



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
College of Nursing

# Graduate Student Handbook

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# Introduction

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## Disclaimer Note to Student

The provisions of this 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 [Aggie One Stop](#).

## Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy

Texas A&M University (TAMU) 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. TAMU 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 (CON) 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 CON 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 CON 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 CON. The Texas A&M University System administration and the CON 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.

## About the University

TAMU 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 30 million residents, Texas A&M's main campus in College Station is home to more than 72,000 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 graduate 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 MSN 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 over 700 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 CON is to educate professional nurses of today and leaders of tomorrow through the provision of excellent educational programs in nursing. The CON 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 CON will be enhanced through faculty contributions to community service, leadership, practice and research.

## Philosophy

The philosophy of the Texas A&M University College of Nursing 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 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 several 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: Education Excellence

Enhance academic and professional education with innovative, competency-based and student-centered pedagogies to prepare creative, competent and ethically responsible nurse leaders equipped to advance human health and health care.

### Goal 2: Student-Centered Excellence

Cultivate a student-centered culture where people from all backgrounds thrive.

### Goal 3: Research and Scholarship Excellence

Lead transformative research, implementation science and scholarship that addresses the health challenges of vulnerable, rural, and underserved populations.

## Goal 4: Community Engagement Through Rural Clinical Practice and Partnerships

Foster and invest in innovative clinical and health promotion models through strategic partnerships that improve health and health care access, value, and quality.

## Goal 5: Resource Stewardship

Diversify and sustain revenue streams and the infrastructure to support growth of current and new educational programs, development of the clinical enterprise, and optimize resource utilization and operational efficiencies.

## Accreditation

### Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

TAMU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award baccalaureate, master's, doctoral, and professional degrees. While SACSCOC accredits the institution as a whole, many of the academic degree programs offered at the university also undergo accreditation by specialized accrediting bodies. More information on the accreditation report is available through the [Office of the Provost](#).

### 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 College of Nursing was granted a full accreditation through December 31, 2030 by the CCNE. For more information on accreditation, visit the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, [CCNE Accreditation](#) webpage.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice and Post-Graduate Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner programs at the Texas A&M College of Nursing are pursuing initial accreditation by the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#). Applying for accreditation does not guarantee that accreditation will be granted.

### Texas Board of Nursing (TBON)

Approval of nursing education programs is one of the primary functions that the Texas Board of Nursing (TBON) performs to fulfill its mission to protect and promote the welfare of the people of Texas. TBON has the responsibility and legal authority to decide whether a nursing education program can meet the Board's established minimum standards for educational programs. The CON was granted full approval on April 22, 2010 upon graduation of the first class of students

# Chapter 1: General Information

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## Academic Calendar

The CON adheres to the TAMU academic calendar for class dates and holidays/vacation, available each semester from the University Registrar's Office and at [Academic Calendar](#).

## Academic Advising

Academic advising is required each semester for all CON students. Students are assigned to an academic advisor who will work with the student to develop and maintain a plan for graduation. To make an appointment for academic advising, please use Navigate or contact the CON Office of Student Affairs.

The primary purpose of academic advising at TAMU is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational plans compatible with their personal abilities and goals. An academic advisor in the CON can assist a student with general information about the program, curriculum, policies, and procedures within the CON. In addition, they can help the student with class registration, academic learning resources, registrar processes, student services and counseling.

**Academic Advising Defined:** Academic advising engages students beyond their own world view recognizing the "art of possibility."

**Student Responsibilities:** The ultimate responsibility for making decisions about personal goals and educational plans rests with the individual student. Students are responsible for:

- Knowing their degree requirements, relevant rules, policies, and deadlines.
- Consulting with their academic advisor and the degree evaluation system.
- Keeping contact information current (local and permanent addresses, phone numbers, and emergency contact information).
- Reading all correspondence from the College and the University.
- Being open to developing and clarifying personal values and goals.
- Keeping records of academic goals and progress. Take notes during advising meetings.
- Utilizing campus resources to enhance your academic experience and
- Developing professional and personal goals.
- Respecting others: Be on time, be prepared, and treat your academic advisor and other students as you would wish to be treated.

**Academic Advisor Responsibilities:** Academic Advisors are responsible for upholding the integrity and value of your degree by maintaining the rules, standards, policies, and procedures of TAMU and the CON. Academic advisors assist by helping to identify and assess alternatives and the consequences of decisions. Academic advising is a continuous process of clarification and evaluation. Academic advisors should:

- Listen carefully and respect the student's questions, concerns, and problems.
- Collaborate with the student in development of academic and personal goals and interests.

## Access to Student Records & FERPA

Students at Texas A&M University have the right of confidentiality under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. 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-CON 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. Directory information that holds student information may be made public unless the student desires to withhold any or all of this information.

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. 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 complies 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](#).

## 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, they 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, stepsister, stepbrother, 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

TAMU and the CON 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 Expectations

[Student Rule 61](#) rule establishes e-mail as an official means of communication (equivalent to the U.S. Postal Service) at TAMU. 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 TAMU, 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 their computer has the required software installed upon admission and updated throughout their time as a student 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. Students will be granted access to an online orientation course with specific instructions and assignments in the 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.

## Identification Badge

Students are required to wear their college student identification badge with a picture during all clinical experiences. The badge must be worn in plain sight. Names on the badges must not be covered up with tape, pins, stickers, etc.

Clinical badge photos will be taken during your New Student Conference. This photo will be used to create a clinical identification badge. The clinical badge will reflect your name and denote that you are a graduate nursing student. It must be worn during all clinical experiences. This photo will also be used to create a building access badge as well as provide hospital identification.

The Health Science Center campus is locked after certain hours; however, students may access the building 24/7 with their building access badge.

## Legal Violations

Any student charged with a crime, with or without conviction, must notify the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA) 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. Note: future employment as a registered nurse may be limited in some states based on legal convictions.

## 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.

## 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 CON 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](#).

## Smoking Policy

All buildings and vehicles, regardless of location, that are owned or leased under the administrative purview of the president of Texas A&M University will be entirely smoke-free. This smoke-free rules will apply to all indoor air space, including foyers, entryways and classrooms, individual faculty and administrative offices. Many clinical settings have their own smoking policies. Students are expected



to abide by the rules of each institution. A violation of this policy is considered unprofessional conduct and can result in disciplinary action leading to professional probation. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action. For more details on this policy, see [Student Rule: Appendix IX](#).

## Social Media Policy

The University presence or participation on social media sites is guided by university policy. This policy applies to CON students who engage in internet conversations for college- related purposes or college-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, X, 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 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 system for course information and communication as well as TAMU 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 a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 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 CON 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:

- No multimedia content of any kind can be gathered in a health care environment, including the CLRC. Examples include but are not limited to photos, videos, snaps, etc.
- 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 CON is committed to providing a learning environment for its students in which complaints are responded to in a prompt and fair manner. The CON 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 are expected to follow the appropriate chain of command:

1. Course instructor
2. Program Coordinator
3. Assistant Dean for Distant Site Round Rock (ADRR) (2<sup>nd</sup> Degree students only)
4. Associate Dean for Graduate Nursing Education (ADGNE)
5. Executive Associate Dean (EAD)
6. Dean

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 submit 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 TAMU 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 CON 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 and Scholar 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

The CON partners with the [Department of Disability Resources](#) to provide appropriate accommodation and support. Students should work through Disability Resources 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 their health care provider that they are 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.

## Title IX and Sexual Violence/Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities at institutions that receive federal financial assistance. 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. At the Round Rock site, 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](#).

## Transcript Requests

An official transcript is a comprehensive record of a student's academic progress at TAMU. 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.

For information on ordering transcripts, go to the [Aggie One Stop](#) webpage. 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.

## 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 TAMU 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. 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. 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 CON [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 regarding 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 Programs

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## About the MSN Program

The CON 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 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 for subsequent use in civil or criminal legal proceedings. MSN-FRNR students will complete a total of 135 clinical hours.

## Master of Science in Nursing Education

### Student Outcomes

At the completion of the [MSN-ED 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

Department Abbreviation	Course Number	Course Title	Semester Credit Hours
NURS	617	Advanced Pathophysiology	3
NURS	618	Advanced Pharmacology	3
NURS	630	Teaching & Learning Theory	1
NURS	631	Curriculum Foundations	3
NURS	632	Educational Assessment & Evaluation	3
NURS	633	Teaching Strategies	3
NURS	634*	Teaching in Nursing Practicum (90 clh)	2
NURS	638*	Adv Clinical Practicum & Project (90 clh)	3
NURS	651	Quality Improvement and Informatics	3
NURS	652	Scholarship: Integration and Application	3
NURS	653	Advanced Health Assessment (45 clh)	3
NURS	654	Prevention and Population Health	3
NURS	656	Leadership and Health Policy	3
		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 the [MSN-FNP program](#), the graduate will be prepared to:

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

Department Abbreviation	Course Number	Course Title	Semester Credit Hours
NURS	617	Advanced Pathophysiology	3
NURS	618	Advanced Pharmacology	3
NURS	620	Advanced Practice Nurse Roles	3
NURS	621	Diagnostics and Procedures	2
NURS	622*	Primary Care of Families I (135 clh)	6
NURS	623*	Primary Care of Families II (135 clh)	6
NURS	624*	Primary Care of Families III (135 clh)	6
NURS	625*	Primary Care of Families- Practicum (180 clh)	4
NURS	651	Quality Improvement and Informatics (16 clh)	3



NURS	652	Scholarship: Integration and Application	3
NURS	653	Advanced Health Assessment (45 clh)	3
NURS	654	Prevention and Population Health	3
NURS	656	Leadership and Health Policy	3
		Total hours	48

*\*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 [MNS-FRNR program](#), the graduate 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

Department Abbreviation	Course Number	Course Title	Semester Credit Hours
NURS	601	Foundations of Forensic Health Care	2
NURS	602	Victimology: Clinical Implications & Applications	3
NURS	603	Impact of Violence Across the Lifespan	3
NURS	604	Forensic Investigation of Injury	2
NURS	617	Advanced Pathophysiology	3
NURS	618	Advanced Pharmacology	3
NURS	638*	Adv Clinical Practicum & Project (90 clh)	3
NURS	651	Quality Improvement and Informatics	3
NURS	652	Scholarship: Integration and Application	3
NURS	653	Advanced Health Assessment (45 clh)	3
NURS	654	Prevention and Population Health	3
NURS	656	Leadership and Health Policy	3
<i>Students select two or more hours of elective from the following choices:</i> 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*

## About the Doctoral Program

The Doctor of Nursing Practice degree prepares graduates for practice-based leadership and to combat the shortage of advanced practice providers.

## Doctor of Nursing Practice

### Student Outcomes

At the completion of the DNP program, the graduate will be prepared to:

1. Apply implementation science as a framework to design, implement, and lead best practices at the highest level of advanced nursing practice.

2. Act as a practice scholar to analyze, evaluate, and advance quality, safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of patient care and systems of care.
3. Design innovative, evidence-based advanced nursing approaches to reduce health disparities, promote health and high-quality outcomes for individuals, populations, and health systems.
4. Engage with and lead high performing inter-professional teams to co-create solutions that promote health outcomes and health care delivery.
5. Construct innovative solutions to complex health issues using information systems, data analysis, and technology.
6. Lead development of nursing practice and health care policy based on principles of social justice, health equity, and cultural sensitivity.

Department Abbreviation	Course Number	Course Title	Semester Credit Hours
NURS	725	Theoretical Foundations of Healthcare	3
NURS	728	Organizational & Systems Leadership	3
NURS	734	Healthcare Policy & Economics	3
NURS	731	Quality & Outcome Improvement in Healthcare	3
NURS	733	Clinical Prevention & Population Outcome Improvement	3
NURS	729	Analytic Methods for Research & Evidence Based Practice	3
NURS	726	Principles of Translational Science	3
NURS	727	Application of Translational Science	3
NURS	732	Transformational Leadership	3
NURS	730	Informatics	3
NURS	739*	Residency in Advanced Nursing Practice (100-500 clh)	1-3
NURS	735	DNP Scholarly Project/Practicum I	2
NURS	736	DNP Scholarly Project/Practicum II	2
NURS	737	DNP Scholarly Project/Practicum III	2
NURS	738	DNP Scholarly Project/Practicum IV	2

*\*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*

## Certificate Programs

The CON offers 2 certificates:

[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.

[Post-graduate Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner \(PMNHPC\)](#) – provides graduate-prepared nurses with the knowledge and skills to seek certification as a PMHNP.

## Graduate Forensic Health Care Certificate

### Student Outcomes

At the completion of the [CTG-FOHC 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

Department Abbreviation	Course Number	Course Title	Semester Credit Hours
NURS	601	Foundations of Forensic Health Care	2
NURS	602	Victimology: Clinical Implications & Applications	3
NURS	603	Impact of Violence Across the Lifespan	3
NURS	604	Forensic Investigation of Injury	2
Choose 2 hours (or more) from the electives below:			
NURS	610	Forensic Sexual Assault Examiner	3
NURS	611	Clinical Pharmacology	1
NURS	612	Human Trafficking	1

NURS	613	Forensic Photography	1
NURS	614	Policy & Ethics Interpersonal Violence	1
NURS	615	Forensic Mental Health	1
		Total hours	12

## Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certificate (Post- Masters)

### Student Outcomes

At the completion of the [PMHNPC](#) the graduate will be prepared to:

1. Provide quality care within the scope of practice of the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.
2. Evaluate and utilize research within the role of a nurse practitioner who specializes in psychiatric mental health nursing.
3. Provide ethical psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner care that is tailored to the unique culture and lives of the diverse populations of people served.
4. Serve the people of the state, nation, and world as a leader with Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner competencies.
5. Integrate communication and technology-based skills into the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner role.

*\*Note: Post-graduate certificate students previously completed a graduate degree from a nationally accredited Master of Science in Nursing or Doctor of Nursing Practice program.*

### Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certificate Courses

Department Abbreviation	Course Number	Course Title	Semester Credit Hours
NURS	670	Introduction to Psychopharmacology	2
NURS	671	Pre-Clinical Essentials for the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Rold	2
NURS	672	Family Psychiatric-Mental Health I: Adult/Acute	3
NURS	673*	Family Psychiatric-Mental Health Clinical I	3
NURS	674	Family Psychiatric-Mental Health II: Child-Adolescent	3
NURS	675*	Family Psychiatric-Mental Health Clinical II	3
NURS	676	Family Psychiatric-Mental Health III: Older Adult and Chronic Mental Illness	3
NURS	677*	Family Psychiatric-Mental Health Clinical III	3

NURS	678*	Family Psychiatric-Mental Health Clinical Practicum	4
		Total hours	26

*\*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*

# Chapter 3: Admissions Procedures & New Student Requirements

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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.

## MSN 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. Recommended minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in all undergraduate coursework.
10. Recommended cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework.
11. Applicants with foreign credentials must submit a transcript evaluation report to NursingCAS and official documents to the University upon admission.
12. 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.
13. Timed verbal and written assessments, if requested by Graduate Admissions, Graduation, and Progression Committee.

NOTE: The CON does not require the GRE or the GMAT.

## DNP Application Requirements

Requirements for admission include the following:



1. Graduate degree from a Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, or National League for Nursing accredited institution. (Note: Successful completion of the graduate degree 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. Successful completion of advanced pharmacology, advanced physical assessment and advanced pathophysiology prior to admission with a minimum grade of "B".
6. Elementary or Applied Statistics three semester credit hour class with a minimum grade of "B" completed by the desired term of entry.
7. Professional resume.
8. Three (3) professional references.
9. Cumulative overall grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in all graduate course work.
10. Applicants with foreign credentials must submit a transcript evaluation report to NursingCAS and official documents to the University upon admission
11. 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.
12. Timed verbal and written assessments, if requested by Graduate Admissions, Graduation, and Progression Committee.

NOTE: The CON 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 CON, 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 TAMU 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.

## MSN 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.
- References – three academic and/or professional references.
- Volunteer/community/military service.
- Leadership/involvement/awards in professional activities.
- TOEFL score, required of international applicants only.
- Timed verbal and written assessments, if requested by Graduate Admissions, Progression, and Graduation Committee.
- History of withdraws, repeats, or failures will place applicant at a disadvantage.

For applicants to the MSN-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 invited to complete timed verbal and written assessments. A variety of factors are considered in the interview process to include: experiences and attributes that support compatibility of applicant's goals and interests with the purposes and values of the program; demonstration of the six Core Values of TAMU (excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect, and selfless service); interpersonal communication skills; and critical thinking skills.

## DNP Admission Criteria

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

- Cumulative GPA on all graduate course work.
- References – three academic and/or professional references.
- Volunteer/community/military service.
- Leadership/involvement/awards in professional activities.
- TOEFL score, required of international applicants only.

- Timed verbal and written assessments, if requested by Graduate Admissions, Progression, and Graduation Committee.
- History of withdraws, repeats, or failures will place applicant at a disadvantage. For applicants to the DNP specialty, 1 to 2 years of work experience as an RN is preferred.

After a review of all applicant credentials, some applicants may be invited to complete timed verbal and written assessments. A variety of factors are considered in the interview process to include experiences and attributes that support compatibility of applicant's goals and interests with the purposes and values of the program; demonstration of the six Core Values of TAMU (excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect, and selfless service); interpersonal communication skills; and critical thinking skills.

## 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 MSN 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 Graduate Admissions, Progression, and Graduation 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 must drop out for any reason, the offer will no longer apply.

## Transfer of Credit

The consideration of the transfer of course credits are done in compliance with TAMU policy, as outlined in the Graduate catalog 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/NURS 735), 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 awarded or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are earned (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.

Transfer 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.

## 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 must 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 academic advisor will then notify the student of the decision.

## Transfer from Another Nursing Program

A student who has been enrolled in another MSN or DNP 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/NURS 735).
- Courses accepted for transfer must be similar in content and credit to the TAMU 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 ADSA.

## 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 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 ADGNE 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.

## Immunization Information

Students must complete coursework in health care settings with the College of Nursing's clinical partners. The College of Nursing recommends, but does not require, certain immunizations to help mitigate the risk of exposure to viruses and bacteria. Clinical partners require proof of certain immunizations to participate in clinical experiences. Students wishing to seek immunization exemptions should contact the Associate Director of Academic Nursing Clinical Placement to discuss the process, which varies among clinical partners. Failure to complete required clinical coursework may prevent progression in the program.

Immunization	Information
Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis	one dose of vaccine, after age 18 and within the past 10 years (valid through projected graduation date Td, Tdap, DPT)
Measles (Rubeola)	two doses (at least 4 weeks apart) if born after 1957 or positive titer
Mumps	one dose or positive titer
Rubella (German Measles)	one dose or positive titer
Influenza	one dose annually
Bacterial Meningitis	<a href="https://uhs.tamu.edu/medical/immunizations.html">https://uhs.tamu.edu/medical/immunizations.html</a>
Varicella (chickenpox)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2 dose series OR positive antibody titer lab report from last 5 years required (lab reports required).</li> <li>– If titer is negative/low/equivocal, must repeat the 2-dose series OR booster dose as recommended by HCP.</li> <li>– History of disease must provide positive titer from last 5 years.</li> </ul>
Hepatitis B*	positive antibody titer within last 5 years

Tuberculosis (TB) skin test or approved blood assay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Skin or blood assay test required annually</li> <li>– If PPD or Quantiferon Gold blood test is positive, provide a radiology report or a letter from HCP indicating a negative Chest X-Ray and a completed TB Questionnaire annually is required.</li> <li>– Chest X-ray is valid for 2 years but must include annual TB questionnaire.</li> </ul>
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\*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 healthcare provider for specific and additional information regarding vaccine administration.

The CON uses a third-party platform as the manager of compliance requirements. Students must complete all items requested through their portal. The CON may be asked to provide immunization documentation 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.

## Health Insurance

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 CON 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 Insurance

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 CON must submit to and satisfactorily complete a criminal background review as a condition of admission. This will be initiated through the 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 ADSA no later than three (3) 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 your enrollment, you will be required to present proof through the compliance portal that you have recertified. Students who have not submitted appropriate documentation by the designated deadline or upon request will be blocked from the learning management system portal and will not be allowed to complete clinical experiences until the situation has been resolved.

## 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 compliance portal. Failure to stay compliant will result in the student getting blocked from the learning management system portal and not being allowed to complete clinical experiences until the situation has been resolved.

# Chapter 4: Student Services

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## Disability Resources

It is the policy of the CON 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 Resources on the campus of TAMU coordinates efforts for the benefit of the individuals covered under the statute. Students must present each course coordinator a copy of the accommodations letter a minimum of 3 business days before the first exam.

Students who wish to request reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the Department of Disability Resources to start the process for documenting their disability and determining eligibility for services prior to the start of the program. If you have not heard from Disability Resources within 3 weeks of submitting information you should contact the office. Students with disabilities are expected to perform all the [Core Performance Standards](#) of the program with or without reasonable accommodation. We will work with the student to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations. While the CON 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.

Department of Disability Resources Contact Information:

Department of Disability Resources  
471 Houston Street  
Student Services Building, Suite 122  
1224 TAMU  
College Station, TX 77843-1224  
P: (979) 845-1637  
F: (979) 458-1214  
[disability@tamu.edu](mailto:disability@tamu.edu)

For additional information or assistance, contact your academic advisor.

## Health Services

Bryan campus students are eligible to receive services at the Texas A&M University Health Services building located on the TAMU campus. [University Health Services](#) (UHS) is an accredited ambulatory health care provider serving students by providing primary health care services and promoting health through prevention and education. Visits to medical care providers, ambulance transport service on campus, and consultation with contracted medical specialists or health educators are available at a reduced cost.

Students located in Round Rock and RN to BSN students will not be assessed the University Health Services fee thus are not eligible to utilize these services. They are encouraged to access needed services through local healthcare providers.

Programs for academic success as well as mental health services and crisis intervention are available through the UHS. They provide short-term counseling and crisis intervention services. They also provide individual, group, and couples counseling for personal concerns that are common among

undergraduate and graduate students.

Common concerns that students face include relationship difficulties (e.g., romantic partner, roommate, family), depression, anxiety, stress, dealing with change, fear of failure, career uncertainty, and coping with feelings such as loneliness, sadness, shame, anger, guilt, etc. For more information, contact your academic advisor.

TAMU University Health Services has partnered with [TELUS Health Student Support](#) app to offer 24/7 access to free, confidential professional counseling by phone or chat.

TELUS Health Student Support services include:

- Confidential, real-time virtual counseling
- 24/7 availability via chat and phone
- Scheduled, short-term counseling appointments
- Extensive on-demand content library
- Support in your language

## Library Resources

An extraordinary array of resources and services are available to students through the [TAMU University Libraries](#). Students and faculty have access to reference services in person, over the phone, through email and online via a live chat format. Library staff can assist students in using online resources, web pages and resource guides at any geographical location. Educational services include traditional in-person instructional sessions, online subject guides and tutorials, and customized programs. [Medical Sciences](#) librarians also provide informatics instruction within the nursing curriculum.

## Office of Financial Aid

All financial aid is processed through the Texas A&M Financial Aid Office. For assistance, contact financial aid advisor by email at [hscfinancialaid@tamu.edu](mailto:hscfinancialaid@tamu.edu).

Most types of aid are based upon financial need and satisfactory academic progress. Students who meet the eligibility requirements may renew most awards annually by submitting a Financial Aid Form before the designated priority date by demonstrating financial need. Students should visit the [TAMU Scholarships and Financial Aid](#) website for complete information. To be considered for Federal aid, students should complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA).

## Scholarships

The CON is committed to helping students fund their education. The CON has a growing number of internal scholarships available. To view Texas A&M University and CON available scholarships, go to the [Scholarships](#) webpage. Deadline to apply is February 1. Civic groups, foundations and other organizations have additional scholarships available for nursing students.

## Scholarship Academic Progress Policy

CON scholarships have minimum GPR requirements in order to be awarded as well as GPR requirements to maintain a scholarship. If recipients cumulative GPR falls below that scholarship standard, all future terms for the scholarship will be terminated. Scholarship recipients are required to provide an official transcript to the Office of Student Affairs in the CON at the end of each term.

If the recipient withdraws after funds have been applied to the bill, then the funds will remain applied. That semester will count against the student's multi-year scholarship allotment. If the recipient is in good academic standing upon withdrawal, he/she will be reconsidered for the scholarship upon reenrollment, contingent on availability of funds.

If the recipient is on probation at the time of the withdrawal, the remaining scholarship eligibility will be terminated. Students are advised to contact Scholarships & Financial Aid to speak with a scholarship advisor if they plan to withdraw and later return to the University. Scholarship recipients must also be in good standing with the University. If the recipient is placed on disciplinary probation, they lose all remaining scholarship eligibility.

Students who do not meet the Scholarship Academic Progress Policy requirements have the right to appeal and provide information about extenuating circumstances that may have hindered their progress. Appeals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## Security

The Texas A&M University Police Department (UPD) provides law enforcement and security services to all components of the main academic campus and a variety of satellite facilities throughout Brazos County. The Texas A&M Health Science Center Bryan Campus has security officers on site 24 hours a day. They are available to escort students to the parking lot after hours. You may stop by the security desk on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the HPEB building or call 979-436-9000 to get assistance. The Round Rock Campus provides security officers between the hours of 7 am and 6 pm Monday through Friday. Any criminal offense, suspected criminal activity, or other emergency on campus should be reported directly to Security at: Bryan Campus 979-436-9000, Round Rock Campus 512-341-4900, McAllen Campus 956-668-6300, in person, or by dialing 9-911 from any campus phone or by using one of the emergency blue light telephones located throughout some campuses.

## Academic Success Program

Programs for academic success are available through the [Academic Success Center](#). Services include individual and group counseling, assessment of study behaviors, screening for learning disabilities, an extensive collection of self-help resources, and weekly workshops on a variety of study skills topics.

Transforming individuals into nurses requires acquisition of scientific knowledge, critical reasoning, skill development, and values to shape professionals characterized by caring, empathy, social justice and ethical comportment. CON faculty understand the challenges of the transition and are committed to success of all students in our community. To achieve that goal, the CON offers two evidence-based resources, the Academic Success Coach and Supplemental Instruction (SI), to facilitate student success and successful progression toward degree completion for nursing students at all levels. Students may individually select to access the support of either the Academic Coach or SI. In addition, faculty may also refer students to one or both resources.

### Academic Success Coach

The Academic Success Coach provides individualized guidance in skill development and identifying interventions to assist students to successfully navigate the nursing program. The Academic Success

Coach meets with students seeking this service and assesses student need. Students and their coach co-design an action plan with specific steps and monitor individual student progress. Intervention strategies address a number of areas including study skills, test-taking skills, and time management skills. A coach is available on both the Bryan and Round Rock campuses.

## Supplemental Instruction

In addition, SI is offered in the first semester of the pre-license program. SI is a peer-led, academic assistance program that can significantly improve performance for students who attend regularly. In the CON SI leaders are students who have been successful in pharmacology and in pathophysiology. Weekly tutoring sessions free to any student wishing to participate.

SI is sponsored by the Association of Former Students. Both TAMU and the CON invest in this program because evidence indicates that students who attend 10 or more sessions throughout the semester earn half to a full letter grade higher than those students who do not attend.

## University Writing Center

The [University Writing Center](#), a unit of Undergraduate Studies, supports writing and public speaking for every Texas A&M student, with particular emphasis on supporting Writing and Communication courses. Their priorities are as follows:

- To help graduate and undergraduate students practice the habits of mature composers of written and oral communication.
- To provide resources for faculty and Graduate Assistant Teachers for integrating best writing and oral communication pedagogy into courses.

# Chapter 5: Registrar Policies & Procedures

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## Howdy

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 TAMU 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.

## 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 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 TAMU 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 *My Record* 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 CON. 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 CON.

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 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 academic 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 the learning management system 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 academic advisor and Dean or designee for approval. A student may not 'Q' drop or withdraw after the deadline period ends.

For additional information about withdrawing from the University, see [Texas A&M University Student Rules Section 17](#)

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://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 (LOA). An approved LOA is required for any term in which a student is not enrolled for course work. Graduate students at the CON may request a LOA of no more than two semesters. A student on LOA 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 LOA 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 LOA at the CON of no more than one year, the following must be met:

- Students must be in good academic standing to request a LOA.
- 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 LOA to see if their financial aid will change with the planned change in courses.
- Once the LOA 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 LOA, 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 TAMU after an approved LOA 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 CON. 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 LOA, 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 Catalog](#).

An international student should visit with an International Student Services advisor to find out how a LOA may impact their stay in or their re-entry into the U.S.

Discontinuance of study without permission from TAMU does not constitute a LOA.

Pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, and recovery are justification for a LOA for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student's health care provider, 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 TAMU for this reason.

## Readmission

Following a break in enrollment of one year or more, graduate students at TAMU 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 CON for one year or more (due to personal reasons, expired LOA status, or dismissal) who wishes to reenter the CON, must follow the procedure as outlined below:

- Complete online application and meet admission criteria for full admission as outlined on the [CON website](#).
- Submit any transcripts which include coursework not already on file at TAMU.
- Submit a letter requesting readmission to the academic advisor describing their activities since the last enrollment in the CON 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 CON Graduate Admission, Graduation, and Progression Committee reviews all requests for readmission to the CON MSN, doctoral, and certificate programs.

## Absence without Permission

Students who leave school without officially withdrawing or without an approved LOA, or who fail to return after a LOA, may be ineligible to return to the CON. See readmission policy. Students who, without permission from the ADSA or designee of the college 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 their visa status. They should consult with 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 [TAMU 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 6: Academic Rules, Policies, and Procedures

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

## Aggie Code of Honor

TAMU 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 TAMU Honor System. As such, it is the central office responsible for maintaining records and coordinating communication, prevention, training, remediation, and adjudication efforts for the TAMU Honor System.

Additionally, it aids 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. [See Student Rule 20.](#)

## Student Rules

Each student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with and to comply with the [Texas A&M University Student Rules](#). 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 - 62)
- [Appendices](#)

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 TAMU 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 TAMU 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 and Creative Work](#) 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 in System Regulation 15.99.03 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 policies, please contact your academic 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](#).

TAMU 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 always keep appropriate records. 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 CON. The grading scale is as follows:

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

\*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 and DNP 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.
- 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 ADGNE.
- 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. 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 their 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 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, they will fill out an "Incomplete Grade Report," which is filed with the AD SA 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 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 Executive Associate Dean (EAD).

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 CON 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 SON as well as any CON 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 each semester. Evaluations are anonymous.



# Chapter 7: Classroom and Clinical Experiences

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## 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 TAMU, CON 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 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 or advanced nursing practice.
3. Minimum one year of experience as an advanced practice nurse or in nursing leadership.
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.
7. 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 the 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 and DNP 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 appropriate Program Coordinator at least six (6) months in advance. Requests are reviewed on a case- by-case basis by the MSN Program Coordinator and ADGNE.

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.

CON 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 or DNP students.

Students who are admitted into the MSN Education and Forensic tracks and relocate to another state during 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 are 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, they 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 TAMU 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

CON ID badge must always be worn 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 CON abide by [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 \(HIPAA\) regulations](#). In addition, the CON adheres to the national privacy standards issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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 CON 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](#). 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.

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 CON 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 their 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 they choose to seek a private health care provider.
5. Assist the student in completing any administrative paperwork required.
6. Complete the CON Needle Stick Incident/Exposure Report Form.

References:

Centers for Disease Control. (2016). [Bloodborne Infectious Diseases: HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C](#)  
Retrieved 4/11/2017

Taylor, C.R., Lillis, Cl, LeMone, Priscilla, & Lynn, Pamela. (2011). Fundamentals of Nursing: The Art and Science of Nursing Care. (7th Ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins

## 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 everyone 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 CON 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 Conference.

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 after 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 CON 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 CON. Reports will be sent to the Dean and the ADSA.

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 CON, 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 ADSA 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 their 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 their 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 (TBON) 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 TBON 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.

## DNP Clinical and Residency Hours

The DNP degree requires a minimum of 1,000 hours of practice post-baccalaureate (BSN). Practice hours from a master's nursing program can apply towards the 1,000-hour, post-baccalaureate practice requirement (AACN, 2015). DNP students holding a master's degree in nursing and national certification as an advanced practice registered nurse (nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse midwife, certified registered nurse anesthetist) can apply up to 500 hours towards the 1,000-hour, DNP practice requirement. Students will complete remaining hours through the DNP Scholarly Project.

The student will submit verification of up to 500 practice hours from their master's program in NursingCAS during the application process. All practice hour requests require review and approval by the DNP Program Coordinator.

Students with fewer than 500 practice hours will complete necessary hours through completion of prescribed residency (NURS 739) electives. These electives will be determined in a program-planning meeting between the student and the DNP program coordinator and/or course coordinator.

Residency hours are designed to provide:

- systematic opportunities for feedback and reflection,



- in-depth work/mentorship with experts from nursing, as well as other disciplines,
- opportunities for meaningful student engagement within practice environments,
- an opportunity to build and assimilate knowledge for advanced specialty practice at a high level of complexity,
- an opportunity for further synthesis and expansion of learning,
- experience in the context within which the final DNP scholarly project is completed,
- an opportunity to integrate and synthesize the essentials and specialty requirements necessary to demonstrate competency in an area of specialized nursing practice,

## The DNP Project

### Final Project

The DNP degree culminates in an integrated, practice-focused project led by a faculty mentor based upon availability and research/practice interest and aided by consultation from internal or external content experts. Following AACN (2015) guidelines, the focus of the DNP project is practice change through translation of evidence and quality improvement. The project may target nursing interventions that influence health care outcomes for individuals or populations. This project may address direct care, care management, administration of health care systems or development and implementation of health care policy.

### Student's Advisory Council

After receiving admission to the DNP program, the student will consult with the DNP Program Coordinator concerning appointment of a chair for the DNP Project. The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The committee will consist of no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty representative of the student's field of study and practice expertise. The Project Chair must be a full-time faculty member within the CON (or another Texas A&M College with special permission) with an appropriate role on the graduate faculty. A second member of the advisory committee may also be from the CON with expertise in the practice area of the student or with expertise in program design and conduct. At least one or more of the members must have an appointment to a department other than the student's major department.

## 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](#) and 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.

## Course Recording

Synchronous class sessions, where faculty instruction includes lecture delivery as a teaching strategy, will be recorded. Course lecture content will be available via the Learning Management System. Recordings will only be shared with the students registered for this course at the time of distribution. Enrolled students should not distribute the recording to anyone. Class recordings will not be used in subsequent semesters.

Class recordings will capture the following:

- Students' faces and background
- Students' verbal communications

## Exam Guidelines

Exams are given by computer or occasional written tests. Be prepared with appropriate supplies for either. It is the expectation of the CON 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 CON 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.

## Chapter 8: Student Conduct Code Procedures

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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 TAMU 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 TAMU, 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 their 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 School/Hospital policy may result in immediate termination from the program.

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

Students are expected to demonstrate and embrace the following principles:

- Be responsible for their 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 TAMU, CON, or clinical site requirements regarding confidentiality prior to the beginning of the academic year. Use patient data in all schoolwork, 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, TAMU and the CON 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 CON 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 ADGNE. The ADGNE 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 CON ADSA by the reporting party within 10 business days of the violation. The ADSA will investigate the complaint.

## Procedures for Handling Uncontested Case Investigations

If it appears that a student has breached CON 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 CON.

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 CON, bar from readmission, denial of degree, revocation or surrender of a degree, the EAD 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 ADSA shall investigate the allegations that a student has violated one or more of the rules of the CON.

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 least 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 ADSA will address any questions the committee or the accused has in regard to the evidence or the investigation process.
- The CON 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, they 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 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 9: Student Life

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### Sports Pass/Ticket Options

All students will be given the option of purchasing a ticket package to TAMU 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 TAMU identification card to use a sports pass.

### Student Participation in Committees

Students can serve on various [CON committees](#) 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 ADSA.

### Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society

Phi Iota Chapter is the CON 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 graduate student:

1. Have completed at least one-fourth of the nursing curriculum,
2. Have a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale,
3. Rank in upper 35% of graduating class,
4. 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 CON, acknowledged as an official student organization, and a recipient of all rights and privileges afforded formal student organizations within the College must be reviewed and approved. All official student organizations affiliated with the CON must demonstrate both in purpose and actions consistency with the mission and vision of the College. In addition, official student organizations must follow CON and TAMU 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 [TAMU Student Activities](#) 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 CON'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: To secure approval and recognition as an official student organization within the CON, the proposal (see above) must be reviewed (and documented) by the following entities (in the order indicated):

- CON Student Policy and Scholarship 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 CON.

## Interprofessional Organizations

There are many other student organizations with healthcare focus within TAMU. 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

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## 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 TAMU.

## 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 to participate in the commencement ceremony.

## APRN Licensure

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 MSN in Nursing Education are encouraged to attain the [Certified Nurse Educator<sup>CM</sup>](#) 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 MSN 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](#).

# APPENDIX A

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## The Essentials of Masters Education in Nursing Practice (2011)

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](#).

The core competencies are found in the [Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies with Curriculum Content](#) (2017). Retrieved August, 22, 2019. Additional Lifespan Competencies are provided from the [Population-Focused Nurse Practitioner Competencies: Family/across the lifespan](#) (2013). Retrieved February 5, 2014.

Competency Area	NP Core Competencies	Family/Across the Lifespan NP Competencies
Scientific Foundation Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Critically analyzes data and evidence for improving advanced nursing practice.</li><li>- Integrates knowledge from the humanities and sciences within the context of nursing science.</li><li>- Translates research and other forms of knowledge to improve practice processes and outcomes.</li><li>- Develops new practice approaches based on the integration of research, theory, and practice knowledge.</li></ul>	
Leadership Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assumes complex and advanced leadership roles to initiate and guide change.</li><li>- Provides leadership to foster collaboration with multiple stakeholders (e.g. patients, community, integrated health care teams, and policy makers) to improve health care.</li><li>- Demonstrates leadership that uses critical and reflective thinking.</li><li>- Advocates for improved access, quality and cost-effective health care.</li><li>- Advances practice through the development and implementation of innovations incorporating principles of change.</li><li>- Communicates practice knowledge effectively both orally and in writing.</li><li>- Participates in professional organizations and activities that influence advanced practice nursing and/or health outcomes of a population focus.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Works with individuals of other professions to maintain a climate of mutual respect and shared values 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.</li><li>- Engages in continuous professional and interprofessional development to enhance team performance.</li><li>- Assumes leadership in interprofessional groups to facilitate the development, implementation and evaluation of care provided in complex systems.</li></ul>

Quality Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uses best available evidence to continuously improve quality of clinical practice.</li> <li>- Evaluates the relationships among access, cost, quality, and safety and their influence on health care.</li> <li>- Evaluates how organizational structure, care processes, financing, marketing, and policy decisions impact the quality of health care.</li> <li>- Applies skills in peer review to promote a culture of excellence.</li> <li>- Anticipates variations in practice and is proactive in implementing interventions to ensure quality.</li> </ul>	
Practice Inquiry Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides leadership in the translation of new knowledge into practice.</li> <li>- Generates knowledge from clinical practice to improve practice and patient outcomes.</li> <li>- Applies clinical investigative skills to improve health outcomes.</li> <li>- Leads practice inquiry, individually or in partnership with others.</li> <li>- Disseminates evidence from inquiry to diverse audiences using multiple modalities.</li> <li>- Analyzes clinical guidelines for individualized application into practice.</li> </ul>	
Technology and Information Literacy Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrates appropriate technologies for knowledge management to improve health care.</li> <li>- Translates technical and scientific health information appropriate for various users' needs.</li> <li>- Assesses the patient's and caregiver's educational needs to provide effective, personalized health care.</li> <li>- Coaches the patient and caregiver for positive behavioral change.</li> </ul>	
Technology and Information Literacy Competencies cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrates information literacy skills in complex decision making.</li> <li>- Contributes to the design of clinical information systems that promote safe, quality and cost-effective care.</li> <li>- Uses technology systems that capture data on variables for the evaluation of nursing care.</li> </ul>	



Policy Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrates an understanding of the interdependence of policy and practice.</li> <li>- Advocates for ethical policies that promote access, equity, quality, and cost.</li> <li>- Analyzes ethical, legal, and social factors influencing policy development.</li> <li>- Contributes to the development of health policy.</li> <li>- Analyzes the implications of health policy across disciplines.</li> <li>- Evaluates the impact of globalization on health care policy development.</li> <li>- Advocates for policies for safe and health practice environments.</li> </ul>	
Health Delivery System Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Applies knowledge of organizational practices and complex systems to improve health care delivery.</li> <li>- Effects health care change using broad based skills including negotiating, consensus-building, and partnering.</li> <li>- Minimizes risk to patients and providers at the individual and systems level.</li> <li>- Facilitates the development of health care systems that address the needs of culturally diverse populations, providers, and other stakeholders.</li> <li>- Evaluates the impact of health care delivery on patients, providers, other stakeholders, and the environment.</li> <li>- Analyzes organizational structure, functions, and resources to improve the delivery of care.</li> <li>- Collaborates in planning for transitions across the continuum of care.</li> </ul>	
Ethics Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrates ethical principles in decision making.</li> <li>- Evaluates the ethical consequences of decisions.</li> <li>- Applies ethically sound solutions to complex issues related to individuals, populations, and systems of care.</li> </ul>	

Independent Practice Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Functions as a licensed practitioner in accordance with the state Nurse Practice Act.</li> <li>- Demonstrates the highest level of accountability for professional practice.</li> <li>- Practices independently managing previously diagnosed and undiagnosed patients.</li> <li>- 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.</li> <li>- Uses advanced health assessment skills to differentiate between normal, variations of normal and abnormal findings.</li> <li>- Employs screening and diagnostic strategies in the development of diagnoses.</li> <li>- Prescribes medications within scope of practice.</li> <li>- Manages the health/illness status of patients and families over time.</li> <li>- Provides patient-centered care recognizing cultural diversity and the patient or designee as a full partner in decision-making.</li> <li>- Works to establish a relationship with the patient characterized by mutual respect, empathy, and collaboration.</li> <li>- Creates a climate of patient-centered care to include confidentiality, privacy, comfort, emotional support, mutual trust, and respect.</li> <li>- Incorporates the patient's cultural and spiritual preferences, values, and beliefs into health care.</li> <li>- Preserves the patient's control over decision making by negotiating a mutually acceptable plan of care.</li> <li>- Develops strategies to prevent one's own personal biases from interfering with delivery of quality care.</li> <li>- Addresses cultural, spiritual, and ethnic influences that potentially create conflict among individuals, families, staff, and caregivers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Synthesizes data from a variety of sources to make clinical decisions regarding appropriate management, consultation, or referral.</li> <li>- Plans diagnostic strategies and makes appropriate use of diagnostic tools for screening and prevention, with consideration of the costs, risks, and benefits to individuals.</li> <li>- Formulates comprehensive differential diagnoses.</li> <li>- 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.</li> <li>- Prescribes medications with knowledge of altered pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics with special populations, such as infants and children, pregnant and lactating women, and older adults.</li> <li>- Prescribes therapeutic devices.</li> <li>- Adapts interventions to meet the complex needs of individuals and families arising from aging, developmental/life transitions, comorbidities, psychosocial, and financial issues.</li> <li>- Assesses and promotes self-care in patients with disabilities.</li> <li>- Plans and orders palliative care and end-of-life care, as appropriate.</li> <li>- Performs primary care procedures.</li> <li>- Uses knowledge of family theories and development stages to individualize care provided to individuals and families.</li> <li>- Facilitates family decision- making about health.</li> <li>- Analyzes the impact of aging and age-and disease-related changes in sensory/perceptual function, cognition, confidence with technology, and health literacy</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educates professional and lay caregivers to provide culturally and spiritually sensitive, appropriate care.</li> <li>- Collaborates with both professional and other caregivers to achieve optimal care outcomes.</li> <li>- Coordinates transitional care services in and across care settings.</li> <li>- Participates in the development, use, and evaluation of professional standards and evidence- based care.</li> </ul>	<p>and numeracy on the ability and readiness to learn and tailor interventions accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrates knowledge of the similarities and differences in roles of various health professionals providing mental health services, e.g., psychotherapists, psychologist, psychiatric social worker, psychiatrist, and advanced practice psychiatric nurse.</li> <li>- 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).</li> <li>- Applies principles of self-efficacy/empowerment in promoting behavior change.</li> <li>- Develops patient-appropriate educational materials that address the language and cultural beliefs of the patient.</li> <li>- Monitors specialized care coordination to enhance effectiveness of outcomes for individuals and families.</li> </ul>
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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. This handbook does not constitute a contract, expressed or implied, between any student or faculty member and the CON. The CON at all times retains the right to dismiss any student who does not attain and maintain adequate academic performance or who does not exhibit the personal and professional qualifications prerequisite to the practice of nursing.

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