take an exam or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. The language of House Bill 256 was adopted into Texas A&M Student Rules, Appendix IV: Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days.

Students are asked, but not required, to request absence from the class in writing (email acceptable). It would be most helpful if the student would submit the request to each course instructor within the first 5 days of the semester for which the absence is requested. A student who is excused for holy day observance may not be penalized for the absence, but the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination within a timely manner. For a list of holy days and their description, view The Interfaith Calendar and the PBS Multifaith Calendar.

Sexual Violence/Harassment
Sexual violence, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking can happen to anyone. Texas A&M wants to make sure you have resources available to help you or someone you know who has been impacted by sexual violence, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking. There are many services available to support students, faculty and staff in crisis. Call the Office of Student Affairs at 979-436-0110 for assistance or contact the Sexual Assault Resource Center in the Bryan/College Station area directly by calling 979-731-1000. The Sexual Assault Resource Center’s goal is to stop sexual violence through advocacy, empowerment, and education. SARC offers a 24-hour crisis hotline, 24-hour accompaniment to medical facilities, accompaniment to meet with law enforcement or court appearances, provides free counseling to survivors and family
members or survivors of sexual assault, and makes professional and educational presentations to schools, businesses, and other agencies. In the Round Rock location, you may contact the Hope Alliance Center at 512-255-1212. This center is dedicated to empowering victims of family violence, sexual assault, and other violent crimes through support and advocacy, while promoting community awareness, compassion, and responsibility for creating a safer community. The staff assists victims in finding counseling, housing and employment, and works closely with law enforcement agencies, hospitals, and others involved in crisis intervention.

Student Assistance Services can help to identify or provide assistance. Other resources are available on the Step In/Stand Up website.

The Office of the Dean of Student Life, the Human Resources Department employee relations office, and the Office of the Dean of Faculties are available to serve as resources to any student, non-faculty employee, or faculty member who has a sexual harassment inquiry or complaint. A person who believes he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment may pursue either the informal or the formal complaint resolution procedure. Any faculty member, staff member, or student may initiate a complaint. For more information, see Student Rule 47.

Social Media Policy
The University presence or participation on social media sites is guided by university policy. This policy applies to College of Nursing students who engage in internet conversations for school-related purposes or school-related activities such as interactions in or about clinical and didactic course activities. Distribution of sensitive and confidential information is protected under HIPAA and FERPA whether discussed through traditional communication channels or through social media.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) provides Social Networking Principles to guide nurses in the use of social media to safeguard themselves, the profession, and their patients. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube, to name a few. The following is the position of the ANA which is the organization that represents the interests of all registered nurses: “Nurses have a responsibility first and foremost to their patients. As a nurse, you must always ensure that anything you post or publish could never undermine your patient's treatment or privacy.” (ANA, 2019, https://www.nursingworld.org/social/). The NCSBN (National Council of State Boards of Nursing) also speaks specifically to the use of social media for nurses. For more information, view the guide available on their website.
CON students are responsible and accountable for any and all content (in any format whatsoever) posted, transmitted, or communicated on, by or through any social media account associated with a CON student. The use of social media sites is not approved for classroom communication. The CON utilizes learning management systems for course information and communication as well as Texas A&M University email. Any information shared on social media sites in conjunction with the course regarding clinical sites, patient information, pictures, or sharing of course content such as exam questions, may lead to disciplinary action. These actions may range from an unsafe/unprofessional write up to permanent dismissal from the program, depending on the level and severity of the violation. All course material developed by faculty is the property of the College of Nursing and the individual faculty member. This property cannot be used without prior consent from the faculty (http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule22).

CON students should strictly follow guidelines as noted below:

- Do not share, post, or otherwise disseminate any information, that can identify a patient, or in any way violate a patient's rights or privacy. This includes activities in the CLRC/simulation setting. Limiting access through privacy setting is not sufficient to ensure privacy of patients.
- Never post photographs or any information gained in a nurse-patient relationship.
- Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Online contact with patients blurs these boundaries.
- Do not post inflammatory or unflattering information about peers, patients, clinical sites and/or their employees on any social media site. Make every effort to present yourself as mature, responsible, and professional.
- Promptly report any breach of confidentiality or privacy to your faculty member.
- Do not share any protected health information. (HIPAA)
- At all times, behave in a manner consistent with the standards set forth in the Nursing Code of Ethics. Uphold ethical/legal obligations and guidelines regarding patient privacy and confidentiality.

Student Complaints
The College of Nursing is committed to providing a learning environment for its students in which complaints are responded to in a prompt and fair manner. The college recognizes that disputes may sometimes arise and requires the parties involved to resolve the conflict informally whenever possible. If resolution cannot be reached a formal complaint process is available with the Dean who will make the final decision regarding the incident. This process may not be invoked for matters that have independent appeal processes as outlined in the Texas A&M Student Rules or matters which are not grievable to include federal and state laws.
For concerns regarding a class, students should first speak with their instructor. If they do not believe the situation was satisfactorily resolved, they may then speak to the course leader, if applicable. If still no resolution has been reached, the student may contact the program coordinator, followed by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Nursing Education, then the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and lastly, the Dean. Students are expected to follow this chain of command with their course concerns. Grade disputes are addressed in Student Rule 48.

For general concerns, students should contact their academic advisor who will direct the student appropriately.

Student rule violations outside of the academic classroom environment are reported through Student Conflict Resolution Services.

To report a behavioral concern on the part of a member of the student body, faculty, or staff, refer to the Tell Somebody Reporting process.

To report instances of suspected waste, fraud, or a suspected ethics violation, use the Texas A&M University Systems Risk, Fraud, and Misconduct Hotline.

Current, former, and prospective students may email Student Complaints or mail a completed THECB student complaint form to THECB's Office of General Counsel. A non-exhaustive list of exceptions to the types of complaints handled by THECB is provided in the student complaint rules.

**Student Name or Address Changes**

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for maintaining a student's official legal name for Texas A&M University and for the State of Texas. For official name change procedures, go to the Student Name Change webpage. Name changes for degree candidates must be completed by the date designated on the Registrar's website. Students submitting a name change request after this date must pay an additional diploma fee to receive a diploma with their new name. Also, diplomas ordered after this deadline may not be received in time for distribution at the commencement ceremony.

The student's current mailing address and permanent address must be correctly listed in the academic record. Any change in the student's address should be promptly reported to the College of Nursing and changed through the Howdy portal. Because of SEVIS reporting requirements, international students are not permitted to make changes to their permanent address in Howdy. These students should contact International Student Services if their permanent address is incorrect or needs to be changed. A student will not
be excused from penalties on grounds of not receiving communications mailed from the CON if the student failed to report the new address.

**Temporary Disabilities/Pregnancy**

**Temporary Disabilities**
The College of Nursing partners with the Disability Services Office to provide appropriate accommodation and support. Students should work through Disability Services for temporary or permanent sensory, physical or psychological disabilities in order to obtain reasonable accommodations.

Students who encounter an injury or any other physical limitation of a temporary nature must notify the clinical instructor and course coordinator. In addition, students must provide documentation from his/her health care provider that he/she is able to safely carry out the duties of a student in the clinical setting. Any restrictions or limitations must be clearly outlined. Documentation must be provided prior to attending clinical experiences.

**Pregnancy**
Any pregnant student should contact their health care provider to determine what, if any, additional precautions are needed based on their individual situation. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate their needs each semester to their instructors.

**Transcript Requests**
An official transcript is a comprehensive record of a student's academic progress at Texas A&M University. The Transcript section of the Office of the Registrar produces only official transcripts. *Current students* needing an unofficial transcript may print one from Howdy on the My Record tab. *Former students*, fall 1985 to present, needing an unofficial transcript may print one from Howdy on the Former Student tab. *(Former students please also refer to the section on online ordering information below for additional help on how you will need to log onto Howdy.)*

**Ordering an Official Transcript**
Students with outstanding financial obligations to the University may be BLOCKED from receiving an official transcript. *Current students* may check for transcript blocks on Howdy on their My Record tab. *Former students* may check for transcript blocks on Howdy on the Former Student Tab. For information on ordering transcripts, go to: TAMU Registrar Transcripts webpage.

For transcript order procedures and to obtain an order for, go to the Registrar’s website.
Universal Identification Number (UIN)
The Office of the Registrar provides applicants with their individually assigned UIN during the application period. A student who previously attended Texas A&M University will use the same UIN number as was assigned to them at that institution. Students should contact the Admissions Processing office for any questions and/or concerns about their UIN at (979) 845-1060.

Weapons Policy & Campus Carry
The Texas A&M University Student Rule 24.4.14 addresses weapons. For more information go to the Student Rules website. The University is committed to complying with state and federal laws.

The 84th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 11 in 2015, which expands the areas on public university campuses where those with appropriate licenses may carry concealed handguns. Universities have been given discretion to implement the law based on our unique campus cultures, with a focus on safety and the gathering and careful consideration of input from the broad campus community. Texas A&M will announce how the law will be implemented by late summer 2016. For more information, go to the campus carry website.

Weather & Other Campus Crisis Events
Should there be a weather related or other event that would cause the campus to be closed, information will be made available to the local television and radio stations. Please check the university and the College of Nursing website for the latest details. In the event of an emergency in progress, you may call 9-911 for immediate assistance from any campus phone.

Code Maroon and HSC Alert Emergency notification services provides notice of campus emergencies. Students are encouraged to sign up for text and/or email notices. CON Faculty may communicate via the learning management system with regard to unexpected schedule changes due to weather and other situations. Students should check the announcements or scheduling section of learning management system on a regular basis.
Chapter 2: Graduate Program

About the MSN Program

The College of Nursing offers 3 specialty areas to prepare the registered nurse at the master’s level. The Master of Science degree is designed in accordance with the Essentials of Master’s Education in Nursing (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2011) (Appendix A). The 3 tracks are:

1. Master of Science/Nursing Education (MSN-ED) - designed to prepare the nurse for teaching in the academic or clinical setting. Registered nurses will be prepared through graduate education and clinical experience to deliver an advanced scope of health care practice to individuals of all ages. Emphasis is placed on the collaborative role of the nurse within the integrated health system through health promotion, disease prevention and management of common acute and chronic illnesses. Upon completion of course requirements, graduates of the MSN-ED program are eligible to take the Certified Nurse Educator (CNE®) Examination offered by the National League for Nursing. MSN-ED students will complete a total of 225 clinical hours.

2. Master of Science/Family Nurse Practitioner (MSN-FNP) - designed to prepare registered nurses through graduate education and clinical experience to deliver primary health care through an advanced scope of practice. The program reflects the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) core competencies and population focus competencies (Appendix B). Upon completion of course requirements, graduates are eligible to sit for the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s FNP and American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Exams. MSN-FNP students will complete a total of 646 clinical hours.

3. Master of Science/Forensic Nursing (MSN-FRNR) - prepares the graduate to care for victims and perpetrators of traumatic events or criminal acts that result in trauma or death. While caring for their patients, the forensic nurse is also responsible for observing, recognizing, collecting and documenting forensic evidence related to the traumatic event or criminal act for subsequent use in civil or criminal legal proceedings. MSN-FRNR students will complete a total of 135 clinical hours.

4. Graduate Forensic Health Care Certificate (CTG-FOHC) - prepares graduates to excel in this rapidly developing field by drawing from a broad body of academic knowledge in forensic health care to assist victims of violence and trauma.
Master of Science in Nursing Education

Student Outcomes
At the completion of the MSN program, the graduate will be prepared to:

1. Integrate scientific findings from nursing, biophysical science, genetics, public health, quality improvement and organizational sciences for the continual improvement of nursing care across diverse settings.

2. Utilize organizational and systems leadership in developing working relationships and making ethical and critical decisions to promote quality, safe care.

3. Apply principles, methods and tools of quality improvement within an organization to promote quality care.

4. Work as a change agent to apply and disseminate research outcomes within the practice setting.

5. Use patient care and communication technologies to enhance patient care.

6. Intervene at the system level to develop and implement policies that influence health care.

7. Collaborate with other health care professionals to manage and coordinate care.

8. Integrate organizational, client centered and culturally centered approaches to plan, deliver and evaluate health care for individuals, families, and populations.

9. Influence health care outcomes by integrating advanced knowledge into direct and indirect care.

10. Apply educational theory, techniques and strategies to facilitate and assess learner development in diverse environments.

11. Develop curriculum utilizing pedagogical strategies to advance nursing practice in educational and clinical environments.
### MSN Education Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Abbreviation</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Semester Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>Advanced Pathophysiology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>Advanced Pharmacology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>Teaching &amp; Learning Theory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>Curriculum Foundations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>Educational Assessment &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>Teaching Strategies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>634*</td>
<td>Teaching in Nursing Practicum (90 clh)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>638*</td>
<td>Adv Clinical Practicum &amp; Project (90 clh)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>Quality Improvement and Informatics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>Scholarship: Integration and Application</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>Advanced Health Assessment (45 clh)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>Prevention and Population Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>Leadership and Health Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This course requires a preceptor. Preceptors must be secured at least 6 months prior to the first day of the semester.

clh – clinical learning hours

### Master of Science in Forensic Nursing

#### Student Outcomes

At the completion of the M.S.N. Forensic track, graduates of the College of Nursing will be prepared to:

1. Integrate scientific findings from nursing, biophysical science, forensic science, genetics, public health, quality improvement and organizational sciences for the continual improvement of nursing care across diverse settings.
2. Utilize organizational and systems leadership in developing working relationships and making ethical and critical decisions to promote quality, safe care.
3. Apply principles, methods and tools of quality improvement within an organization to promote quality care.
4. Work as a change agent to apply and disseminate research outcomes within the practice setting.
5. Use patient care and communication technologies to enhance patient care.
6. Intervene at the system level to develop and implement policies that influence health care.
7. Collaborate with other healthcare professionals to manage and coordinate care.
8. Integrate organizational, client centered and culturally centered approaches to plan, deliver and evaluate health care for individuals, families, and populations.
9. Influence healthcare outcomes by integrating advanced knowledge into direct and indirect care.
10. Respond to victims and perpetrators of trauma, injury, accidents, neglect, abuse, exploitation, and all forms of violence within complex systems using evidence-based protocols.
11. Design interdisciplinary education and crime prevention strategies to address community needs at the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention levels.
12. Provide nurse advocacy for victims of violence through unbiased, thorough documentation of assessments, and proper evidence collection and preservation in a manner useful in civil and criminal court proceedings.

**MSN-Forensic Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Abbreviation</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Semester Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>Foundations of Forensic Health Care</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>Victimology: Clinical Implications &amp; Applications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>Impact of Violence Across the Lifespan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>Forensic Investigation of Injury</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>Advanced Pathophysiology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>Advanced Pharmacology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>638*</td>
<td>Adv Clinical Practicum &amp; Project (90 clh)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>Quality Improvement and Informatics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>Scholarship: Integration and Application</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>Advanced Health Assessment (45 clh)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>Prevention and Population Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>Leadership and Health Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students select two or more hours of elective from the following choices:

- NURS 610: Forensic Sexual Assault Examiner (3)
- NURS 611: Clinical Pharmacology (1)
- NURS 612: Human Trafficking (1)
- NURS 613: Forensic Photography (1)
- NURS 614: Healthcare Policy & Ethics (1)
- NURS 615: Forensic Mental Health (1)

Total hours: 36

*This course requires a preceptor. Preceptors must be secured at least 6 months prior to the first day of the semester.

clh – clinical learning hours
Master of Science in Nursing - Family Nurse Practitioner Track

Student Outcomes
At the completion of this program the graduate will:

1. Conduct a comprehensive and systematic assessment of health and illness incorporating ethical, diverse and culturally sensitive approaches.
2. Design, implement, and evaluate therapeutic and preventative interventions based on nursing science, and other sciences and humanities.
3. Develop and sustain therapeutic relationships and partnerships with individuals, families or populations.
4. Use effective communication strategies to develop, participate, and lead interprofessional teams and partnerships.
5. Demonstrate advanced levels of clinical judgment, systems thinking, and accountability in designing, delivering, and evaluating evidence-based care to improve patient outcomes.
6. Demonstrates organizational and systems leadership in the provision of quality and safe patient care.
7. Integrate principles of quality improvement, informatics and current and emerging technologies to optimize patient outcomes.
8. Guide, mentor, and support nurses and others to achieve excellence in patient care.
9. Educate and guide individuals and groups in health-related transitions throughout the lifespan.
10. Analyze the links among practice, organizational, population, fiscal, and policy issues to advocate for improved patient outcomes.
### MSN Family Nurse Practitioner Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Abbreviation</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Semester Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS 617</td>
<td>Advanced Pathophysiology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 618</td>
<td>Advanced Pharmacology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 620</td>
<td>Advanced Practice Nurse Roles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 621</td>
<td>Diagnostics and Procedures</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 622*</td>
<td>Primary Care of Families I (135 clh)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 623*</td>
<td>Primary Care of Families II (135 clh)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 624*</td>
<td>Primary Care of Families III (135 clh)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 625*</td>
<td>Primary Care of Families- Practicum (180 clh)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 651</td>
<td>Quality Improvement and Informatics (16 clh)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 652</td>
<td>Scholarship: Integration and Application</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 653</td>
<td>Advanced Health Assessment (45 clh)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 654</td>
<td>Prevention and Population Health</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 656</td>
<td>Leadership and Health Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This course requires a preceptor. Preceptors must be secured at least 6 months prior to the first day of the semester.*

clh – clinical learning hours
Graduate Forensic Health Care Certificate

Student Outcomes
At the completion of the certificate program, the graduate will be prepared to:

1. Respond to victims and perpetrators of trauma, injury, accidents, neglect, abuse, exploitation, and all forms of violence using evidence-based protocols within systems.
2. Translate current research and policies to clinical encounters with persons experiencing violence, injury, trauma, accidents, neglect, abuse, exploitation, and all forms of victimization.
3. Articulate the role and processes of criminal and civil courts in seeking justice for victims of violence.
4. Document techniques to collect and preserve evidence with integrity, competence, and respect.
5. Formulate interdisciplinary approaches within systems to address health-related problems associated with accidents, trauma, crime, victimization, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and all forms of violence.
6. Integrate knowledge of cultural diversity in working with victims and survivors of violence.
7. Advocate for the needs and interests of victims of violence to improve access to services.
8. Design interdisciplinary education and crime prevention strategies to address community needs at the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention levels.
## Forensic Health Care Certificate Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Abbreviation</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Semester Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>Foundations of Forensic Health Care</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>Victimology: Clinical Implications &amp; Applications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>Impact of Violence Across the Lifespan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>Forensic Investigation of Injury</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose 2 hours (or more) from the electives below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Abbreviation</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Semester Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>Forensic Sexual Assault Examiner</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>Clinical Pharmacology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>Human Trafficking</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>Forensic Photography</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Policy &amp; Ethics Interpersonal Violence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>Forensic Mental Health</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 12
Chapter 3: Admissions Procedures and New Student Requirements

Applicants are encouraged to review the CON website for admission procedures and requirements. Deadlines will vary depending on the track to which the student applies.

Application Requirements
Requirements for admission include the following:

1. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree from a Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, or National League for Nursing accredited institution. (Note: Successful completion of the BSN must occur prior to the desired term of entry)
2. Active, unencumbered RN license
3. NursingCAS Application and application fee
4. Official transcripts from all schools attended must be sent to NursingCAS
5. Apply Texas Graduate Application and application fee
6. Elementary or Applied Statistics three semester credit hour class with a minimum grade of “C” completed by the desired term of entry
7. Professional resume
8. Three (3) professional references
9. Essay/Personal statement submitted through NursingCAS
10. Recommended minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in all undergraduate course work
11. Recommended cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in the last 60 hours of undergraduate course work
12. Applicants with foreign credentials must submit a transcript evaluation report to NursingCAS and official documents to the University upon admission
13. Applicants from countries other than the United States must meet the international admission requirements for those seeking a graduate degree according to Texas A&M University policy. Because the majority of course content is delivered online, international students may not be eligible to apply.
14. Admissions interview, if requested by Selection Committee.

NOTE: The College of Nursing does not require the GRE or the GMAT.

Additional Requirements for International Applicants
In addition to each program’s stated application requirements, applicants with foreign transcripts must also include a transcript evaluation from an evaluation service which is a
member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services. We require a course-by-course evaluation for college/university transcripts from non-U.S. institutions. The report should reflect course by course U.S. grade point equivalencies and semester credits received. These reports must be sent directly from the evaluation agency in the original sealed envelope to NursingCAS. Send to: NursingCAS, P.O. Box 9201, Watertown, MA 02471. If being sent via UPS or FEDEX, send to NursingCAS Transcript Department, 311 Arsenal Street, Suite #15, Watertown, MA 02472.

If admitted to the College of Nursing, applicants with foreign transcripts must submit the native language transcript along with an official English translation. These documents must include all original seals and/or signatures and be approved by the Texas A&M Office of Admissions prior to enrollment in the program.

**English Proficiency**

Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit proof of English proficiency to be eligible for review. English proficiency can be demonstrated through various criteria. See more on this requirement on the International Admissions website.

**Other Requirements**

International applicants will be expected to present declaration of finances, F-1 travel documents and additional documentation upon acceptance to the College of Nursing. All deadlines required by the Office of International Student Services must be met.

**Admission Criteria**

Admission to the college will be competitive and applicants will be evaluated on the following basis:

- Cumulative GPA on all undergraduate course work
- GPA on the last 60 hours of undergraduate course work
- Admission essay(s)
- References – three academic and/or professional references
- Volunteer/community/military service
- Leadership/involvement/awards in professional activities
- TOEFL score, required of international applicants only
- Interview, if requested by Selection Committee
- History of withdraws, repeats, or failures will place applicant at a disadvantage

For applicants to the M.S.N.-FNP specialty, 1 to 2 years of work experience as a baccalaureate RN is preferred.
After a review of all applicant credentials, some applicants may be asked to interview. A variety of factors are considered in the interview process to include: compatibility of applicant's goals and interests with the purposes and values of the program; strength of support letters, interpersonal communication skills, critical thinking skills, service and social consciousness, and resilience and adaptability. Faculty who teach in the specialty area participate in the review of applicant criteria, interviews, and decisions regarding final admission offers.

**Provisional Admission**

Provisional admission may be offered to a limited number of applicants who do not meet the admission criteria for full admission. Students admitted provisionally are not eligible for federal or state financial aid. Applicants admitted under provisional status may progress to full status after successfully fulfilling the following conditions:

- Successfully complete 12 semester credit hours as outlined in the M.S.N. curriculum plan earning a minimum grade of “B” in all attempted courses
- Q drops are not allowed
- Withdrawals are not allowed
- If conditions are not met in the time allotted, the student will be dismissed from the program

Criteria used in extending this conditional offer will be determined by the Admissions Selection Committee. Applicants may not request this type of admission offer. Students admitted under provisional status who have not achieved full status by successfully completing 12 semester credit hours are not eligible to request a LOA. If a student has to drop out for any reason, the offer will no longer apply.

**Transfer Policies**

**Transfer of Credit**

The consideration of the transfer of course credits are done in compliance with TAMU policy, as outlined in the Graduate catalogue and reproduced below.

Courses for which transfer credits are sought must have been completed with a grade of B or greater, completed no more than six (6) years prior to the start of the first practicum course (NURS 622), and must be approved by the program coordinator. These courses must not have been used previously for another degree. Except for officially approved cooperative doctoral programs, credit for thesis or dissertation research or the equivalent is not transferable. Credit for “internship” coursework in any form is not transferable. Courses taken in residence at an accredited
U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater might be considered for transfer credit if the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Credit for coursework taken by extension is not transferable. Coursework in which no formal grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are given (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit.

Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any college or university must be shown in semester credit hours, or equated to semester credit hours. Grades for courses completed at other institutions, except for the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center, are not included in computing the GPR on the final transcript. An official transcript from the university at which transfer courses are taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

Masters students may transfer a maximum of 12 hours of courses or one-third of the total hours of the degree plan, whichever number is greater, from an approved institution upon the advice of their advisory committee.

**Transfer from Another Nursing Program**
A student who has been enrolled in another MSN program may request admission as a transfer applicant. Criteria used in the decision will be based on the following criteria:

- Applicants must have a minimum 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) on all nursing coursework completed.
- Admission will be dependent on space available. Spaces in clinical courses are tightly controlled by both accreditation and clinical agency policies.
- The following courses: Advanced Pathophysiology, Advanced Pharmacology, Advanced Health Assessment cannot be considered for transfer credit unless they were taken within six (6) years from the semester in which the student will enroll in the first practicum course (NURS 622).
- Courses accepted for transfer must be similar in content and credit to the College of Nursing course. Applicants must present a course description and course syllabus for review to the Office of Student Affairs before credit will be considered.
- No grade below a “B” in any nursing course will be accepted for transfer.
- Applicants may be required to submit a letter from the Dean of the previous program stating they were a student in good standing at the time of their withdrawal.
- Other documentation subject to the discretion of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
Process for Obtaining Transfer Credit
To determine the equivalence of courses for transfer credit, the student will submit the appropriate form to the academic advisor, requesting credit for the course(s), with rationale. The student should also submit the course syllabus and appropriate supporting documents at least one month prior to the first class day. The syllabus and other documentation will be submitted to graduate faculty for review. The reviewing faculty will submit a recommendation for approval or disapproval. The advisor will then notify the student of the decision.

Internal Transfer Policy
Students may request to transfer from one MSN specialty area to another within the CON without having to reapply. For more information on this process, students should speak with their student affairs academic advisor. A decision to allow a student to transfer internally is dependent on space available and academic standing. Student must be in good academic standing defined as maintaining a minimum grade of “B” in all courses, a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale and non-probationary status for conduct related issues. Students who apply and meet minimum academic qualifications are not guaranteed acceptance into their requested program. Students admitted under provisional status may not request a transfer until they have fully met the terms of their conditional admission. Students meeting academic minimum qualifications are not guaranteed acceptance as each request will be considered on a variety of factors. To request an internal transfer, students should initiate the request through their academic advisor. Program coordinators in consultation with the Assistant Dean for Graduate Nursing Education will make the final determination on internal transfer requests.

The following items may be reviewed or requested:

1) Review of academic history;
2) Essay written as noted on the CON website for the particular track;
3) Interview by program coordinator and/or faculty committee;
4) Successful completion of at least 12 semester credit hours in the track to which they are admitted.

Immunizations Policy
As an academic health science center dedicated to educating health care professionals and biomedical researchers, the university has a responsibility to support the health of its students, faculty, and staff, as well as the people in the community with whom they come in contact. Toward this end, the College of Nursing follows immunization guidelines for students, faculty, and staff based on probability of exposure. These guidelines are consistent with the immunization requirements of Texas Administrative Code, Title 25,
Health Services, Part 1, Chapter 97, Subchapter B¹ and recommendations for adult immunizations from the Centers for Disease Control. Prior to registration for the first academic semester, students must give evidence of the following immunizations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VACCINE</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis</td>
<td>one dose of vaccine within the past 10 years (valid through projected graduation date Td, Tdap, DPT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles (Rubeola)</td>
<td>two doses (at least 4 weeks apart) if born after 1957 or positive titer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumps</td>
<td>one dose or positive titer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubella (German Measles)</td>
<td>one dose or positive titer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influenza</td>
<td>required for all students (must receive the seasonal vaccine each year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacterial Meningitis (MCV4, MPSV4)</td>
<td>one dose within the 5 year period immediately preceding first class day; *exceptions based on age &gt; 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella (chickenpox)</td>
<td>one dose for students who received this vaccine prior to 13 years of age; OR two doses for students who were not vaccinated before their 13th birthday; OR proof of exposure OR a positive titer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B*</td>
<td>a completed series of 3 doses of vaccine and serological confirmation of immunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis (TB) skin test or approved blood assay</td>
<td>Skin or blood assay test required annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Hepatitis B series must be initiated prior to enrollment in order to have all doses completed shortly after entry into clinical experiences. For Hepatitis B, a surface antibody serologic marker (blood titer) is required 6 weeks after receiving the last dose to ensure immunity or the series will have to be repeated. If vaccinations received in prior years, blood titer still required to ensure immunity.

Students with immune-compromised conditions or chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease or diabetes mellitus are encouraged to consider obtaining pneumococcal vaccinations. All costs associated with obtaining immunizations are the sole responsibility of the student. Female students are advised that pregnancy is a contraindication to administration of certain vaccinations and should consult their physician for specific and additional information regarding vaccine administration.
The College of Nursing uses CastleBranch as the manager of compliance requirements. Students must complete all items requested through their portal. The College of Nursing may be asked to provide proof of immunizations to authorized parties as a pre-requisite to participation in advanced clinical experiences at a particular site. In that event, students are requested to sign release of student information request forms and are bound by their stipulations.

**Insurance**

**Health**
All nursing students are required to carry and maintain health insurance. Students who presume that they are still covered on their parents’ policies are advised to confirm this with their insurance carriers. Some policies delete coverage for family members who: reach a certain age, get married, no longer reside with parents, etc. Knowing these conditions in advance will permit time to obtain coverage if needed. Under optimal conditions for a healthy individual this could take a month or more.

Any enrolled Texas A&M University System student taking at least six (6) credit hours of classes is eligible to enroll in the Blue Cross Blue Shield Academic HealthPlans. Students are encouraged to compare various plans before purchasing a plan. Medi-share type plans are acceptable. Students must submit proof of insurance coverage by the end of the first month of enrollment. The following benefits are strongly recommended to provide minimum coverage: in-patient hospital, medical/surgical, and physical medicine expenses as well as preventive and emergency care. Students are strongly encouraged to consider health and mental health insurance coverage in excess of the required minimum for several reasons, not the least of which is that you may become ill or injured and have bills that could present an unexpected burden.

Should students require medical treatment due to situations that may arise while in clinical rotations, i.e. needle stick or other incidences, neither the hospitals, clinical agencies or the College of Nursing are responsible to cover any treatment that might be needed. Any medical charges incurred are the responsibility of the student.

**International Student Insurance Requirements**
As an enrollment requirement with the Texas A&M University Health Science Center, students who are not citizens or permanent residents of the United States will be required to have insurance to include medical evacuation and repatriation.

**Professional Liability**
All nursing majors in clinical settings must be covered by malpractice insurance. The cost for liability insurance will be the responsibility of the student (approximate cost each year is
$30) and will be included in the student's tuition and fee statement. The student policy covers only the work done as students during clinical courses and expires on the date of graduation. The policy does not cover students while employed in clinical agencies. Students employed in a health care setting must obtain a separate policy for liability coverage if required by that institution.

**Criminal Background Checks Policy**
Because health care providers are entrusted with the health, safety and welfare of patients, have access to controlled substances and confidential information, and operate in settings that require the exercise of good judgment and ethical behavior, criminal background checks are required. All students in the College of Nursing must submit to and satisfactorily complete a criminal background review as a condition of admission.

Students in the College of Nursing are required to submit to a background check. This will be initiated through the CastleBranch compliance portal. The student is responsible for the cost of screening.

An offer of admission will not be final until the completion of the background check with results that are deemed favorable. Admission may be denied or rescinded based on the review. Students who refuse to submit to a background check may be dismissed from the program. All students are expected to obey federal, state, and local laws. Criminal history information that occurs while a student is enrolled in the program must be self-disclosed to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs no later than five (5) business days following the charge of any crime. Depending on the circumstances of the charge, student access to clinical experiences may be impacted. Failure to disclose information may result in dismissal from the program.

Background check results will be confidential. A student who has a break in their enrollment is required to complete a new background check. A break in enrollment is defined as non-enrollment of at least one semester.

**Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification**
Each student must obtain certification in Basic Life Support or Advanced Life Support for Health Care Providers by the designated deadline prior to the first class day. This certification must be maintained throughout enrollment. If your initial training will expire during the course of your enrollment, you will be required to present proof through the CastleBranch portal that you have recertified. Students who have not submitted appropriate documentation by the designated deadline or upon request will be dropped from all classes for the subsequent semester.
Other Requirements
Each student receives a “New Student Guide” that provides additional compliance requirements to include urine drug screening, clinical training, etc. It is the student’s responsibility to review the guide carefully and meet all compliance by the deadline noted in the CastleBranch portal. Failure to stay compliant may result in the student getting blocked from the Learning Management System portal and not being allowed to complete practicum experiences until the situation has been resolved.
Chapter 4: Student Services & Registrar Procedures

Howdy is a web portal that provides applicants, students, faculty, and staff convenient access to Texas A&M University web services. Howdy is available by going to https://howdy.tamu.edu/ and logging in using the assigned NetID.

Howdy allows students to view and update Texas A&M information, access TAMU Email, and a variety of other web links. Access includes, but is not limited to, the following resources.

My Record tab includes the following channels:

- Graduation
- Registration
  - Registration Time Assignment
  - Search Class Schedule
  - Add or Drop Classes
  - Registration Status (includes View Holds; Registration History)
  - View My Schedule
  - Final Exam Schedules
  - Change Class/KINE options
- Grades and Transcripts
  - Grades
  - Credit by Examination
  - Official Transcript (Order Official Transcript)
  - View Unofficial Transcript
  - View Holds
- My Information
  - Withhold Directory Information
  - View/Update Contact Information (includes Addresses/Phones; Emergency)
- Degree Evaluation
  - Application for Graduation
  - View Degree Evaluation
  - Excess Credit Hours Rule
- Academic Resources

My Finances tab includes the following channels:

- Billing – Tuition & Fees
  - Pay My Tuition/Manage My Account
- Refunds
• Scholarships and Financial Aid

**Student Life** tab includes the following channels:
- Parking and Transportation
- Student Involvement
- Purchase Optional Services
- Employment and Internships

**Student Business Services**

Tuition and fee statements are accessed and may be paid through the [Howdy portal](#). For more tuition and billing information, contact [Student Business Services](#). When mailing payment, please include the student's name and UIN number on the check to ensure accurate posting of payments.

**Office of Financial Aid**

All financial aid is processed through the Texas A&M Financial Aid Office. The office is located in the Pavilion on the 2nd floor. Or you may contact an advisor by email at [hscfinancialaid@tamu.edu](mailto:hscfinancialaid@tamu.edu).

**Scholarships**

The College of Nursing is committed to helping students fund their education. The CON has a limited number of internal scholarships available. To view Texas A&M University and College of Nursing available scholarships, go to the [Scholarships](#) webpage. Civic groups, foundations and other organizations have additional scholarships available for nursing students.

**Registration Process**

Registration for classes is coordinated by the [Office of the Registrar](#) in cooperation with the CON. Tuition and fees are payable in full at the designated date (see the Student Business Services website for tuition due dates) unless arrangements for installment payments have been completed with the [Office of Student Business Services](#).

To be eligible for registration, the student must have been officially admitted as a new student and must have satisfied all admission requirements, or must be a continuing student. Any student ineligible due to an academic, administrative or disciplinary sanction or hold will be blocked from registration until all sanctions are removed. Only the unit that placed a hold may lift a hold. If tuition and fees have not been collected by the due date, the Office of the Registrar will drop the student administratively from all classes.

Registration opening and deadline dates are published on the Registrar’s website. It is the
responsibility of the student to register for the appropriate courses according to their degree plan.

**Cancellation of Registration**
A student may cancel registration after payment through the Office of the Registrar without financial penalty (with the exception of the Matriculation Fee) if the student does so before the official first class day. The student is regarded as never having registered. Note: students receiving Title IV financial aid must advise the Office of Financial Aid if they cancel their registration.

**Late Registration**
Late registration may be permitted only until the publicized late registration dates and upon payment of the appropriate late fee. Fees are listed in the Texas A&M Health Science Center catalog.

**Verification of Enrollment**
The Office of the Registrar will provide enrollment verification when requested. A link to Student Self Service Enrollment Verification is accessed via Howdy. Under the MyRecord tab, access the Verification of Enrollment link in the Records and Grades Channel.

**Withdrawal and Q Drop**
Withdrawal from all courses or non-registration/non-enrollment during a fall or spring semester constitutes withdrawal from the College of Nursing. A student not planning to register for any courses in the next fall, spring, or summer semester is expected to withdraw from the program or must take a leave of absence (See Leave of Absence section). Students who withdraw from a graduate program are required to go through the full application process for readmission to the College of Nursing.

Students who are taking more than one course during a semester who want to drop one of the courses but continue in other courses may initiate a ‘Q’ drop. CON Progression Policy does not allow a student to ‘Q’ drop or withdraw from a course in which the enrollment is the second attempt in the course.

Any student wishing to withdraw or ‘Q’ drop a course should speak with their Student Affairs academic advisor and follow appropriate CON policy to remain in good standing. The academic advisor will determine if a Leave of Absence and/or change in degree plan should be initiated. In addition, the advisor will record the student's grade at the time of withdrawal or 'Q' drop if student has not yet earned a final grade in COMPASS prior to final action taken through the Registrar's office. An official withdrawal is initiated by the student online in Howdy and routed to the student's Dean or designee for approval. A 'Q' drop
requires the student to complete a ‘Q’ drop electronic form and submit it to the advisor and Dean or designee for approval. A student may not ‘Q’ drop or withdraw after the deadline period ends. See the Registrar’s website or contact your advisor for dates.

For additional information about withdrawing from the University, see Part I, Section 17 of the Texas A&M University Student Rules.

Students are reminded that withdrawing from the University does not dismiss the repayment of student loans borrowed and may impact payment and grace periods. To learn more about repaying your student loans, please visit http://studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans and to find your current loan history, see http://nslds.ed.gov. For questions, contact Scholarships & Financial Aid at (979) 845-3236.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

Under unusual circumstances a student may petition for a leave of absence. An approved leave of absence is required for any term in which a student is not enrolled for course work. Graduate students at the College of Nursing may request a leave of absence of no more than two semesters. A student on leave may not use any University facilities nor is the student entitled to receive advice from any member of the faculty. Students admitted under provisional status who have not achieved full status by successfully completing 12 semester credit hours are not eligible to request a LOA.

Prior to withdrawal from all courses in any semester, students must meet with their Academic Advisor at least two weeks in advance of the withdrawal deadline. A formal leave of absence request must be submitted by the student and approved by the Program Coordinator prior to the withdrawal deadline.

When a student wishes to take a leave of absence at the College of Nursing of no more than one year, the following must be met:

- Students must be in good academic standing to request a Leave of Absence.
- Students must meet with their Academic Advisor at least two weeks in advance of the withdrawal deadline to complete a Leave of Absence Request Form.
- Students receiving financial aid should consult the Office of Financial Aid before withdrawing/dropping a course or taking a leave of absence to see if their financial aid will change with the planned change in courses.
- Once the leave of absence has been approved, the student should file an official petition for a leave of absence through the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS); A petition for leave of absence is initiated by the student through the Document Processing Submission System (DPSS).
Prior to returning from an approved leave of absence, students must submit appropriate compliance requirements including background check, drug screen, proof of current, unencumbered licensure and other documents as requested by the Office of Student Affairs.

A student who returns to the University after an approved leave of absence of no more than one year will not be required to submit an application for readmission to the Office of Graduate Admission.

If proper communication is not initiated by the student and/or the student does not return from LOA, the student may be ineligible to return to the College of Nursing. For students on LOA for medical reasons, a letter recommending the student is cleared to return to the CON program from a health care provider may be required.

All periods of absence after the date of first enrollment may be counted toward the seven year program completion requirement for graduate students. For approved leave of absence, i.e. medical and military, the time period for the completion of the degree will stop with the leave and begin when the student returns to the program. Other types of leave may not stop the time limit for the degree. A student should refer to the sections on Time Limits for masters and doctoral programs in the Texas A&M University Graduate Catalogue.

An international student should visit with an International Student Services advisor to find out how a Leave of Absence may impact his/her stay in or his/her re-entry into the U.S.

Discontinuance of study without permission from the University does not constitute a leave of absence.

Pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, and recovery are justification for a leave of absence for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student's physician, at the conclusion of which the student shall be reinstated to the status which she held when the leave began (Title IX Education Amendments, Section 106.40(b)(5)). Prompt and appropriate communication by the student is necessary to ensure appropriate accommodations are provided. While retroactive requests will be considered, making arrangements in advance is preferred, and requests that are untimely may be denied on that basis.

**Military Leave**

Withdrawal due to a call-up to active military duty is not processed through the online withdrawal system. A special procedure has been established for students who must withdraw from the University for this reason. See the following web page or contact the
Registrar’s Office for more information specific to students who withdraw under these circumstances:

http://registrar.tamu.edu/Courses,-Registration,-Scheduling/Registration-Enrollment-Information/Withdrawing-From-the-University

Readmission
Following a break in enrollment of one year or more, graduate students at Texas A&M University must apply for readmission. Readmission procedures parallel those for admission in that official transcripts of college-level work not already on file must be submitted. Minimum GPAs must be met and, if a program change is involved, any associated requirements must be satisfied.

A graduate student who has withdrawn from the College of Nursing for one year or more (due to personal reasons, expired LOA status, or dismissal) who wishes to reenter the College, must follow the procedure as outlined below:

- Complete online application and meet admission criteria for full admission as outlined on the College of Nursing website
- Submit any transcripts which include coursework not already on file at Texas A&M
- Submit a letter requesting readmission to the Academic Advisor describing his/her activities since the last enrollment in the College of Nursing and the reasons the applicant thinks the request for readmission should be approved

All requests for readmission must be made prior to the application deadline for the semester in which readmission is requested. The College of Nursing Graduate Admissions Progression Committee reviews all requests for readmission to the College of Nursing MSN programs.

Absence without Permission
Students who leave school without officially withdrawing or without an approved leave of absence, or who fail to return after a leave of absence, may be ineligible to return to the College of Nursing. See readmission policy. Students who, without permission from the Student Affairs Dean or designee of the school in which they are enrolled, discontinue attending a course or clinical experience without completing the established drop/withdrawal procedures will, at the end of the enrollment period, be assigned a grade(s) based upon the requirements of the entire course or clinical experience.
**Continuous Registration Requirements**
A student in a graduate degree program is required to be in continuous registration until all requirements for the degree have been completed. The continuous registration requirement may be satisfied by registering In Absentia. An international student may have additional registration requirements depending on his/her visa status. He/she should consult with the International Student Services website or an International Student Services advisor to obtain current information on these requirements. A student who does not comply with the continuous registration requirement will be blocked from registration. If a break in enrollment occurs for one academic year or longer, the student must apply for readmission to the graduate degree program.

**Course Auditing (Visiting Classes)**
Please refer to Texas A&M University Student Rule 2.1 for information regarding visiting (auditing) classes.

**Full-Time Student**
A full-time graduate student is defined as one who is registered for 9 semester credit hours during a fall or spring semester and 6 semester credit hours in a 10-week summer semester. A “W” grade does not count toward the certification of enrollment status.
Chapter 5: Academic Rules, Policies, and Procedures

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

Aggie Code of Honor
Texas A&M University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields and assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. Living in accordance with the Aggie Code of Honor is critical to these ideals, to the goal of assuming a place of preeminence in higher education, and to the development of the whole student.

The Aggie Honor System Office (AHSO) administers the Texas A&M University Honor System. As such, it is the central office responsible for maintaining records and coordinating communication, prevention, training, remediation, and adjudication efforts for the Texas A&M University Honor System. Additionally, it shall provide assistance to members of the University Community when questions or concerns arise pertaining to academic misconduct. It oversees the operations and functioning of the Honor Council, a body of students and faculty established to hear and adjudicate honor cases. Instructors as well as students may report a violation to the AHSO. View Student Rule 20 for complete information.

Student Rules
Each student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with and to comply with the Texas A&M University Student Rules. All rules are accessible at: student-rules.tamu.edu. The Texas A&M University Student Rules are broken down into three sections, with additional information provided in the appendixes:

- **Part I: Academic Rules** (Rules 1 - 22 & 61)
- **Part II: Student Life Rules** (Rules 23 - 44)
- **Part III: Student Grievance Procedures** (Rules 45 - 60)
- **Appendixes**

The Texas A&M Office of the Dean of Student Life has primary jurisdiction over reports of behaviors that implicate rules contained in the Student Code of Conduct. For rules and regulations governing the Student Conduct Code, see Student Rule 24. The CON has
primary jurisdiction over reports of behaviors that implicate the Professional Standards of the academic program.

**Academic integrity**

Academic integrity is an essential force in the academic life of a university. It enhances the quality of education and celebrates the genuine achievements of others. It is, without reservation, a responsibility of all members of the Texas A&M University Community to actively promote academic integrity. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of academic dishonesty is not a neutral act -- failure to confront and deter it will reinforce, perpetuate, and enlarge the scope of such misconduct. As such, a primary responsibility assumed by Texas A&M students is to promote the ideals of the Aggie Code of Honor. Various methods of encouraging integrity exist, such as setting an example for new students, education through student organizations, and student-to-student moral suasion. Students have the responsibility to confront their peers engaging in compromising situations, and if unsuccessful, to report the matter to the Aggie Honor System Office. Self-reporting is encouraged and may be considered a mitigating circumstance in the sanctioning phase of a particular case.

Instructors are expected to take proactive steps to promote academic integrity. Instructors should have an open discussion about academic integrity with students in their courses early in the semester. Instructors and staff share in the responsibility and authority to challenge and make known acts that violate the Aggie Code of Honor. Additionally, instructors are expected to adhere to the policy pertaining to the reporting and adjudication of violations of the Aggie Code of Honor. Initiating formal procedures is a necessary and obligatory component of this shared responsibility.

Collaboration and sharing information are characteristics of academic communities. These become violations when they involve dishonesty or are used in ways that give a student an unfair advantage. Instructors shall make clear to students their expectations about collaboration and information sharing. Students should seek clarification when in doubt. While Texas A&M values and affirms all cultures, it is important to recognize that only one standard of academic integrity will be tolerated; this is the Aggie Code of Honor.

If the alleged misconduct meets the definition of "misconduct in research or scholarship" under [System Regulation 15.99.03 - Ethics in Research and Scholarship](https://www.tamu.edu/rrc/policy/reg-15-99-03.html) and relates to federally funded research, either by an active federal research project or the use of data that was compiled in whole or in part with federal funds the procedures set out 15.99.03 and [University Rule 15.99.03.M1 - Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship](https://www.tamu.edu/rrc/policy/dean-of-science/ru-15-99-03-m1.html) will apply.
Violations of academic rules are likely to violate the Code of Conduct for Nurses as well. It is not uncommon for violations of an academic nature to also be reviewed for possible disciplinary sanctions. For student guidance related to any academic rules or polices, please contact your Student Affairs advisor.

**Definitions of Academic Misconduct**
Definitions of academic misconduct may be found in Student Rule 20.1.2.3. They include cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submissions, plagiarism, complicity, abuse and misuse of access, violation of college rules, and university rules on research. Clarification on each of these areas is provided under Student Rule 20. The listing is not, however, exclusive of any other act that may reasonably be called academic dishonesty. Students should also be familiar with Student Rule 52 and Student Rule 53. All student rules may be found at the [Student Rules website](#).

Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one’s work, should the instructor request it, is sufficient grounds to initiate an academic dishonesty case.

**Other Types of Conduct Concerns**
Student rule violations outside of the academic classroom environment are reported through [Student Conflict Resolution Services](#).

To report a behavioral concern on the part of a member of the student body, faculty, or staff, refer to the [Tell Somebody Reporting process](#).

To report instances of suspected waste, fraud, or a suspected ethics violation, use the [Texas A&M University Systems Risk, Fraud, and Misconduct Hotline](#).
Grading Policies
A four-point (4.0) grading system is utilized in the College of Nursing. The grading scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Grade Points per Credit Hour</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A – Excellent</td>
<td>Four grade points per credit hour</td>
<td>90 - 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B – Good</td>
<td>Three grade points per credit hour</td>
<td>80 - 89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C* – Fair</td>
<td>Two grade points per credit hour</td>
<td>70 - 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D* - Poor</td>
<td>One grade point per credit hour</td>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F* – Failure</td>
<td>No grade points</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I – Incomplete</td>
<td>No grade points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG – No Grade</td>
<td>Grade removed from record, no grade points, hours not included in GPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Course dropped with no penalty, no grade points, hours not included in GPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S – Satisfactory (C or above)</td>
<td>No grade points, hours not included in GPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U – Unsatisfactory (D or F)</td>
<td>No grade points, hours included in GPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X – No grade submitted</td>
<td>No grade points, hours not included in GPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W – Withdraw</td>
<td>No grade points, hours not included in GPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Minimum academic requirements for retention in the graduate program are a grade of “B” in all courses.
Grade Rounding Policy
All graded assignments and assessments (exams, quizzes) will be calculated to the hundredth (i.e. 2 decimal points). Grades will not be rounded. The final grade of 80% or higher is considered a passing grade for the course in the graduate program.

Progression

Good Academic Standing
To maintain good academic standing, an MSN student must make a minimum grade of “B” in all courses, maintain a minimum cumulative 3.0 GPR (on a 4.0 scale), and not be on probationary status. If a student fails to meet the requirements above, he or she will be placed on academic probation. See student rule 12.4: Scholastic Deficiency for additional information.

Time Limitations for Completion of Degrees
Candidates for the MSN are expected to complete all requirements for completion of the respective degree within a maximum time period of seven (7) consecutive years. Students have the obligation to make satisfactory progress toward completion of all degree requirements. A minimum standard to measure degree progress requires satisfactory completion of 75 percent of attempted course credit hours each academic year.

Academic Progression Criteria
Rules for program progression are as follows:

- Students must meet all co-requisites or prerequisites to progress in the program. Some nursing courses are sequential and may not be taken out of sequence.
- Some nursing courses are sequential and may not be taken out of sequence. Progression into the next semester's nursing courses may be contingent upon the successful completion (grade of B or better) of all previous semester courses.
- Grades of C, D, F, or U are not acceptable in graduate nursing courses.
- Students who receive a grade of C, D, F or U in any course in any given semester will be automatically placed on probation and notified in writing of probation status. The student will remain on probation until the course is repeated with a B or better. The course can only be taken through the Texas A&M CON unless approved by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
- A second attempt in a course cannot be “Q” dropped. This applies if the first attempt grade was a “Q” or a failing grade. The grade earned in a second attempt will stand.
- Students who have two nursing course failures or earn a grade of C, D or F upon repetition of a nursing course are ineligible to continue enrollment in the CON.
• Students who are unsuccessful in meeting clinical objectives of a clinical course will receive a final grade of “F”, regardless of what the current grade is for the didactic portion of the course.
• If a student repeats a course which he/she has failed in the CON, the official grade for the final graduation degree audit is the last one earned. See Student Rule 10 regarding calculation of the cumulative GPA.

In addition to obtaining grades of B or above in all nursing courses, students must demonstrate their ability to deliver safe care to patients at all times. Failure to provide safe patient care may result in immediate withdrawal from the course and, potentially, dismissal from the CON.

Q Drop Policy
A student may drop a course with no record during the first 12 class days of a fall or spring semester and during the first four class days of a summer term. Following this period, if approved by the dean of the college or his or her designee, a student may drop a course without penalty through the 60th class day of a fall or spring semester, the 15th class day of a summer term or the 35th class day of a 10-week summer semester. The symbol Q shall be given to indicate a drop without penalty. For more information on Q drop, contact your academic advisor.

Q drops for students who fail the practicum objectives of a course for safety, competence, or professionalism are not allowed. The student will receive a grade “F” regardless of what the current grade is for the didactic portion of the course. In addition, students must withdraw and/or may not enroll in any other clinical courses until the situation has been resolved or the student has been successfully remediated.

Incomplete “I” Grade Policy
An incomplete grade (“I”) may be assigned when there is unfinished work and the student is in good academic standing (at least a “B” grade) in the course. A student who requests an incomplete must initiate contact with the faculty member. This discussion will be converted to a written Incomplete Contract and signed before the last class meeting of the semester in which the “I” will be recorded.

The instructor shall give this grade only when the deficiency is due to an authorized absence or other cause beyond the control of the student. When an instructor reports an incomplete grade to the registrar, he or she will fill out an “Incomplete Grade Report,” which is filed with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Office of the Registrar. Copies should be provided to the student and to the student’s academic dean(s). This report includes (1) a statement of the instructor’s reason for awarding the incomplete grade and (2) a statement concerning the remaining work to be completed before the last
day of scheduled classes of the next fall or spring semester in which the student enrolls in
the university unless the student's academic Dean or designee, with the consent of the
instructor grants an extension of time for good reason. The student and the faculty
member should discuss a plan, including a schedule, for completing the remaining work
prior to the conferral of an “I”. All requirements of the contract must be satisfied in order
for the student to progress in the program.

A grade of incomplete will be marked on the grade roster at the end of the term. It is the
responsibility of the instructor to initiate and complete a Change of Grade form. An “I” must
be completed before the end of the subsequent semester in which the “I” was given. The
grade of “I” will automatically become an “F” if not removed within the prescribed time
limit; however, an extension may be requested by the instructor when the Request for an
Incomplete Grade form is submitted with the submission of grades, provided that a
definitive time frame for completion is presented. An extension will be granted only for
circumstances beyond the control of the student.

Grade Disputes and Graduate Appeals Process
The instructor of the class is the primary authority with respect to a student's proficiency
and final grade in the course as noted in Student Rule 48, Grade Disputes. A student who
believes that his or her final grade reflects a capricious, arbitrary or prejudiced academic
evaluation must follow the resolution procedures and deadlines as described in Student
Rule 53 regarding graduate student examination disputes. The Graduate Academic Appeals
Panel (GAAP) will hear appeals that involve actions against students stemming from
disputes over final course grades. The appeal process is described in detail in Student Rule
59 Graduate Academic Appeals Panel.

Academic Dismissal
Students will not be permitted to continue in the nursing program or apply for readmission
if they: 1) receive a grade of “C”, “D” or “F” in more than one course, 2) receive any
combination of grades of “C”, “D” or “F” on two attempts of the same course, or 3) receive
written email notice of dismissal from the program by the Associate Deans for Academic or
Student Affairs.

Written email notification of academic dismissal will include procedures for appeal as
outlined in Student Rule 12 and Student Rule 59 Graduate Academic Appeals Panel.

The basis for an appeal based upon dismissal for failure to adhere to College of Nursing
Professional Standards Policy will follow the procedures as noted in the section on
Violation of the Professional Code of Ethics.
Dismissed students are expected to make arrangements with the Office of Student Affairs to begin the formal withdrawal process in a timely manner. Dismissed students will be required to turn in any equipment or materials belonging to the College as well as any College ID badges.

**Evaluation of Faculty, Courses, and Program**

Student participation in faculty, course, and program evaluations is both the student’s right and responsibility. The process of evaluation is viewed as the student’s opportunity for input into curriculum development and the assessment of faculty effectiveness and student learning needs. Students are therefore encouraged to participate in all evaluations which will be done during the course of each semester. Evaluations are anonymous.

**Guidelines for Classroom Experiences**

**Intellectual Property**

All course materials developed by the faculty and posted within a course are the intellectual property of the individual faculty and can only be used for the purpose of participating in the course in which they are posted, unless express consent is given by the faculty member. Any posting of course materials outside the enrolled course violates the intellectual property rights of faculty. The student is referred to the Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: Intellectual Property and Fair Use policy, available at [http://library.tamu.edu/services/library_tutorials/academic_integrity/index.html](http://library.tamu.edu/services/library_tutorials/academic_integrity/index.html).

**Netiquette & Discussion Board Expectations Guidelines** for acceptable online classroom behavior are posted in the learning management system course syllabus. Students will be expected to adhere to rules for acceptable online behavior and communication.

Expectations for course discussion board posts and grading criteria are posted in each course learning management system website. Standard grading rubric are used throughout the graduate nursing program, although frequency and subject matter will differ per course.

**Exam Guidelines**

Exams are given by computer or occasional written tests. Be prepared with appropriate supplies for either. It is the expectation of the College that every student has a computer capable of running the required software for all assignments, exams, and quizzes. It is the responsibility of the student to download and install the software as directed.

Students are required to act with integrity according to the Aggie Honor Code while preparing for and taking all nursing school examinations. Contents of all exams are considered confidential and are not to be shared with other students through verbal, written, or electronic communications. No attempt should be made to acquire, save or
reproduce exam content. The use of outside materials (i.e. written materials, electronic devices) is strictly forbidden on all exams (except in specific cases in which the students will be notified by the exam instructor or proctor ahead of the exam). Failure to adhere to these policies could result in corrective actions up to and including dismissal from the college.

In fairness to all exam takers, it will not be possible for examination proctors to answer questions of interpretation that may arise during examinations. After completion of the examination, you may receive a preliminary raw score at the discretion of course faculty. This raw score may change following the statistical review by faculty. After faculty have completed a detailed examination question analysis and all students have taken the exam, you will receive a final examination score. Typically, examination results will be released in the Learning Management System within three to five working days following an examination, but may take longer under certain circumstances. Individual exam item appeals are not permitted. There is no curving of grades.

Refer to the syllabus provided with each CON course for detailed exam guidelines.

**Transportation Expectations**

The College of Nursing Transportation policy requires that students are responsible for arranging their own transportation and the resulting costs. The State of Texas requires all drivers to maintain minimum liability automobile insurance coverage. For more information, go to: TexasSure - Financial Responsibility Verification Program.
Chapter 6: Clinical/Practicum Policies

Clinical/Practicum Experiences
Clinical/practicum experiences enable the graduate student to experiment and acquire competence with new knowledge and skills to integrate didactic learning, promote innovative thinking, and test new potential solutions to clinical/practice or system issues. Clinical/practicum experiences will occur in a variety of settings and offer exposure to a variety of populations.

Faculty are responsible and accountable for the management of clinical learning. No clinical/practicum experience will commence prior to the establishment of a contractual agreement between the University and clinical facility/agency and completion of orientation requirements. Students should consult faculty regarding verification of a contractual agreement. Furthermore, students are required to complete all University, College of Nursing and facility/agency specific orientation and clinical paperwork (i.e. verification of nursing license, immunization records) prior to the start of clinical experiences.

Clinical/Practicum Preceptors
Clinical/practicum experiences may involve direct faculty supervision or indirect faculty supervision with the guidance of a preceptor. Faculty must approve preceptor and clinical site. Students who relocate out of state during the course of their enrollment may be unable to continue due to the regulations which many state boards of nursing impose regarding use of preceptors.

Clinical preceptors will be chosen according to the learning needs of the student, course content, the experience/expertise of the preceptor and the opportunity within the clinical agency for student access to clinical services. The criteria for selection of clinical preceptors are (adapted from the Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 219.10, Texas Board of Nursing)

1. Authorized to practice as Family Nurse Practitioner or practice in a specialty area such as Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, or
2. Currently licensed health care professionals who can provide supervision and teaching in clinical settings appropriate for advanced practice nursing.
3. Minimum one year of experience as an advanced practice nurse.
4. Practicing in a clinical agency that meets course-specific clinical learning needs.
5. Written clinical contracts obtained prior to clinical experiences.
6. Written course objectives shared with clinical preceptors.
Limited preceptor/student ratio to 1(student)/1(preceptor) or 2/1.

Course faculty will communicate regularly with the clinical preceptor and student for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating learning experiences. This communication may consist of physical site visits, conference calls, online conferences, and written communication. The faculty and the preceptor will jointly perform formative and summative evaluations of the student's clinical performance according to established criteria. The ultimate responsibility for the assignment of grades is the responsibility of the faculty. Details regarding the choice of preceptors and the roles of faculty, students and preceptors are available in the online graduate student resources housed in learning management system.

When providing clinical care, graduate students are held to professional standards for registered nurses (i.e. what would the reasonably prudent nurse with like education and experience do). This includes but is not limited to adherence to the Texas Nurse Practice Act (NPA) and Rules & Regulations, University and facility/agency policies and procedures.

Clinical paperwork and assignments are due as indicated by faculty in the course syllabus. Clinical paperwork and assignments may include but are not limited to clinical logs, reflective journals, education materials, SOAP notes, history and physical, and clinical algorithms.

Students are responsible for adhering to any additional clinical expectations and guidelines outlined in course syllabi.

Policy for Requesting Out of State Practicums

MSN FNP students are expected to complete precepted clinical experiences in Texas with a licensed and approved preceptor, reside in the state of Texas and hold an active, unencumbered RN license. Students who relocate out of state during the course of their enrollment may be unable to continue due to the regulations which many state boards of nursing impose regarding use of preceptors. Under extenuating circumstances, students may need to request clinical experiences out-of-state. These requests must be submitted in writing along with evidence of extenuating circumstances to the MSN Program Coordinator at least six (6) months in advance. Requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the MSN Program Coordinator, Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Approval for completing clinical experiences outside the State of Texas will be determined after review of the following:
• State's participation in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (nc-SARA)
• Board of Nursing rules and regulations governing “out of state” nursing programs; for example, other states may request: evidence of TAMU program accreditation, formal review and approval of TAMU programs, visits and/or presentation to the state's Board of Nursing, faculty licensure/residence in host state, etc.
• Out-of-state agency/clinical site must be willing to establish an affiliation agreement with TAMU in a timely manner so as not to delay the student's progression in the program
• Costs incurred to the Texas A&M College of Nursing

College of Nursing Administration will consider the criteria above as well as any other concerns that may arise when determining feasibility of an out-of-state clinical experience for MSN students.

Students who are admitted into the MSN Education and Forensic tracks and relocate to another state during the course of their enrollment may be unable to continue due to regulations imposed by state boards of nursing. It is the responsibility of the student to keep the program coordinator apprised of any move or change in location as this could significantly impact the student’s ability to complete required courses. Due to higher education regulations, the CON is not able to admit students from California.

**Clinical/Practicum Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled clinical experiences, arriving on time and prepared in appropriate attire. Failure to appear for scheduled clinical experiences, coming unprepared, and tardiness are viewed as unprofessional behavior and may result in failure of the course. The course syllabus will provide information regarding the attendance policy for each course. As professional courtesy, students should provide a minimum of 24-hour notice to preceptors of any expected absences. Students are responsible for completing required clinical hours within the semester timeframe.

**Clinical/Practicum Evaluation**

Clinical experiences are constructed to allow the student to apply classroom learning in the clinical area, and are vital to the educational process. Clinical learning and evaluation is guided by the course objectives. To determine if learning has taken place, the faculty and/or preceptor must evaluate the student’s learning and performance and all spheres of learning, cognitive, psychomotor and affective. Additionally, the student provides an evaluation of the clinical preceptor, clinical faculty and clinical agencies.
The evaluation process consists of:

1. Student performance by the preceptor, midterm and end-of-course
2. Student evaluation by the clinical faculty, midterm and end-of-course
3. Student evaluation of clinical preceptor, end-of-course
4. Student evaluation of clinical agency, end-of-course.

Evaluations of the preceptor and agency will be shared.

**Dress Code/Uniforms Rules**
The CON expects students to reflect professionalism and maintain high standards of appearance and grooming in the clinical setting as well as in the classroom, labs, and simulation. Clinical faculty will have final judgment on the appropriateness of student attire and corrective action for dress code violations.

**Graduate Student Dress Code:**
When graduate students’ practicum experiences are in primary, acute or long term care facilities,

- Wear either scrubs or business casual with clean and pressed white lab coats.
- The lab coat must not have any other identifiers on it. Covering identifiers with tape is not acceptable.
- Wear the CON name tag at all times in practicum experiences.
- Wear only close-toed shoes in the acute care setting.
- For safety and infection control purposes, artificial nails are prohibited.
- Minimal jewelry is advised.
- Students should be modest in their choice of heel height, skirt length and neck-line attire.

In the community setting, graduate students are expected to wear business casual with the CON name badge.

**Unsatisfactory Performance/Safety**
Faculty and/or preceptors may request that a student be removed from the clinical setting if the level of performance does not meet an acceptable level of competence. If a student is removed from a clinical setting due to concerns about professionalism, safety or competence, he/she will not be allowed to continue in other course clinical courses until the situation has been resolved. Legal and ethical grounds exist for dismissal of a student who is clinically deficient. Any unsafe act that leads to, or could lead to, injury of a patient may result in immediate removal from the clinical setting. Consequences may range from
additional written paperwork up to dismissal from the nursing program. Errors related to patient care are to be reported to preceptors, clinical faculty, and administration. Severity of errors will be analyzed by faculty to determine students' progression in the course.

Confidentiality
Students will maintain confidentiality of personal health information (PHI) adhering to University and institutional/agency policies. Violation of confidentiality, including photocopying PHI documents, taking photographs, removing documents or postings on internet social networking sites will be subject to disciplinary action (Refer to HIPAA policy).

Student Identification
College of Nursing ID badge must be worn at all times in all clinical settings when performing student related activities. Wearing a badge is an issue of security and safety, as well as a requirement for the agency and the university. Any student who forgets their ID badge will not be allowed to participate in clinical until they present with proper identification.

HIPAA Policy
All educational experiences in the College of Nursing abide by Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations. In addition, the College adheres to the new national privacy standards issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that went into effect on February 17, 2010. For further information on each of these laws, please consult Health Information Privacy.

It is the legal and ethical responsibility of CON faculty, staff, and students to use, protect, and preserve personal and confidential patient information in accordance with state and federal laws as well as university policies. If an unauthorized use or disclosure of public health information has occurred, this incident must be reported immediately to the program coordinator and practicum supervisor.

Needlestick Guidelines
The College of Nursing endorses standard precautions as the single best strategy to reduce the risk of bloodborne pathogen (BBP) exposure. Healthcare personnel are at risk for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens, including hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Exposures occur through needlesticks or cuts from other sharp instruments contaminated with an infected patient's blood or through contact of the eye, nose, mouth, or skin with a patient's blood. Adequate barrier protection (e.g., gloves, safety glasses, mask) when performing any activities is
needed where the potential exists for BBP exposure. Familiarity with and use of safety devices on needles, syringes, and intravenous equipment can also reduce the risk of accidental BBP exposure.

All healthcare personnel who have a reasonable chance of exposure to blood or body fluids should receive hepatitis B vaccine. Healthcare workers should be tested 1-2 months after the vaccine series is complete to make sure that vaccination has provided immunity to HBV infection. Hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) alone or in combination with vaccine (if not previously vaccinated) is effective in preventing HBV infection after an exposure.

**Hepatitis C** is a liver infection caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus. An estimated 3 million to 4 million persons in the United States are chronically infected with HCV, and approximately half are unaware of their status. These individuals may ultimately progress to advanced liver disease and/or hepatocellular cancer. However, those outcomes can be prevented by treatment, which is rapidly improving and offers the potential of a cure to more patients than has been previously possible. Guidance for treatment may be found on the Infectious Diseases Society of America website at [www.hcvguidelines.org](http://www.hcvguidelines.org) and is changing rapidly with the advent of new therapies. The best way to prevent Hepatitis C is by avoiding behaviors that can spread the disease, especially injecting drugs. For these reasons, following recommended infection control practices to prevent percutaneous injuries is imperative. [Center for Disease Control (CDC) Guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/management.htm)

There is no vaccine against HIV. However, results from a small number of studies suggest that the use of some antiretroviral drugs after certain occupational exposures may reduce the chance of HIV transmission. Postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) is recommended for certain occupational exposures that pose a risk of transmission.

Students who have been exposed to needlesticks or to potentially infectious blood or blood products or body fluids should be evaluated and have treatment initiated within 2 hours according to established criteria that conform to federal and state law and Center for Disease Control standards. Any expenses incurred by treatment are the sole responsibility of the student.

**First Aid for percutaneous and mucocutaneous exposures:**

1. Needlesticks or puncture wounds: express blood from wound, scrub area vigorously with soap and water for 5 minutes.
2. Oral mucous membranes: rinse area several times with oxygenating agent such as 50% strength Hydrogen Peroxide. Do not swallow.
3. Ocular (remove contacts if applicable): irrigate immediately with water or NS solution.
4. Human bite: cleanse with povidone-iodine and sterile water.

**Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens Procedure**
Immediately upon receiving a contaminated needlestick or exposure to blood, blood products, or body fluids, the student will:

1. Begin first aid measures
2. Report the incident to the clinical faculty member/preceptor and the appropriate person in the clinical agency.
3. Complete the appropriate clinical agency incident report. If incident does not occur within a clinical facility, follow College of Nursing reporting requirements as required by the Occupational Health & Safety Administration (OSHA).
4. Follow institutional protocols regarding wound care and reporting procedures. Clinical faculty should be notified as soon as reasonably possible.
5. Seek treatment intervention from the University Health Center, or a private health care provider within 2 hours of the exposure incident (at student's expense).

Based on information provided to the health care provider, baseline lab values may be ordered. In responding to an incident in which a student experiences a contaminated needle stick or exposure to blood, blood products, or body fluids, the clinical faculty will:

1. Verify appropriate first aid measures have been initiated.
2. Counsel the student to seek follow-up care at the University Health Center or his/her private health care provider.
3. Confirm with Chief Nursing Officer (or appropriate personnel) that appropriate patient testing is currently available or has been initiated.
4. Advise the student to consult the clinical facility's protocol or the CDC for follow-up on contaminated needlesticks or exposures to blood, blood products, or body fluids should he/she choose to seek a private health care provider.
5. Assist the student in completing any administrative paperwork equired.
6. Complete the CON Needle Stick Incident/Exposure Report Form.

**References**
Substance Abuse Rules

The Texas A&M University System is committed to maintaining an environment that is free from substance abuse, as well as complying with state and federal laws. The Texas A&M System policy governing this may be found in the following regulation: 34.02 Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Rehabilitation Programs.

As health care professionals, the CON faculty members support a policy wherein each individual providing patient care in a clinical/practicum setting or preparing educationally to become a care provider adheres to high personal health standards. This includes, but is not limited to, the avoidance of substances that impair thinking and behavior.

The College of Nursing requires all students to participate in a 10 panel urine drug screen upon entry into the program and then as required by clinical agencies for practicum experiences during the remainder of their time in the program. The student is responsible for obtaining the drug screen(s) at their expense. The Office of Student Affairs will provide information on drug screens at New Student Orientation.

If a positive drug screen is reported after the initial screening, the student's offer of admission will be rescinded. If a positive screening is reported subsequent to enrollment, the student will not be allowed to participate in the practicum component of the course at the assigned clinical agency or any other clinical agency. The student will be required to withdraw from all clinical/practicum courses with the grade earned at that point in the semester. If proof is provided that the student is currently receiving treatment, the student may continue in non-clinical courses. The student must meet prerequisites and co-requisites of any courses taken.

For the protection of patients, faculty, staff, and students, the College of Nursing retains the right to require a student to submit to testing for substance abuse at the student's expense when the nursing program has reasonable cause to believe that a student is abusing controlled substances.

- Observable phenomena, such as direct observation of drug use or the physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of a drug or alcohol, such as, but not limited to, slurred speech, noticeable change in grooming habits, impaired physical coordination, inappropriate comments or behaviors, or pupillary changes
• Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior, absenteeism, tardiness or deterioration in performance
• Report of drug use provided by credible sources
• Evidence that a student has tampered with a previous drug or alcohol test
• Possession of drug paraphernalia

If a faculty member observes such behavior, and if such behavior is observed or validated by another faculty member or clinical agency staff member, the faculty member must excuse or remove the student from the educational or patient setting immediately. The student will be sent to a designated site for a drug screen. The cost of the testing will be the responsibility of the College of Nursing. Reports will be sent to the Dean and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

If questionable behavior is observed by a preceptor or other agency personnel overseeing a student’s practicum experience performed in conjunction with, or as a component of, meeting the requirements of a course of study in the College of Nursing, such preceptor or other agency personnel and a member of the nursing staff, in the interest of patient safety, shall have the authority to take action in the same manner as an assigned faculty member.

Additional Testing Conditions
During the practicum experience, students may be required to undergo additional substance abuse testing if the following situations arise at the facility:

• An injury occurs while participating in a practicum experience
• If a medication or handling discrepancy is discovered
• If medication may have been stolen or improperly used
• Other conditions wherein all employees of the facility are required to undergo testing

Appeal and Retesting Guidelines
Positive tests may be appealed by submitting a written request to the Dean or Associate Dean within three (3) business days after being informed of positive test results. The appellant has the right to have a second test performed at a certified laboratory of his/her choice and all expenses of such retest will be the responsibility of the appellant. The specimen transfer between laboratories will follow standard protocol.

Disciplinary/Actions
Any student who fails an alcohol or drug test will be subject to disciplinary sanctions and a disciplinary hearing. These sanctions could result in dismissal. An individual’s participation
in and successful completion of an approved drug or alcohol counseling program coupled with his/her consent to random testing may be considered in the disciplinary process but does not ensure that dismissal will not occur. The Dean will make the final decision on action to be taken.

**Refusal to Consent to Testing**
Any student who refuses to consent to an alcohol or drug test or fails to provide an adequate specimen will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

**Confidentiality**
The Texas Board of Nursing (BON) has a policy that any substance-related condition(s) may affect the ability of a nurse to safely perform nursing duties, thus creating a threat to public safety. The policy applies to all nurses or those individuals seeking to obtain licensure. A nursing education program shall report a student to the BON if they have reasonable cause to suspect that the ability of the nursing student to perform the services of the nursing profession would be, or would reasonably be expected to be, impaired by chemical dependency (as noted in the Nursing Practice Act Sections §301.404, Duty of Nursing Educational Program to Report). Students should be aware that test results may be used for administrative hearings and court cases and may be sent to state and /or federal agencies as required by applicable law. Beyond the scope of these regulations, every effort will be made to keep the results of alcohol and drug testing confidential.
Chapter 7: Student Conduct Code Procedures

The University views the student conduct system as an educational experience that can result in growth in personal understanding of one's responsibilities and privileges in the University community. Acceptable standards of conduct have been established to protect the rights of others and the orderly operation of the University. Part II: Student Life Rules provide direction on student expectations and consequences for misconduct. The focus of student conduct proceedings is to determine whether the University's standards of conduct have been violated. To this end, student conduct proceedings attempt to balance an understanding and knowledge of the students' needs with the needs of the University community. Individuals may bring a complaint against a student for alleged violations of the Student Conduct Code. Such complaints may be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Student Life. An investigation may be initiated to determine if the complaint has merit. Complaints may result in charges, a form of alternative dispute resolution, or dismissal of complaint. These decisions are made at the sole discretion of the University.

To ensure that students understand how to appropriately pursue a grievance at Texas A&M University, students are encouraged to seek clarification and advice regarding procedures before initiating a grievance. Although a student may seek such advice from any faculty or staff member, the Office of the Dean of Student Life has staff members trained to help students who have grievances.

Professional Code of Ethics

The nursing profession expresses its moral obligations and professional values through the Code of Ethics for Nurses (ANA, 2017). Each student should read the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics and be accountable for its contents. Ethics is the foundation upon which nursing is built. Nursing has a distinguished history of concern for the welfare of the sick, injured and vulnerable. This concern is embodied in the provision of nursing care to individuals and the community.

The Code of Ethics for a profession makes explicit the primary goals, values, and obligations of the profession. Students are expected to function within the framework of the American Nurses Association Code for Nurses.

Nursing students are expected not only to adhere to the morals and norms of the profession, but also to embrace them as part of what it means to be a nurse. The nurse recognizes that his/her first obligation is to the patient's welfare.
Any situation that threatens patient safety, exhibits a lack of moral character, demonstrates a lack of professionalism or good judgment, and/or is a violation of College/Hospital policy may result in immediate termination from the program.

Verbal or written derogatory statements about patients, clinical placements, the Health Science Center, College of Nursing students, faculty or staff will be subject to disciplinary action. This includes postings on internet social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)

Students are expected to demonstrate and embrace the following principles:

- Be responsible for his/her own learning and clinical practice and honor other students’ right to learn and be successful in academic and clinical environments.
- Demonstrate respect in verbal and non-verbal behaviors to all others in clinical and academic settings. The use of abusive language or disruptive behavior directed toward faculty, staff, or other students will not be tolerated.
- Provide safe, competent care, seeking assistance when personal knowledge and/or skill are not adequate. Avoid use of any substances that would impair clinical ability or judgment.
- Provide the same standard of care to all patients and families regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sexual preference, disability, religion, economic status, employment status, or the nature of their health problem. Accept that others have the right to their own cultural beliefs and values and respect their choices.
- Document in a thorough, accurate, truthful, and timely manner data that reflects findings from one's own personal assessment, care, interventions, teaching, or the patient's and/or family's response to those activities.
- Act in a manner that contributes to the development and maintenance of an ethical educational and practice environment. Recognize that the primary commitment in clinical practice is to the patient and that respectful interactions are expected.
- Complete legally required HIPAA training and University or clinical site requirements regarding confidentiality prior to the beginning of the academic year. Use patient data in all school work, papers, presentations, research findings and in the clinical setting in a manner that is accurate, truthful, and confidential.
- Refrain from unauthorized use or possession of school or clinical setting’s equipment, patient’s belongings, or items dispersed or intended for patient use.

Students may purchase the Code of Ethics for Nurses by contacting the American Nurses Association Publishing Company.
Civility Statement
The Texas A&M College of Nursing is committed to creating and maintaining a positive learning environment consistent with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics which states nurses are required to “create an ethical environment and culture of civility and kindness, treating colleagues, coworkers, employees, students, and others with dignity and respect” (ANA, 2015, p. 4). To support an environment for positive learning any disregard for the effects of one's actions on others, bullying, harassment, intimidation, manipulation, threats, or violence are always morally unacceptable behaviors (p.20).

Each course is geared at helping all students learn to think and act like a nurse. Each student toward the end is expected to demonstrate ethical and professional behavior in all aspects of the course. To assist in a healthy and respectful learning environment, we ask that students follow the protocols below:

For online classes:
- Use proper netiquette. (Netiquette is a combination of words "network" and "etiquette")
- Be respectful of each other and your instructor.
- Address each person individually when you create responses. For example, when you respond, be friendly, begin your writing with a greeting, i.e. howdy or hello.
- Praise and support your fellow Aggies

For face to face classes:
- Be on time to class and attend class regularly.
- Refrain from unsavory or unprofessional use of language.
- Silence your cell phone during class; refrain from texting during class.
- Keep chit-chat to a minimum in class to avoid distraction to others.
- Treat your colleagues, the agency staff, and the faculty with respect.
- Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior in all aspects of this course.

In addition, Texas A&M University and the College of Nursing expect all students to abide by the Aggie Honor Code and conduct themselves as an Aggie.
Disciplinary Penalties for Violation of Professional Code of Conduct

One or more of the following penalties may be assessed for violation of any provision of Academic Integrity and Honesty, Code of Conduct, or College of Nursing professional standards policies:

- Written reprimand
- Financial restitution for any property damage or for any property destroyed or taken and not returned
- Grade adjustment
- Special remediation report or community service project based on the nature of the offense, to be determined by the Associate Dean. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs shall set a reasonable date for completion of the project or report.
- Disciplinary probation for a definite period of time
- Suspension for a definite period of time
- Revocation of academic credit, requiring repetition of course work
- Dismissal
- Bar against readmission
- Denial of degree
- Revocation of degree and surrender of diploma

Disciplinary probation, suspension, dismissal, bar against readmission, denial of degree and revocation/surrender of degree will be recorded on the academic transcript.

Reporting Violations

The Texas A&M Office of the Dean of Student Life has primary jurisdiction over reports of behaviors that implicate rules contained in the Student Code of Conduct. For rules and regulations governing the Student Conduct Code, see Student Rule 24. The CON has primary jurisdiction over reports of behaviors that implicate the Professional Standards of the academic program as outlined by the Professional Code of Ethics and Clinical Expectations.

Violations of professional standards will be reported in writing to the College of Nursing Associate Deans for Student Affairs by the reporting party within 10 business days of the violation. The Associate Dean will investigate the complaint.

Procedures for Handling Uncontested Case Investigations

If it appears that a student has breached College rules or procedures in such a way that there is a reasonable concern that injury or harm may come to patients, faculty, staff,
students or the facility, interim disciplinary action may be taken in the best interest of the individuals involved and the College.

If, after full investigation, the complaint turns out to be founded and the infraction warrants removal from participation in any part of the curriculum, suspension, dismissal from the College, bar from readmission, denial of degree, revocation or surrender of a degree, either one of the Associate Deans will apply one or more disciplinary penalties.

If the student does not contest the facts of the incident, they must sign a written admission that the violation took place and that the facts reported are accurate. This admission will be recorded by the ADSA as a disciplinary infraction and the disciplinary action will be imposed. The student has the right of appeal to the Dean in writing within ten (10) university business days for penalty only. In these cases the Dean’s decision is final.

**Procedures for Handling Contested Case Investigations**

If an incident cannot be handled as an uncontested offense, the CON has two (2) options of addressing the case: 1) refer the case to the Aggie Honor System Office for reported violations of the Aggie Code of Honor AND/OR, 2) initiate formal procedures to review the case as outlined in this section.

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA) shall investigate the allegations that a student has violated one or more of the rules of the College.

1. If the allegations are determined to be of a minor nature that can be handled informally without initiation of disciplinary proceedings, the person filing the complaint, the student, and the Dean will be informed of this decision.

2. If the investigation reveals that the evidence presented substantiates a likely breach of professional conduct, the ADSA will initiate a hearing. The ADSA shall prepare a written notification to the student to be either hand delivered, with written acknowledgement of receipt, or sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, containing the following:
   - a statement of the charge(s) against the student with a description documenting the violation(s)
   - a statement of the date, time, and place of the hearing on the charges. Normally, the hearing will be held not less than 10 business days or more than 21 business days from the student’s receipt of the letter. Exceptions to this time frame require the party requesting to show good cause.
   - a statement which informs the student that the student may choose to appear at the hearing or waive that right in writing.
• a list of the witnesses furnishing the evidence supporting the charge(s).
• a request that the student provide to the Committee a list of witnesses, legal
counsel, or others that will be in attendance 24 hours before the scheduled date
of the hearing.
• a FERPA waiver form to be signed by any parties that attend at the request of the
student.
• a copy of the procedural guidelines for due process.
• a listing of potential penalties if the student is found guilty.

Disciplinary Hearing
The Student Appeals Committee shall be an ad hoc committee consisting of faculty and
student members; a faculty chair will be selected by the committee members. The ADSA
will also serve as a non-voting member. A faculty member who is directly or indirectly
involved in a particular case will be automatically excused from the committee and
replaced by a substitute faculty member. The Disciplinary Hearing will follow these
guidelines:

• The date of the hearing must be set, at the earliest, ten (10) university business days
following student receipt of the written statement of the charges against them but
no longer than 21 university business days following receipt, unless agreed to by
both the student and the committee.
• All meetings, investigations, proceedings, and hearings conducted under the
provisions of this document shall be confidential. Faculty and students on the panel
will sign a confidentiality agreement.
• The ADSA will present the case to the committee by stating any pertinent evidence
along with an explanation of the investigative process. The Associate Dean will
address any questions the committee or the accused has in regard to the evidence
or the investigation process.
• The College has the burden of presenting the evidence and proving the charges by a
preponderance of evidence. Evidence, to be admissible, need not meet the
standards of admissibility established by the rules of evidence.
• The student has the right to be present at the hearing and may question witnesses.
• The student has the opportunity to present their version of the facts through
personal statements, affidavits or witnesses.
• The student may have legal counsel present to provide advice but cannot question
or interview other participants in the proceedings.
• The student may request a transcript or a copy of the recording of the hearing.
• The Committee may question the student and will summon, present and reasonably question all witnesses.
• All decisions by the Student Appeals Committee shall be secret ballot and majority rule.
• The Committee shall make a decision of guilty or not guilty based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing.
• The decision of the Committee will be provided in writing to the student and the Dean within three (3) university business days of the hearing.

Right to Appeal
1. Within ten (10) university business days after the student has been notified of the decision, the student may appeal the decision of the Committee to the Dean.
2. The appeal must be in writing and specifically state the reason for the appeal and what action by the Dean is sought.
3. The Dean may approve, reject or modify in whole or in part, the decision and/or assessed penalty in question. Should the Dean choose to reject or modify the decision in question, he or she will clarify the position to the appropriate parties.
4. In these cases, the Dean’s decision is final.
5. Within 10 business days after notification by the Dean of an adverse decision, the student may appeal the decision of the Dean to the Provost only on grounds of procedural due process.

False Alarm/Reporting Penalties
Recent legislative changes established new penalty provisions for the an offense committed under Section 42.06, Penal Code, of making a false alarm or false report involving a public or private institution of higher education. As of September 1, 2013, an offense committed under this section is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to $4,000 and a jail term not to exceed one year. However, it is considered a state jail felony offense if such a false report or false alarm relates to an emergency involving a public or private institution of higher education or involving a public primary or secondary school, public communications, public transportation, public water, gas, or power supply or other public service. A state jail felony is punishable by a fine of up to $10,000 and a jail term from 180 days to two years.
Chapter 8: Student Services and Resources

**Advisors**
All students will be assigned an academic advisor through the Office of Student Affairs. Your academic advisor is a partner in your academic journey as you move through and graduate from Texas A&M University. An academic advisor can assist a student with general information about the program, curriculum, policies, and procedures within the College. In addition, s/he can help the student with class registration, academic learning resources, student services and counseling. Your academic advisor is a reliable source of information regarding Texas A&M and College of Nursing resources and services. To make an appointment for academic advising, please contact the advisor directly.

Students may be assigned a faculty advisor. These professors are experts in the academic discipline, knowledgeable about educational and career opportunities in their area of concentration, and serve as professional mentors to graduate students.

**Access to Student Records**
Information in student records will be released only to faculty and professional staff for authorized legitimate educational interest. The student's consent is required to release information other than public information to any non-UNIVERSITY person unless required by law or upon subpoena duces tecum. Public information includes: a student's name, home address (including country), local address, telephone numbers, classification, enrollment status, major, dates of attendance, date and place of birth, photos and other types of media, degrees, certificates, and other awards received, the name of the institutions previously attended, and medical residence location and specialization.

If a student does not wish for this public information to be released, the student is responsible for notifying the Office of the Registrar during the first week of classes to ensure that information is not released by the university. A request to withhold public information remains in effect until revoked in writing. This request does not apply when an emergency occurs that indicates that the student is a danger to others or themselves or in the case of an FBI request that is in compliance with the Family and Compliance Office that administers Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA).

Within the institution, information from students' educational records is given without the consent of the student to administrative officials, faculty members and their staff, only for legitimate purposes in the students' educational interests.
FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the university receives a request for access.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosures without consent, including published directory information. One additional exception permits disclosure without consent to administration, faculty or staff with legitimate educational interests.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the university to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

All the rights and protections given students under FERPA and this policy belong to the student. However, information in student records may be provided to parents without the written consent of the student if the eligible student is a financial dependent of his or her parents as defined under Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. For more information, go to FERPA Notice to Students.

**Disability Services**

It is the policy of the College of Nursing to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other applicable federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Students who wish to obtain individual accommodations must provide documentation from a licensed professional. The Department of Disability Services on the campus of Texas A&M University coordinates efforts for the benefit of the individuals covered under the statute.

Students who wish to request reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the Department of Disability Services to start the process for documenting their disability and determining eligibility for services prior to the start of the program. In order to assure approved services the first week of class, students should contact the Department of Disability Services 45 – 60 days prior to the beginning of the semester in which services will be requested.

Students with disabilities are expected to perform all the Essential Competencies of the program with or without reasonable accommodation. We will work with the student to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations. While The College of Nursing will
make every effort to work with our students with disabilities to accommodate their disability-related needs, it is important to note we are not required to provide requested accommodations that would fundamentally alter the essential functions or technical standards of the program.

Disability Office Contact Information:

Disability Services, Texas A&M University
Currently located in the Student Services Offices at White Creek complex, West Campus
College Station, Texas 77843-1224
Disability Services Main Office: (979) 845-1637~ disability@tamu.edu

For additional information or assistance, contact Kathryn McCallum, Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

Library Resources
An extraordinary array of resources and services are available to students through the Texas A&M University Library system which includes the Sterling C. Evans Library, the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, the West Campus Library, the Policy Sciences and Economics Library, and the Medical Sciences Library. Current university library holdings includes a total of 5.4 million volumes. This total volume count consists of 3.8 million print resources, 1.6 million electronic books, approximately 223,000 maps, over 23,000 linear feet of archival and manuscript collections, over 100,000 photographs, art collections, numerous artifacts, and material in virtually all forms of audiovisual media.

Students enrolled in the CON MSN programs have full access to resources that are provided by the General University Library to support graduate level education programs. Specific to College of Nursing faculty and students, the Medical Sciences Library serves as the primary library with an ever-expanding collection of resources in nursing, medicine, life sciences, and public health areas that are relevant to the nursing program. Students have 24 hour access to online resources. Assistance for online students is available via email, online chat, text and telephone from 7 am to 10 pm most days. Go to Medical Science Library for more information.

Personal Counseling
Graduate students may utilize a variety of services offered through the University of Texas Student Assistance Program. These services include:

- Confidential Counseling
• Financial Advice and Analysis
• Simple Will Preparation
• Legal Consultations
• Identify Theft Solutions
• Worklife Services
• Wellness and Stress Management
• Solutions to Life’s Challenges

For more information, call (713) 500-3327 or toll-free (800) 346-3549, visit the UT Employee Assistance Program’s website Link to Student Assistance Services.
Chapter 9: Student Life

Sports Pass/Ticket Options
All students will be given the option of purchasing a ticket package to Texas A&M University sporting events. This option will be available during fall registration and, if requested, cost of the tickets will be added to the tuition and fee statement. Students must have a Texas A&M University identification card to use a sports pass.

Student Participation in Committees
Students have the opportunity to serve on various committees within the College by election from the student body or through appointment. Student input, feedback, and vision is extremely valuable in guiding curriculum, academic policy, and program evaluation and effectiveness. Interested students should contact the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society
Phi Iota Chapter is the College of Nursing chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. This organization recognizes outstanding scholarly achievements of nurses worldwide. It exists to recognize superior achievements in nursing, encourage leadership development, and foster high nursing ideals of the profession. Sigma Theta Tau currently has over 500 chapters and more than 135,000 members in 90 countries.

On May 15, 2011, the College of Nursing's Phi Iota chapter was named as a new charter chapter in Sigma Theta Tau International. This chapter is active in bringing together nursing students and professional nurses in the area. Nursing undergraduate and graduate students as well as nursing professionals may be inducted into the organization. Eligible students will be invited for membership during the fall term with induction in the spring.

Criteria eligibility for the undergraduate student: Have completed at least one-half of the nursing curriculum

1. Have a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (calculated from 58 hour prerequisites along with grades earned from nesting curriculum
2. Rank in upper 35% of graduating class
3. Meet the expectation of academic integrity and professional leadership potential criteria eligibility for the masters/doctoral student
4. Have completed at least one-fourth of the nursing curriculum
5. Have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher earned in the nursing curriculum
6. Meet the expectation of academic integrity and professional leadership potential
New Student Organization Recognition and Approval Process

All student organizations wishing to be affiliated with the College of Nursing, acknowledged as an official student organization, and a recipient of all rights and privileges afforded formal student organizations within the school must be reviewed and approved. All official student organizations affiliated with the College of Nursing must demonstrate both in purpose and actions consistency with the mission and vision of the College of Nursing. In addition, official student organizations must follow CON and A&M System regulations and codes of conduct. Finally, all official student organizations affiliated with the College must successfully proceed through the formal student organization recognition process through the TAMU Student Activities organization unless a waiver is granted by the approving entities.

Student organizations that are not fully approved and recognized as official student organizations within the CON may not use the College’s name or resources in any way in the execution of their organization’s business. The Office of Student Affairs is responsible for providing additional information and assistance to anyone considering proposing a new official student group within the CON.

Required Documentation for Proposal: Any group interested in being recognized as an official student organization within the CON, must submit a proposal including information on the following:

- the purpose and mission of the proposed organization;
- proposed activities of the organization;
- needs and interests among the student body the proposed organization will fulfill that are not currently being met by another official student organization within the CON;
- estimated membership and membership criteria;
- signature of at least one CON faculty member willing to serve as the organization’s faculty advisor

Required Review and Approvals for a New Student Organization: In order to secure the requisite approval and recognition as an official student organization within the College of Nursing, the proposal (see above) must be reviewed (and documented) by the following entities (in the order indicated):

- College of Nursing Student Affairs Committee
- CON Dean

Once reviewed by these entities, the proposed student organization is free to proceed through the final stages of the TAMU Student Organizations recognition process. Once
approved and fully recognized by the Office of Student Activities at TAMU, the organization must submit its constitution and bylaws to the Office of Student Affairs in the College of Nursing.

**Interprofessional Organizations**

There are many other student organizations with healthcare focus within Texas A&M University. Some organizations have leadership representation from all Health Science Center colleges. Examples include: Healthcare Professionals for Life, Global Health Outreach, One Health. To find other organizations, go to the Texas A&M Student Activities webpage.
Chapter 10: Graduation & APRN Certification

Graduation Requirements
In order to qualify for the graduate degree, each student must fulfill the following:

• Complete the coursework with a grade of “B” or better in all nursing coursework and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher;
• File an application for degree through the Howdy portal by the designated deadline;
• Pay any associated graduation fees;
• Clear all financial and other obligations to the Texas A&M Health Sciences Center and Texas A&M University.

Graduation Commencement
As students enter their final semester, the Office of Student Affairs will provide information to graduating students. Commencements will vary depending on the track to which the student is enrolled. Students must complete the application for graduation by the deadline in order to participate in the commencement ceremony.

APRN Licensure
In order to practice as an APRN in the state of Texas after obtaining the Master of Science in Nursing, you must pass a national certification exam. Family nurse practitioner candidates may seek certification by exam following graduation from the Master of Science in Nursing-Family Nurse Practitioner track through either the AANPCP or the ANCC. It is recommended that you download from the website the associated Candidate or General Testing Handbook and review it thoroughly. During the last semester, the program coordinator will provide each student with a detailed guide via email regarding on how to complete an application for “Advanced Practice” in Texas.

Certified Nurse Educator
Students who graduate with the M.S.N. in Nursing Education are encouraged to attain the Certified Nurse EducatorCM distinction by successfully completing the CNE exam. The academic nurse educator certification was created to establish nursing education as a specialty area of practice and create a means for faculty to demonstrate their expertise in this role. Academic nurse educators engage in a variety of roles and functions. The extent to which a specific nurse educator implements the various roles may vary according to many factors such as the mission of the nurse educator's institution, the nurse educator's rank, the nurse educator's academic preparation, and the type of program in which the nurse educator teaches. Nursing education takes place in diverse settings can include technical schools, hospitals, two-year colleges, four-year colleges, and universities.
The certification test plan for this role is based upon the identified competencies of the academic nurse educator and can be found with the Certified Nurse Educator Candidate Handbook.

Requirements for sitting for the exam include:

1. **Licensure**
   - A currently active, unencumbered, registered nurse designation in the country where currently practicing as a nurse educator.

2. **Education**
   - A master's or doctoral degree in nursing with a major emphasis in nursing education or
   - A master's or doctoral degree in nursing plus a post-master's certificate in nursing education or
   - Master's or doctoral degree in nursing and nine or more credit hours of graduate-level education courses (examples of acceptable courses include: Curriculum Development and Evaluation; Instructional Design: Principles of Adult Learning; Assessment/Measurement & Evaluation; Principles of Teaching and Learning)

The Certified Nurse Educator exam was developed to measure competence in the full scope of the academic nurse educator practice role. Even though the CNE® eligibility criteria have been expanded to include new graduates of master's and doctoral programs focused in nursing education, the test itself was not developed as a measure of graduate program outcomes.

**Forensic Nursing & Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Distinction**

Completion of the Master of Science in Forensic Nursing degree does not directly lead to certifications in forensic nursing, however, the education helps prepare students in their pursuit of SANE certification. Successfully completing **NURS 610 Forensic Sexual Assault Examiner Course** satisfies only one of several basic eligibility requirements to sit for the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) sanctioned SANE-A National Certification Exam. NURS 610 Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Course comprises a minimum of forty (40) hours of academic coursework and addresses all of the content areas outlined in the IAFN Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Education Guidelines. More information on SANE certification may be found on the IAFN website.

The 27-page Commission for Forensic Nursing Certification 2019 Certification Examination Handbook may be downloaded for a complete list of eligibility, pre-exam requirements and application guidelines.
The “Essentials” reflect the profession’s continuing call for imagination, transformative thinking, and evolutionary change in graduate education. Master’s education prepares nurses for flexible leadership and critical action within complex, hanging systems, including health, educational and organizational systems. Master’s education equips nurses with valuable knowledge and skills to lead change, promote health and elevate care in various roles and settings...” (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, p. 3). The Essentials building upon the knowledge and practice of baccalaureate education and provide a foundation for progression into doctoral education.

**Essential I: Background for Practice from Sciences and Humanities**
Recognizes that the master’s-prepared nurse integrates scientific findings from nursing, biopsychosocial fields, genetics, public health, quality improvement, and organizational sciences for the continual improvement of nursing care across diverse settings.

**Essential II: Organizational and Systems Leadership**
Recognizes that organizational and systems leadership are critical to the promotion of high quality and safe patient care. Leadership skills are needed that emphasize ethical and critical decision making, effective working relationships, and a systems-perspective.

**Essential III: Quality Improvement and Safety**
Recognizes that a master’s-prepared nurse must be articulate in the methods, tools, performance measures, and standards related to quality, as well as prepared to apply quality principles within an organization.

**Essential IV: Translating and Integrating Scholarship into Practice**
Recognizes that the master's-prepared nurse applies research outcomes within the practice setting, resolves practice problems, works as a change agent, and disseminates results.

**Essential V: Informatics and Healthcare Technologies**
Recognizes that the master’s-prepared nurse uses patient-care technologies to deliver and enhance care and uses communication technologies to integrate and coordinate care.

**Essential VI: Health Policy and Advocacy**
Recognizes that the master’s-prepared nurse is able to intervene at the system level through the policy development process and to employ advocacy strategies to influence health and health care.
Essential VII: Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes
Recognizes that the master’s-prepared nurse, as a member and leader of interprofessional teams, communicates, collaborates, and consults with other health professionals to manage and coordinate care.

Essential VIII: Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving Health
Recognizes that the master’s-prepared nurse applies and integrates broad, organizational, client-centered, and culturally appropriate concepts in the planning, delivery, management, and evaluation of evidence-based clinical prevention and population care and services to individuals, families, and aggregates/identified populations.

Essential IX: Master’s-Level Nursing Practice
Recognizes that nursing practice, at the master’s level, is broadly defined as any form of nursing intervention that influences healthcare outcomes for individuals, populations, or systems. Master's-level nursing graduates must have an advanced level of understanding of nursing and relevant sciences as well as the ability to integrate this knowledge into practice. Nursing practice interventions include both direct and indirect care components.
APPENDIX B  Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies

At completion of the NP program, the NP graduate possesses the nine (9) core competencies regardless of population focus as provided by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Area</th>
<th>NP Core Competencies</th>
<th>Family/Across the Lifespan NP Competencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Foundation Competencies</td>
<td>1. Critically analyzes data and evidence for improving advanced nursing practice.</td>
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<td>2. Integrates knowledge from the humanities and sciences within the context of nursing science.</td>
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<td>3. Translates research and other forms of knowledge to improve practice processes and outcomes.</td>
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<td>4. Develops new practice approaches based on the integration of research, theory, and practice knowledge.</td>
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<td>Leadership Competencies</td>
<td>1. Assumes complex and advanced leadership roles to initiate and guide change.</td>
<td>Works with individuals of other professions to maintain a climate of mutual respect and shared values.</td>
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<td>2. Provides leadership to foster collaboration with multiple stakeholders (e.g. patients, community, integrated health care teams, and policy makers) to improve health care.</td>
<td>Engages diverse health care professionals who complement one’s own professional expertise, as well as associated resources, to develop strategies to meet specific patient care needs.</td>
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<td>3. Demonstrates leadership that uses critical and reflective thinking.</td>
<td>Engages in continuous professional and interprofessional development to enhance team performance.</td>
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</table>
4. Advocates for improved access, quality and cost effective health care.
5. Advances practice through the development and implementation of innovations incorporating principles of change.
6. Communicates practice knowledge effectively both orally and in writing.
7. Participates in professional organizations and activities that influence advanced practice nursing and/or health outcomes of a population focus.

Assumes leadership in interprofessional groups to facilitate the development, implementation and evaluation of care provided in complex systems.

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<th>Competency Area</th>
<th>NP Core Competencies</th>
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| Quality Competencies | 1. Uses best available evidence to continuously improve quality of clinical practice.  
2. Evaluates the relationships among access, cost, quality, and safety and their influence on health care.  
3. Evaluates how organizational structure, care processes, financing, marketing and policy decisions impact the quality of health care.  
4. Applies skills in peer review to promote a culture of excellence.  
5. Anticipates variations in practice and is proactive in implementing interventions to ensure quality. |  |
| Practice Inquiry Competencies | 1. Provides leadership in the translation of new knowledge into practice.  
2. Generates knowledge from clinical practice to improve practice and patient outcomes. |  |
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<th>Competency Area</th>
<th>NP Core Competencies</th>
<th>Technology and Information Literacy Competencies cont.</th>
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<td>3. Demonstrates information literacy skills in complex decision making.</td>
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<td>4. Contributes to the design of clinical information systems that promote safe, quality and cost effective care.</td>
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<td>5. Uses technology systems that capture data on variables for the evaluation of nursing care.</td>
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</table>
| Policy Competencies | 1. Demonstrates an understanding of the interdependence of policy and practice.  
2. Advocates for ethical policies that promote access, equity, quality, and cost.  
3. Analyzes ethical, legal, and social factors influencing policy development.  
4. Contributes to the development of health policy.  
5. Analyzes the implications of health policy across disciplines.  
6. Evaluates the impact of globalization on health care policy development.  
7. Advocates for policies for safe and health practice environments. |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Health Delivery System Competencies | 1. Applies knowledge of organizational practices and complex systems to improve health care delivery.  
2. Effects health care change using broad based skills including negotiating, consensus-building, and partnering.  
3. Minimizes risk to patients and providers at the individual and systems level.  
4. Facilitates the development of health care systems that address the needs of culturally diverse populations, providers, and other stakeholders.  
5. Evaluates the impact of health care delivery on patients, providers, other stakeholders, and the environment. |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethics Competencies</strong></td>
<td>1. Integrates ethical principles in decision making.</td>
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<td>2. Evaluates the ethical consequences of decisions.</td>
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<td>3. Applies ethically sound solutions to complex issues related to individuals, populations and systems of care.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Practice Competencies</strong></td>
<td>1. Functions as a licensed practitioner in accordance with the state Nurse Practice Act.</td>
<td>1. Obtains and accurately documents a relevant health history for patients of all ages and in all phases of the individual and family life cycle using collateral information, as needed.</td>
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<td>2. Demonstrates the highest level of accountability for professional practice.</td>
<td>2. Performs and accurately documents appropriate comprehensive or symptom-focused physical examinations on patients of all ages (including developmental and behavioral screening, physical exam and mental health evaluations).</td>
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<td>3. Practices independently managing previously diagnosed and undiagnosed patients.</td>
<td>3. Identifies health and psychosocial risk factors of patients of all ages and families in all stages of the family life cycle.</td>
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<td>3.a Provides the full spectrum of health care services to include health promotion, disease prevention, health protection, anticipatory guidance, counseling, disease management, palliative, and end of life care.</td>
<td>4. Identifies and plans interventions to promote health with families at risk.</td>
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<td>3.b Uses advanced health assessment skills to differentiate between normal, variations of normal and abnormal findings.</td>
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<td>3.c Employs screening and diagnostic strategies in the development of diagnoses.</td>
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<tr>
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| Independent Practice Competencies cont. | 4.a Works to establish a relationship with the patient characterized by mutual respect, empathy, and collaboration.  
4.b Creates a climate of patient-centered care to include confidentiality, privacy, comfort, emotional support, mutual trust, and respect.  
4.c Incorporates the patient’s cultural and spiritual preferences, values, and beliefs into health care.  
4.d Preserves the patient’s control over decision making by negotiating a mutually acceptable plan of care.  
4.e. Develops strategies to prevent one’s own personal biases from interfering with delivery of quality care.  
4.f. Addresses cultural, spiritual, and ethnic influences that potentially create conflict among individuals, families, staff and caregivers. | 8. Synthesizes data from a variety of sources to make clinical decisions regarding appropriate management, consultation, or referral.  
9. Plans diagnostic strategies and makes appropriate use of diagnostic tools for screening and prevention, with consideration of the costs, risks, and benefits to individuals.  
10. Formulates comprehensive differential diagnoses.  
11. Manages common acute and chronic physical and mental illnesses, including acute exacerbations and injuries across the lifespan to minimize the development of complications, and promote function and quality of living.  
12. Prescribes medications with knowledge of altered pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics with special populations, such as infants and children, pregnant and lactating women, and older adults.  
5. Educates professional and lay caregivers to provide culturally and spiritually sensitive, appropriate care.
6. Collaborates with both professional and other caregivers to achieve optimal care outcomes.
7. Coordinates transitional care services in and across care settings.
8. Participates in the development, use, and evaluation of professional standards and evidence-based care.

14. Adapts interventions to meet the complex needs of individuals and families arising from aging, developmental/life transitions, comorbidities, psychosocial, and financial issues.
16. Plans and orders palliative care and end-of-life care, as appropriate.
17. Performs primary care procedures.
18. Uses knowledge of family theories and development stages to individualize care provided to individuals and families.
19. Facilitates family decision-making about health.

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<tr>
<td>Independent Practice Competencies cont.</td>
<td></td>
<td>20. Analyzes the impact of aging and age-and disease-related changes in sensory/perceptual function, cognition, confidence with technology, and health literacy and numeracy on the ability and readiness to learn and tailor interventions accordingly.</td>
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<td>21. Demonstrates knowledge of the similarities and differences in roles of various health professionals proving mental health services, e.g., psychotherapists, psychologist, psychiatric social worker, psychiatrist, and advanced practice psychiatric nurse.</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Evaluates the impact of life transitions on the health/illness status of patients and the impact of health and illness on patients (individuals, families, and communities).</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Applies principles of self-efficacy/empowerment in promoting behavior change.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Develops patient-appropriate educational materials that address the language and cultural beliefs of the patient.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Monitors specialized care coordination to enhance effectiveness of outcomes for individuals and families.</td>
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