

Master of Science in Nursing Student Handbook

2023-24

Other [Handbooks](#):

- **General Student Handbook:** Information related to compliance, health and safety, University policies, and so on
- **Graduate Programs: Academic Policies:** Policies in respect to advising, grading, progression, student employment, and so on

Ways to Navigate the Student Handbook

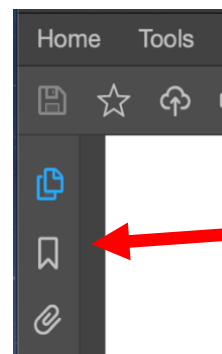
1) **Use hyperlinks in the Table of Contents (TOC):** Hover over a topic and click

2) **Use Bookmarks in Adobe Reader DC (free)**

(You can also use Acrobat Pro, or DC if you already own them.)

- Download and open the file in Acrobat Reader.
- Click on the Bookmarks symbol on the left side of the document (see example).
- A table of contents will appear on the left that lists all headings throughout the document. You can click on any one of them to quickly access a specific section of the document.

NOTE: If you do not see this icon: Select "View > Show/Hide > Navigation Panes > Bookmarks" from the Adobe Acrobat main menu.



3) **Use TOC in Preview (MAC)**

- Download and open the file in Preview.
- If the column with the table of contents does not appear on the left: Select "View" and uncheck "Hide Sidebar".
- To see the table of contents, select "View" and check "Table of Contents".
- A table of contents will appear on the left that lists all headings throughout the document. You can click on any one of them to quickly access a specific section of the document.

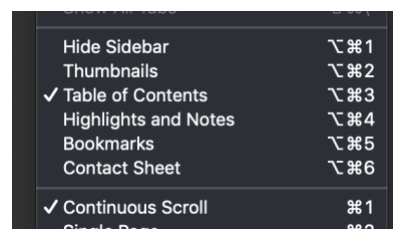


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WELCOME

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program prepares nurses for advanced nursing practice. Graduates are prepared for advanced nursing roles in direct clinical practice and administration/leadership roles in areas that support clinical practice.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The educational outcomes of the MSN program are guided by [The Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing](#) (2011). The [Carolina Core](#) provides a curricular framework to guide the program.

The MSN program prepares students to:

1. Integrate strategies that address the multiple factors that influence health of diverse individuals and populations.
2. Use a reflective, ethical, and scholarly approach to advanced nursing practice
3. Apply evidence-based practice to promote systems that optimize the delivery of care for diverse patients and populations.
4. Integrate theory, research, and practice in the care of diverse patients, families, and communities.
5. Utilize information technology to deliver and enhance care.
6. Engage in professional development and life-long learning.
7. Function as an effective leader or member of the interdisciplinary care team.
8. Lead quality and safety improvements in health care.
9. Demonstrate advanced assessment and/or management strategies to improve health outcomes for diverse patients and populations.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

The program of study varies from 33-46 credits of academic coursework including clinical practice, an oral comprehensive examination, and a master's paper (or in some cases, a thesis).

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

The Lead Faculty in the student's specialty area will provide information regarding academic requirements at the time of matriculation into the program to each student.

If a student has withdrawn from the program for a significant length of time or has interrupted the clinical sequence in their advanced practice area, the student may be required to repeat coursework to prepare them for returning to the appropriate advanced practice standing. Standing in the specialty area upon return to the program will be determined by the Lead Faculty and graduate faculty in the student's specialty area (see Readmission).

POST-GRADUATE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS (APRN)

Advanced practice post-graduate APRN certificate program course offerings respond to the increased need for nurse practitioners, generally, and the increased need for health care delivery in rural and underserved areas in the state. Applicants are nurses with master's or doctoral degrees who desire additional preparation in an advanced practice area that their original master's program did not include. By taking a selected group of courses from the MSN program, students become eligible to sit for appropriate national certification examinations and to be approved to practice as nurse practitioners in the state of North Carolina.

The School of Nursing Office of Student Affairs coordinates the application process for post-graduate courses and the MSN/DNP Division and Programs Office oversees advisement of post-graduate students and evaluation of their courses and teaching.

While the courses are taken with students in the MSN/DNP programs, these courses do not constitute a degree-granting program. However, post-graduate students follow the honor code, participate in course and teacher evaluation, have academic advisors, are subject to health and safety regulations, have library privileges and are assigned mailboxes and lockers.

Post-graduate students must be nationally certified NPs in another population area and meet with the Lead Faculty of their population area to develop an individualized plan of study. A post-graduate student will be unable to proceed in their program of study if he or she receives a grade of F, or if he or she receives a grade of L in more than 30% of the total credits in the student's plan of study.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

Please download the Master's Portfolio [Comprehensive Examination Guidelines](#). They will be discussed with you by your course coordinator or Lead Faculty on the first day of the semester in which you are graduating.

- [Resume Guidelines](#)

Example documents

- [Collaborative Practice Agreement – Guidelines \(April 2018\)](#)
- [NP Survival Guide: NCBON Compliance Review Audits](#)
 - For additional examples: search “np collaborative practice”

Rubrics for evaluation

- [NP Rubric Portfolio](#) (PDF fillable)
- [HCS Rubric Portfolio](#) (PDF fillable)

MASTER'S PAPER

OVERVIEW

All MSN students are required to complete NURS 992--Master's Paper to earn the master's degree. Completion of NURS 992 represents an academic milestone (conferral of the master's degree) signifying the student's ability to synthesize what they have learned in their program of study resulting in a meaningful scholarly product. At completion of the NURS 992 Master's Paper (Scholarly Activity), students will successfully:

- demonstrate scholarship, including mastery of a focused area of knowledge related to the student's advanced practice area;
- complete or be currently enrolled in NURS 740;
- complete a minimum of 3 credits for NURS 992;
- be supervised by a committee who guides the scholarly activity;
- submit a final written product.

Below are quicklinks to commonly requested information.

- [Master's Paper Committee Composition & Proposal Approval Form](#)
- [Checklist for Steps of the Master's Paper](#)
- [Guidelines: Master's Paper: Practicum Experiences](#)
- *Suggested Guidelines: Types of Scholarly Papers*
 - [Research Paper Guidelines](#)
 - [Case Analysis Guidelines](#)
 - [Integrative Research Review Guidelines](#)
 - [Guidelines for a Clinical Paper](#)
 - [Guidelines for Policy Analysis](#)

THE MASTER'S PAPER COMMITTEE

All students must secure a **two-person committee** for their scholarly activity. The committee chair is a SON faculty member with permission to Chair Master's Papers that guides the student in the development of his/her interests and ideas to successfully complete the scholarly activity. The responsibilities of the Chair and Committee Member (may be a SON faculty or outside member with permission to serve on the committee) are to:

- (a) guide the student with identifying a scholarly activity;
- (b) provide coaching on implementation of the activity; and
- (c) ask critical questions to move the student to a higher level of thinking (transformative learning).

When a potential focus for the scholarly activity has been identified, the student should ask their academic advisor or lead faculty to help identify potential faculty. The student should schedule a meeting with a faculty member to discuss the idea, determine if their interests are well-matched, and explore the possibility of an agreement to chair the activity. If a student is unable to find a faculty member who is willing to serve as chair of the committee, the student should discuss this with their academic advisor and Lead Faculty.

At least one member of the committee should be a faculty member in the student's advanced practice area. Please see the Associate Dean MSN-DNP if you seek exemption from this policy. Students must have an approved two-person committee, consisting of chair and advisory member, formed **prior to completion of any work**.

DEVELOPING A TIMELINE

- (PDF) [Suggested Timeline for Master's Paper](#)

Students may begin working on their scholarly activity concurrently upon enrollment in NURS 740. One of the first things to do when beginning to work on the scholarly activity is to develop a timeline in collaboration with your Committee Chair and committee member if needed.

Please note that IRB approval (if applicable) as well as contracts and compliance (if applicable) **may take up to 4-6 weeks** (or longer) and must be factored into the agreed upon timeline. No agency-based activity may begin until a contract and compliance are secured. It is the responsibility of the Committee Chair to ensure that IRB materials and clinical agency information (if relevant) has been submitted.

TYPES OF MASTER'S PAPERS

There are two major types of scholarly activities: (a) a scholarly paper, or (b) a practicum experience (see quicklinks above.)

For a scholarly paper, two students may collaborate on a single paper that is of significant effort. An outline describing each student's specific contribution to the scholarly paper must be submitted to the committee chair at two points in time: (a) when the initial written proposal is reviewed prior to implementation, and (b) upon completion of the paper.

For a practicum experience, the scholarly activity and product should represent the **independent effort** of a single student.

REGISTERING FOR NURS 992

NURS 992 is a three-credit academic course. The University holds to the [federal definition](#) of a credit hour. Practicum experiences must include 60-hours of hands-on participation which counts toward one of the three credits. It is recommended that students maintain a time log for preparation and the actual hands--on participation in a practicum activity.

According to University policy, students are required to be registered whenever University resources (including faculty time) are being used. Students must be registered for NURS 992 under their Committee Chair's section number whenever there is a **deliverable or specific outcome** related to the Master's Paper that involves the use of faculty resources. In most cases, the two deliverables are the proposal (proposal defense) and the final paper/report (final defense) of the completed activity.

Examples:

- If the student and committee chair (including committee members) negotiate a proposal defense during fall semester with a final defense during spring semester, then the student should be registered for NURS 992 during both fall and spring semesters. Many students may fall in this category.
- If a student is going to complete the entire process of the scholarly activity during fall semester and defend the final completed product before the first day of class in the spring semester, they would register for NURS 992 only in the Fall semester.
- Similarly, some students complete the entire process from beginning to end during one semester. This student would register for NURS 992 once.

Note: Only three credits of NURS 992 will count towards the course requirements for the master's degree. The student may enroll in NURS 992 more than once if more time is needed.

GRADING OF NURS 992

Faculty must use the [permanent HPLF graduate grading scale](#) to reflect academic progress for NURS 992 in any given term. An incomplete **may not** be given in NURS 992. For grading policies, please refer to the section on [Graduate Grading](#) in the Graduate Student Handbook.

DISSEMINATION

All students are expected to disseminate the results of their scholarly activity in some way. Dissemination is defined as the purposive distribution of information and intervention materials to a specific audience/stakeholder. Avenues for dissemination include presentations to staff in the site where the activity was conducted; local, regional, national and/or international presentations or posters; and publication of results collaboratively with faculty. The University guidelines for co-authorship should be followed and discussed by the student and committee chair as early as possible in the planned experience.

THE FINAL PAPER OR REPORT

The final paper or report must be prepared in the [seventh \(or most current\) edition](#) of the [Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association](#). A great site for all your APA needs is the [OWL at Purdue University](#) or the [UNC-CH HSL site](#). Please see the Associate Dean MSN-DNP if an alternative publication style is necessary.

Once the final paper or report is defended and your committee has approved your final written product, place your completed paper in a binder or folder prior to submitting it to the MSN Division Manager in suite 1300. A title page with the typed names and credentials of the committee (signatures are no longer required) must be the first page of the report.

All final paperwork will be circulated (via email) by the MSN Division Manager for signatures by the Chair and committee member(s). Please be sure your chair alerts the MSN Division Manager when you have successfully completed your final defense, so these forms go out in a timely manner.

STEPS OF THE PROCESS

- Download this PDF for a detailed description of each step in the process: [Steps-of-the-Process](#)
- [Checklist for Steps of the Master's Paper](#)

Summary of Steps

1. Find a Committee Chair
2. Form a Committee
3. Submit the Committee Composition Form
4. Timeline and Proposal Development
 - i. Determine a timeline & handling of costs
 - ii. Write the proposal
 - iii. Clearance to proceed

5. Schedule and Complete a Proposal Defense
6. Master's Paper Committee Composition & Proposal Defense Form Signed by Chair and Committee member(s) (Part II)
7. Carry Out the Activity
8. Write the Final Paper or Report
9. Schedule and Complete a Final Defense
10. Required Forms and Final Paper/Report Submitted

HELP AND ASSISTANCE

Faculty and students should first direct their questions to the lead faculty in the student's practice area. Faculty and students are also encouraged to email Dawn O'Neal, the MSN Division Manager for general questions. For other questions, email or drop by the Associate Dean-MSN-DNP Division office (suite 1300).

ACADEMIC ACTIONS & CONSEQUENCES

FORMAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA)

The advantage of a leave of absence LOA is that it stops the student's academic clock for the period of time requested. Leaves are not granted retroactively. Leaves should be applied for before or at the beginning of the semester. When seeking a formal leave of absence, students must submit a "Request for Leave of Absence" form (Required forms may be found at [The Graduate School Form Finder](#)).

Students must:

1. Meet with their academic advisor and Lead Faculty to determine their standing in the program.
2. Obtain a brief written statement of support for a leave of absence from the Lead Faculty.
3. Submit all materials (request form and statement of support) to the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP for signature.

The MSN/DNP Division Office will forward the request form to the Graduate School. A copy of the request form will be sent to student, Lead Faculty, and the Assistant Dean-OSA. The student will receive official permission for the LOA from the Graduate School.

FORMAL WITHDRAWAL OR MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

For a formal withdrawal or medical leave of absence, a student must meet with their faculty advisor and Lead Faculty. Students who have taken a formal withdrawal or medical leave of absence must provide evidence that the original problems requiring the withdrawal or medical leave have been resolved when seeking readmission.

If a student decides to withdraw for reasons other than illness, or if a medical withdrawal cannot be authorized, the student must contact the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP and the Lead Faculty in their specialty area. An official withdrawal involves the completion of an "Application for Withdrawal" form. The student must obtain clearance signatures from course instructors and certain University offices, as determined by the dean's office, before the form is submitted.

If a student requests a formal withdrawal from the graduate program while in their first semester of work, they must reapply to the University Graduate School.

READMISSION PROCESS

It is the student's responsibility to notify the faculty advisor and Lead Faculty of all situations that impact progression in the program. It is strongly recommended that students who leave the program for any length of time, stay in close communication with the academic advisor and Lead Faculty to update them on their situation on a regular basis.

A student may be required to repeat coursework to prepare them for returning to the appropriate advanced practice standing. Standing in the specialty area upon return to the program will be determined by the Lead Faculty and graduate faculty in the student's specialty area.

When seeking readmission, students must submit the following materials 1 month prior to the published University deadline for the semester in which they are seeking readmission:

1. Complete a "Request for Readmission" form (available on the Graduate School web site or from the Office of Academic Affairs, Suite 1000).
2. Meet with their academic advisor and Lead Faculty to determine their standing in the program.
3. Obtain a brief written statement of support for readmission to the specialty area from the Lead Faculty which includes any readmission requirements approved by specialty faculty.
4. Submit all materials (request form and statement of support) to the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP for signature.

The Associate Dean-MSN/DNP will forward the request form to the Graduate School. A copy of the "Request for Readmission" form will be sent to student, Lead Faculty, and Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. The student will receive official notification of readmission from the Graduate School.

Any student seeking readmission, who cannot complete his or her program of study by the end of the 5-year calendar clock, must seek formal readmission to the graduate program. A request for a 1-year extension of the 5-year time period for MSN students and 8-year clock for DNP students may be requested in special situations.

Students must formally request readmission (see above) to the program before the School of Nursing deadlines for the semester in which they are seeking readmission. The School of Nursing must have sufficient time to process readmission requests to meet the published deadlines of the University.

School of Nursing Deadlines	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Summer</i>	<i>Spring</i>
Formal Leave of Absence or Break in Continuous Enrollment < 1 yr	June 1	March 1	Nov 1
Formal Withdrawal, Medical Leave, Break in Continuous Enrollment > 1 yr	May 1	Feb 1	Oct 1

ACADEMIC OR CLINICAL DIFFICULTIES

Students who are having academic or clinical difficulties are encouraged to contact the course instructor, clinical faculty, and clinical preceptor, if applicable, as early as possible in the semester. It is also recommended that students apprise their academic advisor and Lead Faculty of academic or clinical difficulties.

At mid-semester, the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP requests from course coordinators the names of students who may be experiencing academic or clinical difficulties. This list will be shared with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, the student's academic advisor and Lead Faculty. Course coordinators will be instructed to ask for a meeting with each student who is experiencing academic or clinical difficulties, informing them of their academic standing, and setting up a plan to facilitate their ability to meet course objectives. The course coordinator will refer the student back to their faculty advisor and Lead Faculty for further guidance and assistance.

Students who are not making satisfactory progress in a course will set a time to meet with the course coordinator and develop a formal learning contract with the course coordinator or a designated course faculty member. The contract should identify the areas of deficiency and specify corrective actions to satisfactorily meet course and/or program objectives.

The academic and clinical performance of master's students is reviewed at mid-semester and at the end of each semester. In programs of study where course work is sequential or clinical performance is unsatisfactory or marginal, the student may not progress in the program until improvement is made and course objectives are met. These situations will be reviewed at the end of each semester (see Progression Review Process).

Approved 9/9/2013, MEC; DNPEC 2013

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESSION

The School of Nursing regularly monitors and assesses the academic performance and progression of each student enrolled in the School of Nursing graduate practice programs, specifically, the Master of Science in Nursing (“MSN”) program and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (“DNP”) program to assure timely progression to degree completion. The purpose of this review is to assure that each student is making satisfactory progress in the student’s program of study based upon stated criteria established by the School of Nursing and the University. This review also provides an opportunity to identify resources and support for students who are having difficulties.

The Associate Dean-MSN/DNP or the Lead Faculty in each practice area will provide information regarding the program’s academic requirements to each student at the time of matriculation.

THE MSN/DNP PROGRESSION REVIEW COMMITTEE

The MSN/DNP Progression Review Committee (“Committee”) is the body responsible for assessing and monitoring academic performance and progression of graduate practice students in the MSN and DNP programs. The Committee is a standing sub-committee of both the Master’s Executive Committee (“MEC”) and the Doctor of Nursing Practice Executive Committee (“DNPEC”). The Committee is composed of six voting members: a chair and one faculty representative from each of the five advanced practice areas. The Chair of the Committee is appointed jointly by the MEC and DNPEC for a three-year term. It is recommended, but not required, that the Chair of the Committee have previously served as a member on the Committee. The Chair of the Committee will also serve as a standing member of the MEC and DNPEC committees. The Chair is responsible for constituting and maintaining the Committee’s membership, orienting new members, administering the Committee’s meetings, and sending written notification to the students who were reviewed by the Committee of the Committee’s decision.

The Advanced Practice Area faculty who will serve as members of the Committee are nominated by their respective faculty and must currently teach or advise in the MSN or DNP programs. Each member of the Committee will serve a three-year term and may be re-appointed for one subsequent three-year term. The Associate Dean of the MSN/DNP Program (“Associate Dean-MSN/DNP”) and the Assistant Dean of the Office of Student Affairs (“Assistant Dean-OSA”) will serve as ex-officio (non-voting) members of the Committee.

If any member of the Committee has a conflict of interest, which would prevent the member’s impartial review of a student, the Committee Chair will appoint an alternative faculty member to serve on the Committee as a substitute for the member who maintains the conflict of interest. A conflict of interest arises when a Committee member has had prior interactions with a student that are relevant to the situation or circumstances under review or that could suggest the possibility of bias in the decision-making process. The MEC and DNPEC chairs may appoint a substitute Committee Chair if there is a conflict of interest that prevents the Committee Chair’s participation in a progression review.

The Committee will meet to conduct progression review shortly following receipt of final grades by the School of Nursing Registrar at the end of each semester. The Committee will review all students who:

- Are on academic probation;
- Received a grade of “L” or “F” in the current semester;
- Have unresolved temporary grades such as “IN,” “AB,” or “NG;”
- Withdrew from a required course during the past semester or have requested a retroactive withdrawal;
- Were non-compliant with health and safety requirements at any point in an academic term; or
- Exhibited unprofessional behavior in their role as a student in the School of Nursing.

In addition, the Committee will review all DNP students who have been recommended for review by their academic advisor based upon one or more of the following circumstances:

- Student ending the second year (MSN to DNP) or third year (BSN to DNP) of full-time study without a scheduled DNP project proposal defense;
- Student ending the third year (MSN to DNP) or fourth year (BSN to DNP) of full-time study without a scheduled DNP project final defense; or

- Faculty, Course Coordinator, or Academic Advisor request that the Committee review a student.

Additional meetings of the Committee will occur under special circumstances during the semester, for instance, to address a student's non-compliance with health and safety requirements.

Shortly after receipt of the semester grades by the School of Nursing registrar, the Assistant Dean-OSA will forward the names of all students who meet the criteria outlined above and their grades to the Chair of the Committee and to the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP. In addition, near the end of each academic semester, the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP will query course coordinators, academic advisors, and the Committee Chairs to identify students who will require progression review. The Associate Dean-MSN/DNP will notify students in their program area who will be subject to progression review and will ask them to submit any relevant information to the Associate Dean in writing prior to the meeting.

During the meeting, the Assistant Dean-OSA will present the academic records of all students who are being reviewed by the Committee. The Associate Dean-MSN/DNP will also present relevant information received from an individual student, course faculty, academic advisor, or Lead Faculty in their program area, as applicable. In addition, the Committee may request information from other individuals who may have pertinent information regarding a student's academic or clinical performance. The student being reviewed will not be present during the meeting.

After receiving all the information, the Committee will discuss the student's performance and vote upon decisions to be made with respect to the student's progression in the program. A simple majority of the voting members of the Committee is required for any decision regarding a student's progression in the program. Such decisions may include any combination of the following:

- A written warning that the student is progressing at a rate that will lengthen the student's time to graduation;
- A requirement that the student perform specific remedial work and/or repeat coursework;
- Academic probation;
- Dismissal from the program if, in the judgment of the Committee, the student does not show sufficient promise to continue in the program; and/or
- Any other measure that would address the Committee's concerns about the student's performance.

Shortly following the meeting of the Committee, the Chair will send a letter to the student describing the Committee's decisions. Copies will also be sent to the OSA for placement in the student's academic file and to the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP.

In cases in which dismissal from the program is the Committee's decision, the letter also will contain the Committee-specific requirements for readmission, and the process for appeal. The Associate Dean-MSN/DNP will then notify the Lead Faculty, academic advisor, and The Graduate School of the decision for a student in their program area. In the case of a DNP student, the student's DNP Project Chair will also be notified.

APPEALS

The student may appeal the Committee's decision to the Dean. All appeals must be in writing and signed by the student. Appeals should be submitted no later than the last day of classes of the next succeeding semester. Any appeal must contain a summary of the evidence and arguments that the student believes support the student's position in the appeal.

Approved MEC and DNPEC, 11/2016; Updated 8/6/18

REINSTATEMENT PROCESS

Students declared academically ineligible due to grades may petition the Graduate School for reinstatement after endorsement from the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP.

Students seeking reinstatement must notify their Lead Faculty and academic advisor as soon as they are aware of their academic ineligibility or the potential for academic ineligibility. The Lead Faculty will notify the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP of the names and the semester for which any student in their specialty area is seeking reinstatement.

In order to determine whether a student's request for reinstatement is eligible for endorsement, the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP will convene a committee made up of the student's academic advisor, Lead Faculty, and one other graduate faculty member from the student's specialty area, the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP, and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs (ex-officio). The Associate Dean-MSN/DNP will chair the meeting and be a nonvoting member. The student will be notified of the day and time of the meeting and be invited to meet with committee members.

In collaboration with the student, the committee will develop a plan to support the student's success that may include student activities and program supports. A simple majority of the voting members of the committee is required for any decision or recommendation regarding a student's progression in the program. If the committee's judgment is that no plan is likely to support success, reinstatement will be denied. However, such a decision will not be made without offering the student the chance to personally meet with the committee.

The Associate Dean-MSN/DNP will prepare a brief summary indicating the decision of the committee. This summary should include any conditions for continuance in the program, which may include, but are not limited to, extended study and tutorial assistance. A copy of this statement will be sent to the student and placed in the student's folder. (**Note:** The Associate Dean-MSN/DNP will complete the reinstatement form including the committee's decision; the form will be delivered to the Graduate School for approval.)

Students have the right to appeal the progression decision in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the School of Nursing within 10 working days of notification by the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP.

Students who are reinstated are on academic probation and are automatically declared academically ineligible if they receive a grade below P.

Second reinstatements are only granted by the Graduate School in exceptional situations and with strong endorsements from the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP. Therefore, the review committee for a student requesting a second reinstatement will be made up of the student's academic advisor, Lead Faculty, and one other graduate faculty member from the student's specialty area, the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP (nonvoting member), the Assistant Dean of Student Services (ex-officio), and two uninvolved graduate faculty members suggested by the Chair of the Master's Executive Committee. A simple majority of the voting members of the committee is required for any decision or recommendation regarding a student's progression in the program.

Students who fail comprehensive examinations twice are not eligible for reinstatement but may appeal directly to the Administrative Board of the Graduate School.

Students may appeal the denial of reinstatement to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Graduate School (in that order). The only grounds for appeal are procedural, denial of due process, arbitrariness, or discrimination.

COURSE POLICIES

See the GRADUATE ACADEMIC POLICIES handbook for general policies governing such things as advisor assignments and transfer of coursework.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regular class attendance is a student obligation. A student is responsible for all the work, including tests, laboratory and clinical assignments and written work, of all class meetings. Each individual instructor of classes at the graduate level has the authority to prescribe attendance regulations for his or her class.

A faculty member wishing to require class attendance must have a systematic method of monitoring student attendance and a stated process for factoring excessive absences into the student's grade or any recommended remedial activity. The attendance requirement and any mechanism for calculating the grade must be given to students in writing at the beginning of the course.

Attendance does not apply to recognized religious holidays. Students do not have to attend class on any major religious holiday that is regularly observed. Faculty members make every effort to avoid scheduling papers or exams on religious holidays, but the student is required to make up any work that is missed.

In the School of Nursing, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs has delegated the handling of absences to course coordinators. The Associate Dean-MSN/DNP must be informed of all unusual situations.

ATTENDANCE AT REGULAR EXAMS OR TESTS

Students are expected to take tests as scheduled unless an excused absence is obtained from an appropriate course faculty representative before the time of the test. A grade of F will be given to a student with an unexcused absence from a test.

All graduate faculty and students are expected to be familiar with the [Honor Code of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) and conduct themselves according to the principles it contains.

ATTENDANCE AT CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Students are expected to uphold the clinical policies and procedures of the School of Nursing. Specifically, students are required to:

- Attend all clinical experiences except when ill.
- Complete all required clinical hours by the end of the semester in which they are enrolled.
- Notify the course faculty and/or clinical preceptor of an absence due to illness or emergency prior to the scheduled clinical time if possible.
- Assume responsibility for making up any specific experiences. Make-up laboratory time is at the discretion of the course faculty and/or clinical preceptor.

Course faculty and/or a clinical preceptor may deny a student access to a clinical experience if the student is:

- Unprepared for patient care, e.g., does not meet all the health and safety requirements and documentation as outlined in the Student Handbook (most current version) or does not meet the requirements as set forth by the clinical site.
- Physically or mentally ill.
- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Unaware of his/her own limitations or fails to seek help when he/she recognizes his/her limitations.
- Unprofessional in appearance or behavior.

APPROPRIATE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Faculty and students are mutually responsible for enforcing optimal classroom behavior and thus helping to create an appropriate learning environment for all.

All students shall be given the opportunity to learn in an environment that is free from noise, intrusions, and disruptions. Students should remain attentive to the activities of the classroom and behave in a manner that allows others to be attentive. Noise must be avoided and includes, but is not limited to beepers, cell phones, children, side conversations among students, monopolization of conversation, reading newspapers, and frequent getting up and down while class is in session.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

Final examinations are not required of graduate courses; therefore, there is no published final examination schedule for graduate courses. In general, exams for graduate courses are scheduled on the same day and time that the course was held during the semester. The course coordinator will discuss the timing of the final exam at the beginning of the semester with students. If conflicts arise with scheduling among graduate courses, students are encouraged to discuss this with the course coordinator. If the conflict cannot easily be resolved, the course coordinator will take this issue to the Director of Master's Programs for further discussion and resolution.

In the University in general, no exams or classes are to be scheduled on reading days. If graduate students or faculty believe that the agreed upon exam schedule should change and a final examination be given on a reading day, students must be given the opportunity for an anonymous vote on the proposed change. If any student objects, the final exam

cannot be held on a reading day or faculty have the option of offering the exam on the reading day and on a second day during the final exam period so that all students are accommodated.

In courses with a final examination, no special preparation quizzes may be given during the last five days of class before the beginning of the final examination period. Only examinations requiring an exceptional portion of practical work should be longer than three hours. The length of the final examination should reflect the credits allocated to the course. Appropriate time should be allocated to take exams.

A student who has three final examinations scheduled within a 24-hour period may petition the Director of the Master's Programs to have one of the scheduled examinations rescheduled. Any petition for a change in the examination schedule because of the "three exams in a twenty-four hour" rule must be made to the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP before the first day of the final examinations. In all cases in which an examination is to be rescheduled, the instructor may reschedule that examination during the final examination period, but not later than the end of the following semester.

Students in the Graduate Program of the School of Nursing who have failed to comply with course requirements may be prevented from sitting for the final examination (e.g., students who have not turned in all their assignments).

Approved MEC, 9/9/2013; DNPEC, 2013

CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

The following roles and responsibilities of students, faculty (including the faculty advisor, course coordinator), Lead Faculty, and the Clinical Site Coordinator have been identified to coordinate placements for graduate students within the School and to clarify communication links between the School and clinical agencies.

ROLE OF STUDENTS

- Students are admitted to a specific advanced practice area.
- Students will communicate to their Lead Faculty member, by a specified deadline, the names and contact information for potential preceptors in their geographic area.
- Requests for clinical placements are responded to in the order in which they are
- A delay in submitting requests may prevent obtaining the best possible or preferred placement site.
- Once clinical sites are confirmed, students will receive information about health and safety compliance requirements for the specific site. Commencement of clinical and practicum experiences rely on timely completion of compliance requirements based on deadlines that will be shared with students each semester.

Students are advised on the following parameters and expectations for the clinical placement process:

- Providing the names and contact information for a potential preceptor does not guarantee they will be assigned to that preceptor and agency.
- Students should not contact sites/preceptors directly; this causes communication problems for both the School and clinical agency.
- When possible, placements will be secured in the student's geographic "home" region. However, the learning needs and travel times for all students must be considered during the assignment.
- Student clinical placement locations will require travel.
- *Students can anticipate travel up to 1.5 hours one-way to a clinical site placement.*
- *Situations may arise when travel one-way may be up to 2 hours.*
- Students are responsible for their own transportation to clinical sites and should consider this factor when calculating and planning for their educational expenses and scheduling.

A clinical site may be able to provide only a portion of the necessary clinical hours. In those cases, students will have clinical experiences at two different clinical sites during the same semester (up to 3 different clinical sites during a major capstone course).

ROLE OF THE FACULTY ADVISOR

Faculty and/or academic advisors should direct students to communicate with their Lead Faculty about clinical placement issues. Faculty members are encouraged to advise the Lead Faculty of potential new placement sites and preceptors.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COURSE COORDINATOR

The responsibilities of the **course coordinator** of a clinical management course or practicum include:

- Informing the appropriate Lead Faculty of potential sites and preceptors.
- Establishing informal faculty contact as an important part of the relationship between the School and agency placement sites.
- Collaborating with the appropriate Lead Faculty to match students to placement sites.
- Communicating with the preceptor about evaluations of student's performance.
- Communicating with students about the need to complete preceptor and site evaluations.
- Confirming the completion of graduate students' clinical hours to facilitate student progression and reimbursement of ambulatory community-based preceptors.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEAD FACULTY

The **Lead Faculty** in each Advanced Practice Area (AGPCNP, AGACNP, FNP, HCS, PNP-PC, and PMHNP) lead the process of coordinating clinical placements for graduate students with assistance from the Clinical Site Coordinator (CSC), faculty, and students.

The responsibilities of the Lead Faculty in an advanced practice area include:

- Advising and assisting with the identification of potential new placement sites and preceptors for students.
- Compiling written requests for placement sites using Qualtrics (student clinical site preferences survey), NurSys and Typhon systems
- Receiving a list of secured sites from the CSC.
- Directing course coordinator to send "Letter of Course Assignment" re: student-to-site match to agency preceptor/contact
- Directing course coordinator or designated person to send orientation materials (course guidelines, evaluation sheets and preceptor guidelines) to agency preceptor/contact informing CSC of changes involving clinical assignments of students.

Submitting requests for clinical placements to the CSC will take place at the following time period

- Requests for Spring Semester: Mid-September
- Requests for Summer Session I and II: Mid-February
- Requests for Fall Semester: Mid-March to Mid-April

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLINICAL SITE COORDINATOR

The responsibilities of the Clinical Site Coordinator (CSC) include:

- Sending requests for clinical site placements to preceptors/contacts as requested by Lead Faculty.
- Securing placements based on consultation with Lead Faculty and responses from preceptors.
- Informing the Office of Contracts and Compliance of new sites and contracts.
- Notifying Lead Faculty and Office of Contracts and Compliance of confirmed sites.
- Notifying sites when a student drops a course or withdraws from the program.
- Notifying each Lead Faculty of changes in clinical agencies that may impact students in the agency.

CHANGE IN ADVANCED PRACTICE AREA OR FOCUS

Students who find their career goals have changed after entering the graduate practice programs in the School of Nursing may submit a one-time request to change the Advanced Practice Area (APA) or substantive focus within an APA to which they were originally admitted. This policy includes students who desire to change the substantive focus of their program within an APA, such as the oncology focus in the AGPCNP practice area. The intent of this policy is to assist the

matriculated student in making a well-reasoned decision as well as to foster timely admission decisions and allocation of faculty and clinical resources.

Any change of APA or focus within an APA, will be made on a space-available basis, dependent on-site placement, and faculty resources, and in accordance with applicable admission policies and procedures.

STEPS FOR REQUESTING A CHANGE

- (PDF) [Change of APA or Focus within an APA Request Form](#)

Requirements for submitting a Request to Change Advanced Practice Area or focus area within an APA:

1. Students must consult with both their advisor and their current Lead Faculty prior to submitting a request. They will advise the student, discuss the request to change his/her APA/Focus within an APA, and review the applicable process and policies. If after this consultation, the student elects to remain in his/her current APA, no further action is required.
2. If the student chooses to proceed, the student will complete and sign the “Change of APA/APA-Focus Request Form.”
3. The student will bring the completed form to their current Lead Faculty for signature.
4. The student will submit the original signed copy of the form to the Graduate Admissions Counselor, in the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). The Graduate Admissions Counselor will distribute electronic copies (PDF) of the completed form to the current Lead Faculty, the Lead Faculty of the requested APA, and the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP in the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA).

By signing the form, the student is acknowledging his/her understanding of the following:

- The approval by the Admissions Committee (MAC or DNPAC) for a student to change an APA and/or a focus area within an APA will be dependent, among other factors, on whether space is available in the requested APA/ focus area within an APA.
- If the requested change is approved, the student will accept the change of APA/focus within an APA and relinquish his/her place in the current APA or focus area within an APA.
- If the request to change APA/APA focus area is not approved, the student will decide whether to remain in the current APA/APA focus area or withdraw from the MSN program.

FOCUS CHANGE WITHIN AN APA ONLY

AGPCNP students who wish to add and/or change a specialty (e.g., Adult Oncology) should complete the first four “Steps for Requesting Change” listed above and thereby acknowledge the implications of their change request. Students requesting a Focus change within an APA only do not need to complete the steps listed in the following section.

Following submission of the Change of APA or Focus within an APA Request Form, the student must submit additional required documents to the Graduate Admissions Counselor in OSA. Students requesting a change of APA/Focus within an APA shall be considered by the MAC or DNPAC in conjunction with other applicants for the desired APA. The required documents include:

- A current internal official UNC-CH transcript
- A Professional Statement that **strictly** follows posted guidelines (see Application Instructions) to include, among other elements:
 - Evidence of the necessary credentials specific to the requested APA. (For example, if the student requests a change to the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner area, he or she must provide evidence of at least one year of clinical experience relevant to pediatrics.)
 - The rationale for the request to change APAs, including how study in that particular area will prepare them for their future practice goals.

Following the review of an admissions committee and decision, the OSA will inform the student of the outcome in the same timeframe and format as all applicants are notified of admissions decisions. OSA will additionally return the *Change of APA/APA-Focus Request Form* with a copy of the letter from the admissions committee to the Associate Dean-MSN/DNP who will notify the respective Lead Faculty of the student’s status.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

The *Change of APA or Focus within an APA Request Form* and support documents must be submitted to the appropriate Admissions Committee via the Office of Student Affairs by the spring application deadline of January 15th. The relevant Admissions Committee must consider these requests as part of the MSN or DNP applicant pool for the following fall semester.

The goal is to facilitate an approved change of APA/focus area within an APA by either the summer semester when graduate clinical courses diverge (e.g., AGPCNP from FNP) or prior to the beginning of fall semester when the clinical course sequence of the newly selected major generally begins.

Approved MEC 5/19/2011; Revised MEC 9/26/2011; Approved DNPEC, 2014

GRADUATE SCHOOL FORMS

Links to electronic copies of all Graduate School forms can be located on the Graduate School Web site ([Form Finder](#)).

- The majority of forms are now PDF fillable.
- Frequently used forms include Request Leave of Absence, Readmission Application, Request Reinstatement, and Extension of Time.