

Graduate Student Handbook



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Disclaimer Note to Student | 7 |
| Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy | 8 |
| Publication Accuracy | 8 |
| About the School | 9 |
| Vision..... | 9 |
| Mission..... | 9 |
| Goals..... | 9 |
| Student Aggregate Outcomes..... | 10 |
| Professional Nursing Education..... | 10 |
| Academic Expectations of an MSN..... | 10 |
| Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) | 12 |
| Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)..... | 12 |
| Texas Board of Nursing (TBON)..... | 12 |
| Chapter 1: General Information..... | 13 |
| Academic Calendar..... | 13 |
| Attendance, Absences & Makeups | 13 |
| Awareness of and Respect | 13 |
| Communication: Email Account..... | 13 |
| Computer Requirements..... | 13 |
| Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) | 14 |
| Identification Badge..... | 14 |
| Legal Violations | 15 |
| Sexual Violence/Harassment | 15 |
| Social Media Policy | 15 |
| Student Complaints..... | 16 |
| Student Name or Address Changes..... | 16 |
| Temporary Disabilities/Pregnancy | 17 |
| Temporary Disabilities..... | 17 |
| Pregnancy..... | 17 |
| Transcript Requests..... | 17 |
| Weapons Policy & Campus Carry | 17 |
| Weather & Other Campus Crisis Events | 17 |
| Chapter 2: Graduate Program..... | 18 |
| About the MSN Program..... | 18 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Master of Science in Nursing Comprehensive..... | 20 |
| Student Outcomes | 20 |
| MSN Comprehensive Courses..... | 20 |
| Master of Science in Nursing - Family Nurse Practitioner Track..... | 22 |
| Student Outcomes | 22 |
| MSN Family Nurse Practitioner Courses | 22 |
| Master of Science in Nursing – Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Track | 23 |
| Student Outcomes | 23 |
| MSN PMHNP Courses..... | 23 |
| Certificate Programs | 24 |
| Chapter 3: Admissions Procedures and New Student Requirements | 27 |
| MSN Application Requirements..... | 27 |
| Additional Requirements for International Applicants..... | 27 |
| Transfer Policies | 28 |
| Admission | 28 |
| Immunization Information | 31 |
| Insurance | 32 |
| Professional Liability | 32 |
| Criminal Background Checks Policy | 32 |
| Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification | 32 |
| Chapter 4: Student Services & Registrar Procedures | 33 |
| Office of Financial Aid | 33 |
| Leave of Absence (LOA) | 33 |
| Military Leave | 33 |
| Full-Time Student..... | 33 |
| Chapter 5: Academic Rules, Policies, and Procedures..... | 34 |
| Student Rules..... | 34 |
| Academic Integrity | 34 |
| Definitions of Academic Misconduct..... | 34 |
| Grading Policies | 35 |
| Grade Rounding Policy | 35 |
| Progression..... | 35 |
| Good Academic Standing..... | 35 |
| Time Limitations for Completion of Degrees..... | 35 |
| Academic Progression Criteria | 35 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Drop Policy | 36 |
| Incomplete “I” Grade Policy | 36 |
| Grade Disputes and Graduate Appeals Process | 37 |
| Academic Dismissal | 37 |
| Evaluation of Faculty, Courses, and Program..... | 37 |
| Guidelines for Classroom Experiences | 37 |
| Intellectual Property | 37 |
| Course Recording..... | 37 |
| Exam Guidelines..... | 38 |
| Transportation Expectations | 38 |
| Chapter 6: Clinical/Practicum Policies | 39 |
| Clinical/Practicum Experiences..... | 39 |
| Clinical/Practicum Preceptors | 39 |
| Policy for Requesting Out of State Practicums..... | 40 |
| Clinical/Practicum Attendance | 41 |
| Clinical/Practicum Evaluation..... | 41 |
| Dress Code/Uniforms Rules | 41 |
| Graduate Student Dress Code: | 41 |
| Unsatisfactory Performance/Safety..... | 42 |
| Confidentiality | 42 |
| Student Identification | 42 |
| HIPAA Policy | 42 |
| Needlestick Guidelines..... | 42 |
| First Aid for percutaneous and mucocutaneous exposures: | 43 |
| Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens Procedure..... | 43 |
| Substance Abuse Rules | 45 |
| Additional Testing Conditions..... | 46 |
| Appeal and Retesting Guidelines..... | 46 |
| Disciplinary/Actions..... | 46 |
| Refusal to Consent to Testing..... | 46 |
| Confidentiality | 46 |
| Chapter 7: Student Conduct Code Procedures..... | 47 |
| Professional Code of Ethics..... | 47 |
| Civility Statement..... | 47 |
| Disciplinary Penalties for Violation of Professional Code of Conduct | 49 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Chapter 8: Graduation & APRN Certification..... | 50 |
| APRN Licensure..... | 50 |
| Certified Nurse Educator..... | 50 |
| APPENDIX A..... | 51 |
| APPENDIX B..... | 62 |
| APPENDIX C..... | 63 |

Disclaimer Note to Student

The MSN Handbook (MSNH) has been designed to provide information about the intents, policies, and procedures for the MSN curriculum and program. The MSN program is an integral part of the university and the graduate school and the policies and procedures for the nursing graduate program are aligned with those entities. The handbook contains information about policies and procedures adapted to the nursing graduate program.

The provisions of this Graduate Student Handbook do not constitute a contract, expressed or implied, between any applicant, student, or faculty member and the West Texas A&M System. Although every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of information in this publication, West Texas A&M University, and the Laura and Joe Street School 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 School, at all times, retains the right to dismiss a student who does not attain and maintain adequate academic or clinical performance or who does not exhibit the personal and professional qualifications required for the practice of nursing.

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

Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states: “no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance”. Sexual assault and violence are forms of sexual harassment prohibited by Title IX and the A&M System rule/procedure and regulation <https://www.wtamu.edu/business-finance/title-ix/index.html>.

West Texas A&M University complies with applicable laws prohibiting discrimination, including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; Executive Order 11246; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008. WTAMU does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or services.

Members of the WTAMU community, guests and visitors have the right to be free from sexual harassment and violence. All members of the campus community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others. WTAMU believes in a zero-tolerance rule/procedure for sex-based misconduct. When an allegation of misconduct is brought to an appropriate administrator’s attention, and a respondent is found to have violated this rule/procedure, serious sanctions will be applied. The University is committed to fostering a community that promotes prompt reporting of all types of sexual misconduct and timely and fair resolution of sexual misconduct complaints, in compliance with Title IX, due process, the First Amendment to the federal Constitution, and other applicable laws and regulations.

The School of Nursing (SON) 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 SON 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 SON Office of Student Affairs.

Publication Accuracy

Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of information in this publication. Nevertheless, the SON 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 SON. West Texas A&M University administration and the SON reserve the right to make changes to policies and procedures without notice as necessitated by governing authorities or administrative needs. Changes are communicated to students through email. A log of all changes is viewable in the Learning Management System portal and on the public website.

Vision

The West Texas A&M University Laura and Joe Street School of Nursing is recognized for its excellence in teaching and learning with a strong focus on engaging students in experiences that aid in the discovery, development, and mastery of nursing scholarship. Our vision is to enhance the health and quality of life for all communities through respect, education, and application of skilled nursing practice.

Mission

The mission of the West Texas A&M University Laura and Joe Street School of Nursing is to provide intellectually challenging, critically reflective, regionally responsive, and student-centered nursing programs that discover, interpret, apply, and disseminate knowledge for preparing the next generation of nurse leaders.

Core Values Statement

N: Nurture – We care for and encourage the growth and development of every individual.

U: Unique – We value individualism while cultivating professionalism.

R: Respect – We embrace the inherent dignity of all people.

S: Service – We put the needs of others first.

E: Ethical & Engagement – We embody honesty, integrity, and engagement in our Buff Nursing community.

Goals

In support of the vision and mission, the SON is committed to the following strategic goals:

1. Develop processes, programs, and facilities necessary to provide the students of the Department of Nursing with a superior student-centered learning experience.
2. Foster a safe, dynamic, and respectful learning/living atmosphere in the campus classroom, lab, and clinical environment.
3. Recruit and retain increasing numbers of students in nursing who will graduate from our programs, assume leadership roles in society, and meet the nursing workforce needs of the region and state.
4. Recruit, develop, and support a faculty and staff that embody the core values of the Department of Nursing and the university and support their missions and goals.
5. Support individual scholarly and/or creative accomplishment in the Department of Nursing and develop into a “Center of Excellence” with increasing cross-departmental and college collaboration in these and other emerging areas.
6. Strengthen external relations and support of the Department of Nursing and the university with alumni, friends of the university, local and regional constituents, and legislative and governmental entities.
7. Baccalaureate and master’s nursing graduates will demonstrate achievement of the expected student learning outcomes and the expected aggregate outcomes.

Student Aggregate Outcomes

1. FNP certification pass rate will be 80% or higher
2. Graduation rates for MSN will be 80% within 6 years of admission to master's program and enrollment in NURS 6318.
3. Graduation rates for post-MSN certification will be 80% within 3 years of admission to the FNP certification program and enrollment in the first FNP course.
4. Alumni satisfaction responses will meet or exceed Select 6 programs, Carnegie Class programs and all other institutions participating in the EBI survey.
5. Comprehensive exam pass rate of 80%.
6. Thesis pass rate of 90%

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.

Academic Expectations of an MSN

You are embarking on a new and exciting learning experience in this Masters' program. Graduate level work may be a bit different from your experiences as an undergraduate, however. Graduate education reflects mastery in an academic discipline which MAY result in an additional certification (e.g., FNP), but it is an academic discipline first. It is distinct from your undergraduate work in that, in addition to applying existing knowledge, you will be expected to generate new knowledge. You will be expected to employ, in all classes, a theoretical framework, a deep understanding of research methodology, and critical analysis. Learning, in the classroom, clinical setting and online is more self-directed. Graduate students are held to a higher standard than undergraduate students and are expected to demonstrate better research skills (e.g., conducting exhaustive reviews of current professional literature), and more in depth and applied knowledge.

Creativity and critical thinking are encouraged in all graduate level work. The graduate program recognizes that, upon graduation you will be considered an expert in nursing. The components of the graduate curriculum are carefully designed to ensure the development of new knowledge, hone communication skills (oral and written), develop new ideas and encourage intellectual growth. One of the expectations of the American Academy of Colleges of Nursing (ACCN) is

that graduate schools build on previous knowledge to include sciences and the humanities. A goal of the WTAMU graduate nursing program is to incorporate sciences and the humanities in each course. It is through the study of the humanities in particular that a broader understanding of the human condition is achieved, and through this broader understanding, more holistic care can be provided. In short, graduate nursing education is about more than just nursing, or perhaps more appropriately, through graduate education, nursing is understood more deeply for what it is, both the doing of nursing, and the being of a nurse.

It is also a goal of the WTAMU graduate nursing program to foster freedom of inquiry. Your experience as an undergraduate may have been prescriptive in specifics of course requirements, such as length of papers, how many references, and/or a specific topical outline for the paper. That is not necessarily true in graduate school. The faculty want you to explore deeper, to go “outside your comfort zone,” to be creative. Therefore, paper guidelines may seem vague. That is purposeful on the part of the faculty in order to foster in depth, critical, creative review. It also fosters close collaboration with the faculty regarding this learning opportunity. It is thru this relational experience that some of the richest learning takes place—which cannot be achieved if limited to specific objectives and expectations. Of course, this requires flexibility on the part of both the learner and the faculty but can be the most rewarding and exciting part of the learning process. Faculty are often asked how many references are required for a specific paper or project and the standard answer, without meaning to be flippant at all, is “as many as it takes.” It depends on the topic, the available literature, the depth, and breadth of the literature accessed, how well it addresses the topic at hand, the age of the resource, and many more variables. The expectation is an exhaustive review so that you are confident in the depth and breadth of the resources to inform your paper or project

Accreditation

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

WTAMU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award baccalaureate, masters, 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 School of Nursing was granted a full accreditation by the CCNE. For more information on accreditation, visit the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, [CCNE Accreditation](#) webpage.

The graduate curriculum is also congruent with the National Task Force criteria.

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.

Chapter 1: General Information

Academic Calendar

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

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.

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, step-mother, step-father, step-sister, step-brother, step-grandparents, grandchild, step-grandchild, legal guardian, and others as deemed appropriate by faculty member or student's academic Dean or designee.

Awareness of Respect

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

Communication: Email Account

Email is an official means of communication (equivalent to the U.S. Postal Service) at WTAMU. Upon a student's admission to WTAMU, they will be assigned an active student e-mail account. 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. If you have questions regarding any of the hardware or software required, please contact the IT Helpdesk.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Students at WTAMU have the right of confidentiality under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Directory information that holds student information may be made public unless the student desires to withhold any or all of this information. More information on this can be found in your New Student Guide which the college provided to you upon admission, or you may contact the Registrar.

Identification Badge

Graduate students doing their clinical or practica must wear a WTAMU Department of Nursing name tag. Name tags are processed and produced on campus by the Buffalo Gold Card Office.

Buffalo Gold Card Office
Classroom Center, ROOM 118
WTAMU Box 62273
Canyon TX 79016-001
806-651-4653 Office



Students need to allow at least four weeks for delivery. All name tags have the WTAMU emblem, the student's name, WTAMU Department of Nursing, RN, BSN credentials if desired.

Obtaining FNP or PMHNP Student ID/ Name tag on campus:

You do not need to make an appointment. You will need to bring a photo ID. Make sure you let them know you are getting a *FNP Student ID badge*, as they will be different than a traditional student ID.

Obtaining FNP or PMHNP Student ID/ Name tag via email:

If students are unable to visit campus, students will need to send the Buffalo Gold Card Office an email request to process *FNP or PMHNP Student ID badge*. For faster processing include your Buff ID number in email. Send email to BuffGold@wtamu.edu .

Items to include in email:

Buff ID #

Name

Credentials

(RN, BSN, RN, CEN, RN, CCRN, FNP, etc.)

Mailing address for name tag delivery

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.

Sexual Violence/Harassment

Sexual violence, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking can happen to anyone. West 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. For more information regarding the process for Title IX, sex-based misconduct, and civil rights complaints, see University Rule [08.01.01.W1 Civil Rights Compliance](#) and Texas A&M System Regulation [08.01.01 Civil Rights Compliance](#)

Social Media Policy

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

The American Nurses Association (ANA) provides [Social Networking Principles](#) to guide nurses in the use of social media to safeguard themselves, the profession, and their patients. Examples of social media include Facebook, 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.

SON 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 SON student. The use of social media sites is not approved for classroom communication. The SON utilizes learning management system for course information communication as well as WTAMU 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 SON and the individual faculty member. This property cannot be used without prior consent from the faculty.

SON students should strictly follow guidelines as noted below:

- Do not share, post, or otherwise disseminate any information, that can identify a patient, or in any way violate a patient’s rights or privacy. This includes activities in the 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.

Academic Grievance Procedure (University Student Grievance Procedure)

West Texas A&M University has procedures for addressing written student complaints. These procedures are intended to provide a process for resolving student grievances in a prompt and equitable manner without prejudice, discrimination, or malice toward the person or persons initiating the complaint. The procedure for filing such a complaint is outlined in the West Texas A&M University Code of Student Life, p. 34. The Code of Student Life document is found electronically at <http://www.wtamu.edu/webres/File/Student%20Life/Codeof-Student-Life.pdf>
Reminder: Any grievance or grade appeal rests on the principle that all parties have made a good-faith effort to resolve the dispute prior to initiating either system. Grade appeals only occur if the student alleges that an arbitrary, capricious, or prejudicial grade assignment has occurred. Students are expected to follow the chain of command in resolving any grievances. The chain of command is as follows: course instructor, associate department head for undergraduate studies or clinical coordination (whichever is appropriate), department head, dean, provost, president.

Student Name or Address Changes

Students must keep the Graduate School and the Nursing Department informed of changes in address and telephone numbers, and the status of nursing licensure. Notification of changes should be in writing to the Registrar, Dean of the Graduate School, and the Assoc. Dept. Head of the Nursing Graduate Program, respectively. Name and address information may also be updated by completing the Update Student Information form and submitting it by mail or fax. If you do not have access to a fax machine or are unable to mail the request, you may send a request via your Buff's student email account containing the following information:

Full Name

Student ID number

Information to be changed

If changing legal name or social security number, documentation must be provided. The Update Student Information form lists the documentation required for a name change. The Update Student Information form is available at <https://www.wtamu.edu/administration/registrar-update-information.asp>

Temporary Disabilities/Pregnancy

Temporary Disabilities

The SON partners with the Office of Student Accessibility to provide appropriate accommodation and support. Students should work through Office of Student Accessibility 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.

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.

See WTAMU Student Handbook

Transcript Requests

An official transcript is a comprehensive record of a student's academic progress at WTAMU. The Transcript section of the Office of the Registrar produces only official transcripts.

Weapons Policy & Campus Carry

The website below addresses weapons. The University is committed to complying with state and federal laws.

For more information, go to <https://www.wtamu.edu/about/campus/campus-concealed-carry.html>.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, the student should call the University line at 651-2010 to learn if the University has cancelled classes. The information is available by 6:00 a.m.

Chapter 2: Graduate Program

About the MSN Program

WTAMU's MSN degree program has been nationally recognized for quality and value in numerous educational rankings resources.

Degree Options

MSN Students may select a comprehensive MSN, Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) MSN or Psychiatric Mental Health Practitioner (PMHNP) MSN

Comprehensive MSN

The **online** Comprehensive M.S.N. program prepares students to function at an advanced nursing practice level in complex environments. This program allows students to tailor their nursing education. Students will take the advanced clinical nursing courses of Pathophysiology, Pharmacotherapeutics, and Advanced Assessment to enhance clinical practice at an advanced level. Praxis coursework is personalized to address each student's specific track.

Graduates work in hospitals, outpatient settings, administrative positions, educator positions, and in collaborative practice with physicians and other health care providers, and schools of nursing.

Track Focuses:

Nursing Administration/Management

Nursing Education

Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)

The WTAMU FNP program prepares students for advanced practice registered nursing (APRN) providing primary healthcare in diverse areas (e.g., underserved areas, clinics, occupational settings, independent practice.) This results in improved access to primary healthcare. Successful graduates are eligible to sit for the Advanced Practice Family Nurse Practitioner Exam. This program is available in a hybrid format with clinical experiences Texas. Clinical experience in a state outside of Texas will need to be approved by the program director prior to acceptance. 750 clinical hours are required.

Post Master's FNP

The post masters FNP is a certificate course of study that enables a practicing nurse who holds an M.S.N. degree to prepare for credentialing as an FNP. Upon completion of the prescribed course of study, the student's transcript indicates that he/she has completed the educational preparation as regulated by the Texas Board of Nursing. Successful students are eligible to take a national FNP certification exam. This program is available in a hybrid format with clinical experiences in Texas. Clinical experience in a state outside of Texas will need to be approved by the program director prior to acceptance. 750 clinical hours are required.

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)

The WTAMU PMHNP program prepares students for advanced practice registered nursing (APRN) providing mental healthcare to diverse populations. Successful students are eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certification exam. This program is available in an online format with clinical experiences in Texas. Clinical experience in a state outside of Texas will

need to be approved by the program director prior to acceptance. 750 clinical hours are required.

Post Master's Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

The Post Masters PMHNP Certification is an online certificate course of study enabling a practicing nurse with a current M.S.N. degree to prepare for credentialing as a PMHNP. Upon completion of the prescribed course of study, the student's transcript indicates that he/she has completed the education preparation as regulated by the Texas Board of Nursing. Successful students are eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certification exam. This program is available in an online format with clinical experiences in Texas. Clinical experience in a state outside of Texas will need to be approved by the program director prior to acceptance. 750 clinical hours are required.

Program Learning Outcomes – Comprehensive Program

Learning Outcome 1: Background for practice sciences and humanities

Learning Outcome 2: Demonstrate organization and systems leadership

Learning Outcome 3: Incorporates quality improvement and safety

Learning Outcome 4: Translates and integrates scholarship into practice

Learning Outcome 5: Incorporates informatics and healthcare

Learning Outcome 6: Shapes healthcare policy and advocacy

Learning Outcome 7: Interprofessional collaboration

Learning Outcome 8: Implement clinical prevention and population health

Learning Outcome 9: Develop master's-level nursing practice

Program Learning Outcomes – FNP and PMHNP Programs

(Based on AACN Essentials: Advanced-Level Nursing Education 2022)

Domain 1: Knowledge for Nursing Practice

Domain 2: Person-Centered Care

Domain 3: Population Health

Domain 4: Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline

Domain 5: Quality and Safety

Domain 6: Interprofessional Partnerships

Domain 7: Systems-Based Practice

Domain 8: Informatics and Healthcare Technologies

Domain 9: Professionalism

Domain 10: Personal, Professional and Leadership Development

Master of Science in Nursing - Comprehensive Track

Student Outcomes – Comprehensive Program

At the completion of the MSN-Comprehensive Program, the graduate will be prepared to:

1. Integrate scientific findings from nursing, biopsychosocial fields, genetics, public health, quality improvement, and organization sciences for the continual improvement of nursing care across diverse settings.
2. Recognize that organization and systems leadership are critical to the promotion of high quality and safe patient care.
3. Be articulate in the methods, tools, performance measures and standards related to quality.
4. Apply research outcomes within practice settings, work as a change agent, and disseminate results.
5. Use patient-care technologies to deliver and enhance care and use communication technologies to integrate and coordinate care.
6. Intervene at the systems level through policy development and advocacy strategies.
7. Communicate, collaborate, and consult with other health professionals.
8. Integrate organizational skills for client-centered, culturally appropriate concepts in the planning, delivery, management, and evaluation in prevention strategies for identified populations.
9. Integrate knowledge into practice.

MSN Comprehensive Courses

| Department Abbreviation | Course Number | Course Title | Semester Credit Hours |
|-------------------------|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| NURS | 6303 | Theories for Nursing | 3 |
| NURS | 6317 | Nursing Research | 3 |
| NURS | 6318 | Nursing Populations and Settings | 3 |
| NURS | 6320 | Pathophysiology | 3 |
| NURS | 6315 | Advanced Health Assessment | 3 |
| NURS | 6384 | Pharmacotherapeutics | 3 |
| NURS | 6314 | Advanced Nursing Education and Leadership | 3 |
| NURS | 6322 | Bioethics and Advocacy | 3 |
| NURS | 6324 (P) | Scholarly Clinical Praxis (Including Informatics) | 3 |
| NURS | 6323 (p) | Role Practicum in Area of Concentration | 3 |
| | 6372 | Special Topics I supporting role specialization | 3 |
| NURS | 6301 or 6382 | Thesis I or Special Topics II 6000-level course supporting role specialization | 3 |
| NURS | 6302 or 6392 | Thesis II or Special Topics III 6000-level course supporting role specialization | 3 |
| NURS | 6120 | Research Synthesis (required for non-thesis students only) | 1 |
| | | Total hours | 39-40 |

P) Practica (requires clinical/field experiences)

Three Tracks are available for the Comprehensive MSN:

1. Leadership and Management
 - a. Available electives: NURS 6372, NURS 6382 and NURS 6392 Special Topics with Leadership and Management Role
2. Education
 - a. Available electives: NURS 6372, NURS 6382 and NURS 6392 Special Topics with Education Role
3. Thesis
 - a. Available electives: 1 elective and NURS 6301 and NURS 6302); NURS 6372, NURS 6382 and NURS 6392 Special Topics with Education Role

Master of Science in Nursing - Family Nurse Practitioner Track

At completion of the NP program, the NP graduate possesses the ten (10) core competencies regardless of population focus as provided by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

The NONPF Nurse Practitioner Role Core Competencies are found at:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nonpf.org/resource/resmgr/np_competencies_&_ntf_standards/_2022_nonpf_np_role_core_co.pdf

The National Taskforce Population Focused Nurse Practitioner Competencies are found at:

<https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nonpf.org/resource/resmgr/Competencies/CompilationPopFocusComps2013.pdf>

MSN Family Nurse Practitioner Courses

| Department Abbreviation | Course Number | Course Title | Semester Credit Hours |
|-------------------------|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| NURS | 6303 | Theories for Nursing | 3 |
| NURS | 6317 | Nursing Research | 3 |
| NURS | 6318 | Nursing Populations and Settings | 3 |
| NURS | 6320 | Pathophysiology | 3 |
| NURS | 6315 | Advanced Health Assessment | 3 |
| NURS | 6384 | Pharmacotherapeutics | 3 |
| NURS | 6116 | Issues: Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice | 1 |
| NURS | 6216 | Issues: Nurse Practitioner Role Development | 2 |
| NURS | 6340 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan I | 3 |
| NURS | 6341 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan I Clinical | 3 |
| | 6342 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan II | 3 |
| NURS | 6442 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan II Clinical | 4 |
| NURS | 6343 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan III | 3 |
| NURS | 6443 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan III Clinical | 4 |
| NURS | 6590 | Capstone Clinical Practicum for Family Nurse Practitioners | 5 |
| | | Total hours | 46 |

Clinical courses require a preceptor. Preceptors should be secured at least 6 months prior to the first day of the semester.

Master of Science in Nursing – Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Track

At completion of the NP program, the NP graduate possesses the ten (10) core competencies regardless of population focus as provided by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

The NONPF Nurse Practitioner Role Core Competencies are found at:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nonpf.org/resource/resmgr/np_competencies_&_ntf_standards/2022_nonpf_np_role_core_co.pdf

The National Taskforce Population Focused Nurse Practitioner Competencies are found at:

<https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nonpf.org/resource/resmgr/Competencies/CompilationPopFocusComps2013.pdf>

MSN Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Courses

| Department Abbreviation | Course Number | Course Title | Semester Credit Hours |
|-------------------------|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| NURS | 6303 | Theories for Nursing | 3 |
| NURS | 6317 | Nursing Research | 3 |
| NURS | 6318 | Nursing Populations and Settings | 3 |
| NURS | 6320 | Pathophysiology | 3 |
| NURS | 6315 | Advanced Health Assessment | 3 |
| NURS | 6384 | Pharmacotherapeutics | 3 |
| NURS | 6245 | PMHNP Introduction to Psychopharmacology | 2 |
| NURS | 6347 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing I: Adult/Acute | 3 |
| NURS | 6348 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing Clinical I: Adult/Acute | 4 |
| NURS | 6349 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing II: Child/Adolescent | 3 |
| | 6350 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing Clinical II: Child/Adolescent | 3 |
| NURS | 6351 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing III: Older Adult/Chronic Mental Illness | 3 |
| NURS | 6352 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing Clinical III: Older Adult/Chronic Mental Illness | 4 |
| NURS | 6246 | PMHNP Clinical Essentials | 2 |
| NURS | 6553 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing Clinical Practicum | 5 |
| | | Total hours | 47 |

Clinical courses require a preceptor. Preceptors should be secured at least 6 months prior to the first day of the semester.

Certificate Programs

Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate (Post-Masters)

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. Student must have completed graduate level coursework in Pathophysiology, Pharmacotherapeutics, and Advanced Physical Assessment (with a clinical component) with a grade of “B” or higher. A student who has one or more of the pre-requisite courses on his/her M.S.N. transcript may receive credit toward the FNP requirements if those courses have been taken within **four years** of enrollment in the post-Master’s course of study and if they correspond to the WTAMU course descriptions.

| Department Abbreviation | Course Number | Course Title | Semester Credit Hours |
|-------------------------|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| NURS | 6116 | Issues: Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice | 1 |
| NURS | 6216 | Issues: Nurse Practitioner Role Development | 2 |
| NURS | 6340 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan I | 3 |
| NURS | 6341 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan I Clinical | 3 |
| | 6342 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan II | 3 |
| NURS | 6442 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan II Clinical | 4 |
| NURS | 6343 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan III | 3 |
| NURS | 6443 | Primary Health Care Across the Lifespan III Clinical | 4 |
| NURS | 6590 | Capstone Clinical Practicum for Family Nurse Practitioners | 5 |
| | | Total hours | 28 |

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certificate (Post- Masters)

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. Student must have completed graduate level coursework in Pathophysiology, Pharmacotherapeutics, and Advanced Physical Assessment (with a clinical component) with a grade of “B” or higher. A student who has one or more of the pre-requisite courses on his/her M.S.N. transcript may receive credit toward the PMHNP requirements if those courses have been taken within **four years** of enrollment in the post-Master’s course of study and if they correspond to the WTAMU course descriptions

| Department Abbreviation | Course Number | Course Title | Semester Credit Hours |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---|------------------------------|
| NURS | 6245 | PMHNP Introduction to Psychopharmacology | 2 |
| NURS | 6347 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing I: Adult/Acute | 3 |
| NURS | 6448 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing Clinical I: Adult/Acute | 4 |
| NURS | 6349 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing II: Child/Adolescent | 3 |
| | 6350 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing Clinical II: Child/Adolescent | 3 |
| NURS | 6351 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing III: Older Adult/Chronic Mental Illness | 3 |
| NURS | 6452 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing Clinical III: Older Adult/Chronic Mental Illness | 4 |
| NURS | 6246 | PMHNP Clinical Essentials | 2 |
| NURS | 6553 | PMHNP Advanced Nursing Clinical Practicum | 5 |
| | | <i>Total hours</i> | 29 |

| SCHEDULE OF WHEN COURSES ARE OFFERED | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| FULL COURSE LISTING | FA | SP | SU |
| Nurs 6120 Research Utilization Project (non-thesis only) (O) | X | X | |
| Nurs 6301 Thesis | X | X | |
| Nurs 6302 Thesis | X | X | |
| Nurs 6303 Theories of Nursing (O) | X | X | |
| Nurs 6317 Nursing Research (O) | X | | X |
| Nurs 6318 Nursing Populations & Settings (O) | | X | X |
| Nurs 6320 Pathophysiology (O) | X | X | |
| Nurs 6384 Pharmacotherapeutics (O) | | X | X |
| Nurs 6315 Advanced Health Assessment | X | | X |
| Nurs 6322 Bioethics and Advocacy (O) | | X | |
| Nurs 6323 Role Practicum in Area of Concentration (O) | X | | |
| Nurs 6324 Scholarly Clinical Praxis (O) | | X | |
| Nurs 6321 Student Engagement in Nursing Education (O) | X | | |
| Nurs 6326 Nursing Informatics (O) | X | | |
| Nurs 6392 Special Topics in Nursing III (O) | X | | |
| Nurs 6382 Special Topics in Nursing II (O) | | | X |
| Nurs 6372 Special Topics in Nursing I (O) | | X | |
| Nurs 6116 Issues: Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice | | | |
| Nurs 6216 Issues: Nurse Practitioner Role Development | | | |
| Nurs 6590 Capstone (FNP) | X | X | |
| Nurs 6340/6341 FNP I | | | X |
| Nurs 6342/6442 FNP II | X | | |
| Nurs 6343/6443 FNP III | | X | |
| Nurs 6094 Directed Studies | X | X | X |
| Nurs 6245 PMHNP Introduction to Psychopharmacology | X | X | |
| Nurs 6246 PMHNP Clinical Essentials | X | X | |
| Nurs 6347/6448 PMHNP Advanced Nursing I | | X | |
| Nurs 6348/6349 PMHNP Advanced Nursing II | | | X |
| Nurs 6349/6450 PMHNP Advanced Nursing III | X | | |
| Nurs 6553 PMHNP Advanced Nursing Clinical Practicum | X | X | |

Chapter 3: Admissions and Progressions Requirements

In addition to University requirements for admission, the applicant must have:

- A minimum of a B.S.N. degree from a CCNE or NLN accredited school of nursing and RN licensure in good standing in the state in which practicums will be completed.
- A minimum 3.0 GPA with no grade below “C” for the last 60 hours taken.
- WTAMU Graduate School acceptance.
- Completion of a basic statistics course with a grade of “C” or higher.
- Current CPR certification.
- Current immunizations, including Hepatitis B.
- Formal application to the Graduate Nursing Program (application fee required).
- Refer to the “Graduate Catalog” information about admission requirements.

Admission Requirements: including recent changes from legislature & graduate school. (See university catalog for detailed requirements)

Application Procedure—obtain forms online or by e-mail from us.

Submit appropriate forms (including transcripts if not WTAMU graduate) to:

University

Very early response

Graduate School

Department of Nursing Nursing "Secondary Admission" included in the graduate school app

Approved Statistics Course (leveling course) must be taken prior to admission

Registered Nurse Licensure

Graduate students are responsible for possessing a verifiable unencumbered Texas Registered Nurse License and/or be registered in the state in which they practice. Students are responsible for notifying the department of any change in their licensure status throughout their enrollment. Failure to do so is grounds for immediate dismissal from the graduate program.

Conditional Admission

If admitted **conditionally**, the student must supply all of the required information listed on the letter of admission from the nursing department on or before the day of registration for the first semester of enrollment.

Students who were admitted conditionally by either the graduate school or the department of nursing must complete 12 hours of graduate courses with a minimum of a grade of B in each course taken. Failure to do so after completing 12 hours will result in suspension from further graduate study. Conditional nursing admission may have leveling course work assigned before progression in graduate course work is permitted.

International Applicants

International applicants must go through the international student office prior to admission. Transfer applicants must meet residency requirements.

Transfer of Credit

It is possible for a student to transfer up to 12 semester credit hours of the required credit hours (exclusive of thesis and independent study) toward the master's degree. Only courses in which the student earned an A or B may be transferred and all transfer courses must be approved by the assoc. dept. head for graduate nursing, college Dean, and graduate school Dean. Credit hours obtained more than 6 years prior to enrollment cannot apply toward a master's degree. Eighteen hours of course work at the 6000 level must be taken at WTAMU. Previous coursework in pathophysiology, advanced physical assessment, and/or pharmacotherapeutics, whether done at WTAMU or another university, **cannot** be applied to the FNP role specialization unless the program of study can be completed within a six-year time frame from when the first of these courses was begun. In some instances, challenge exams may be allowed for students who have previously completed the 3P's.

Time Limitation for Course Credits

Master's degree requirements must be completed within a period of six years beginning with the date the first-degree credit course is taken. If courses taken prior to enrollment are transferred for credit, the time limit is calculated from the date of the first transferred course

Academic Advising and Student's File

Each student is responsible for completing requirements of their plan of study; meeting all deadlines required by the department of nursing, the graduate school, and the university, and for initiating contact with the academic advisor should any problem arise associated with progression or completion of the master's degree.

Each student is assigned an academic advisor from the graduate nursing faculty.

The advisor will assist in the preparation of your Plan of Study and is available to advise you prior to each registration period. Students may meet with advisors by phone, e-mail, or office visit to discuss their plans for the following semester. Graduate students are "greenlighted" at the beginning of their course work and remain greenlighted as long as they are progressing satisfactorily in their program. Greenlighting allows you to register online from home or the computers in the JBK or other spots on campus. Students should meet with their advisor if they wish to amend their Degree Plan.

Each student has an academic file in the Department of Nursing and one in the university Graduate School Office. Students are responsible for seeing that the appropriate information has been submitted to both.

Academic Advisement and Student Record

It is the student's responsibility to provide the documentation and information required in the student folder and to keep this information up to date. Following is a checklist of information that must be filed in each student folder.

_____ Application to the Department of Nursing

_____ Plan of Study

_____ Transcript of Statistics Grade

_____ State Nursing License Number

_____ Evidence of current immunizations/titers

_____ Evidence of current CPR certification

_____ Undergraduate Degree Transcripts (Not required for Graduates of WTAMU BSN Program)

Some file items (Td, TB, Influenza, CPR, and unencumbered RN licensure) will require periodic updating. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the academic file is current. There will be a restriction on course registration for students with files that are not current.

Academic Advising and Plan of Study

Each student consults with the academic advisor to design a **Plan of Study** (Degree Plan) that supports their role specialization upon approval by the Associate Dept. Head for Graduate Nursing Studies, College Dean, and Graduate Dean. The Plan of Study is filed at the Graduate School and becomes the basis for the graduation check by the Graduate School. Changes in courses may be made after filing, as long as they are approved by the student's advisor and the Associate Dept. Head for Graduate Nursing Studies. It is the student's responsibility to obtain a copy of the approved plan from the academic advisor.

In addition, each graduate student will complete, with their advisor, a Department of Nursing Plan of Study for their role specialization. This plan of study will help the student and their advisor track course progression and plan for effective sequencing of coursework to maximize the learning experience. The student's Plan of Study, Timeline, and program progress are available online through Buff Advisor.

Changes in Courses Required for Plan of Study (obtained from advisor)

If it becomes necessary for the student to make changes in the plan of study, a Degree Plan Change form must be completed and approved by the adviser, college Dean, and Dean of the graduate school. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the filing of this form with the academic advisor.

Admissions/progression policy

Students in the graduate program of the Department of Nursing at WTAMU must earn a grade of B or higher in graduate nursing courses. A grade of "C" or lower is considered a failing grade and necessitates repeating that course prior to progressing in the program. This course must be retaken at WTAMU and will not be considered transferable from any other institution of higher education. Two grades of "C" or lower in any graduate courses will result in the student's dismissal from the program.

Students who drop a graduate level course for any reason after the 12th class day (or after the 4th class day during summer sessions) must submit a letter requesting reinstatement to the graduate nursing program. Reinstatement is not guaranteed and requests for reinstatement are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Progression in the nursing graduate program

If a nursing course is listed as a co-requisite for any other nursing course, withdrawal from one of the co-requisite courses requires an immediate withdrawal from the associated co-requisite course.

Grounds for Dismissal

1. Failure to meet academic requirements.
2. Clinical/practicum performance that does not uphold professional and state board nursing standards.
3. Failure to report change in status of registered nurse license. A change in status, even if reported, might result in dismissal.
4. Earning a grade less than B in two nursing graduate courses.

All graduate students are reminded that as Registered Nurses they are expected to practice within the scope of their state Nursing Practice Act. Any deviation from this Act may result in disciplinary actions, including the possibility of suspension, probation or dismissal from the graduate nursing program or university. Students are further reminded that unprofessional conduct and violations of the Texas Nursing Practice Act may be reportable to the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners.

Independent Studies

Independent study courses may not be taken as a substitute for course work designated on the plan of study. Independent studies will be approved only for experiences that enhance research skills, role specialization or otherwise meet a student's unique learning needs. The student desiring the independent study must first seek academic advising. Upon approval of the academic adviser, the student should then identify an appropriate graduate faculty member to guide and evaluate the independent study. The student is required to meet with the faculty member throughout the semester at times mutually agreed on. The student must show evidence of working on the independent study throughout the semester and must complete the study within one semester.

Incomplete Grades

In general, incomplete grades are intended for use only in the event of serious illness or extreme personal crisis of the student or household member. In precepted clinical and practica, an incomplete may be necessary due to time constraints of the preceptor. The student must sign a request for the incomplete and establish, with the course instructor, the time requirements for completion of the course. WTAMU allows one year for the completion of the course before the incomplete becomes an F, however, it is strongly recommended that the date for completion be established as the minimum time required to complete course requirements. It is the student's responsibility to maintain contact with the faculty member regarding progression on the incomplete and to notify faculty of any circumstances hindering progression.

Standardized Examinations:

Standardized HESI specialty examinations will be required at the end of the 3P's core courses (NURS 6384 Pharmacotherapeutics, NURS 6315 Advanced Health Assessment, and NURS 6320 Pathophysiology) and in selected other advanced courses. The cost of the examinations (approximately \$60) is the student's responsibility.

Proctoring of Major Exams:

All major exams will be proctored. An online test proctoring service will be utilized for most major course exams. Students also have an option of testing on campus in most courses. Students are responsible for setting up an account with the online proctoring service, scheduling their exams, and paying associated costs. Instructions for setting up the account and scheduling exams will be provided within each course. The cost of online proctoring will be up to \$90 depending on course and student options. Students electing to test on campus will pay no proctoring fees. A web conferencing camera and microphone are required for online proctoring sessions.

Immunization Information

| The Department of Nursing MUST have a photocopy of completed immunizations and screening prior to the FIRST DAY OF CLASSES. | Schedule for Vaccinations |
|---|--|
| Required Vaccinations include: | |
| Tetanus-diphtheria toxoid (Td/Tdap)* | One (1) dose of Tdap is required within the last ten (10) years. |
| Measles* | Students who were born on or after January 1, 1957, must show, prior to patient contact, acceptable evidence of vaccination of two (2) doses of measles-containing vaccine administered since January 1, 1968 |
| Rubella* | Students must show, prior to patient contact, acceptable evidence of vaccination of one (1) dose of rubella vaccine. |
| Mumps* | Students who were born on or after January 1, 1957, must show, prior to patient contact, acceptable evidence of vaccination of one (1) dose of mumps vaccine. |
| Hepatitis B* | Students shall receive a complete series of hepatitis B vaccine prior to the start of direct patient care or show serologic confirmation of immunity to hepatitis B virus. |
| Varicella (chickenpox)* | Students shall receive two (2) doses of varicella vaccine unless the first dose was received prior to thirteen years of age or a serological test that is positive for varicella antibody. |
| TB Test - Mantoux | On admission to the Department of Nursing and annually during clinical courses. |
| Annual Influenza Vaccine | Students are required to have an annual flu vaccine. |
| <u>Meningitis</u> | Texas Law requires all students (under age 22) entering an institution of higher education (public and private) to either receive a vaccination against bacterial meningitis or meet certain criteria for declining such a vaccination before the first day of the semester. |

For more information, see the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention dated December 26, 1997, Vol. 46, and the Supplement to Hospital Infection Control, January 1998; or call the Texas Department of Health Immunization Division, 1-800-252-9152.

*See Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Health Services, Part 1 Texas Department of Health, Chapter 97 Communicable Diseases, Subchapter B Immunization Requirements in Texas Elementary and Secondary Schools and Institutions of Higher Education, Rule §97.64 Required Vaccinations for Students Enrolled in Health-Related and Veterinary Courses in Institutions of Higher Education, effective July 28, 2016

To ensure the health and safety of all students admitted to the Laura & Joe Street School of Nursing and the individuals they care for, students who are not vaccinated against required immunizations as per the Texas Administrative Code for health-care students are required to wear a mask at all times while in the patient care clinical settings. This policy applies to all nursing students who have not provided evidence of vaccination against seasonal influenza, Hepatitis B, MMR, Tdap, and Varicella. Students are expected to wear masks that cover both the nose and mouth properly. Masks should be clean and in good condition. Religious and/or medical exemptions do not exclude students from this policy.

To ensure a focused and safe educational environment for students, faculty, and staff, children (Individuals under the age of 18) are not permitted in the classrooms, simulation, and laboratory areas of the nursing school. This policy is designed to maintain an environment conducive to learning, ensure safety, and adhere to professional standards. Students with childcare needs are encouraged to seek alternative arrangements before attending classes or labs

Professional Liability

All nursing majors in clinical settings must be covered by malpractice insurance. The cost for liability insurance will be the responsibility of the student 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 SON 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 SON 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.

Chapter 4: Student Services

Office of Financial Aid

The U.S. Public Health Department has money available for students who agree to pay back in working in health shortage areas. Information is shared on the Graduate Bulletin Board and is available through the Internet. It is possible new funding will appear as the nation addresses the nursing shortage.

Military Leave

Withdrawal due to a call-up to active military duty is not processed through the online withdrawal system. has been established for students who must withdraw from WTAMU for this reason.

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 SON. See readmission policy. Students who, without permission from the ADSA or designee of the school in which they are enrolled, discontinue attending a course or clinical experience without completing the established drop/withdrawal procedures will, at the end of the enrollment period, be assigned a grade(s) based upon the requirements of the entire course or clinical experience.

Students who do not take classes in a long semester (fall or spring) will have to submit a new Graduate School application before continuing their program. Students may also be required to submit additional documentation.

Full-Time Student

A full-time graduate student is defined as one who is registered for 9 semester credit hours during a fall or spring semester and 6 semester credit hours in a 10-week summer semester. A “W” grade does not count toward the certification of enrollment status.

Chapter 5: Academic Rules, Policies, and Procedures

Scholastic Dishonesty

It is the responsibility of students and instructors to help maintain scholastic integrity at the university by refusing to participate in or tolerate scholastic dishonesty.

“The imposition of penalties in case of cheating, including plagiarism, shall be within the discretion of the instructor. Plagiarism is a form of intellectual dishonesty and a breach of scholarship, committed by presenting the ideas or phrasing of another as one’s own without giving proper documentation of sources. Names of students involved in cheating, including plagiarism, and the penalties assessed by the instructor may be recorded with the Department Head and appropriate academic dean. At the discretion of the instructor, and with the knowledge of the department and academic dean, the student may be reported to the office of the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs for disciplinary action.”

Please read the section on academic dishonesty in the WTAMU Code of Student Life: Academic Dishonesty: <http://www.wtamu.edu/webres/File/Student%20Life/2008-2009CodeWeb.pdf>

Definitions of Academic Misconduct

Definitions of academic misconduct may be found at <https://www.wtamu.edu/student-life/handbook/academic-rules/01-categories-academic-dishonesty.html>. They include cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submissions, plagiarism, complicity, abuse and misuse of access, violation of college rules, and university rules on research. The listing is not, however, exclusive of any other act that may reasonably be called academic dishonesty.

WTAMU 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.

Grading Policies

A four-point (4.0) grading system is utilized in the SON. 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* – Average | 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 | |
| X – No grade submitted | 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.

Time Limitations for Completion of Degrees

Master’s degree requirements must be completed within a period of six years beginning with the date the first-degree credit course is taken. If courses taken prior to enrollment are transferred for credit, the time limit is calculated from the date of the first transferred course

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 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 SON.
- 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 SON, the official grade for the final graduation degree audit is the last one earned.

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 SON.

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.

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

Incomplete “I” Grade Policy

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

The instructor shall give this grade only when the deficiency is due to an authorized absence or other cause beyond the control of the student. When an instructor reports an incomplete grade to the Registrar, they will fill out an “Incomplete Grade Report,” which is filed with the ADSA 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

West Texas A&M University has procedures for addressing written student complaints. The procedures are intended to provide a process for resolving student grievances in a prompt and equitable manner without prejudice, discrimination, or malice toward the person or persons initiating the complaint. The procedure for filing such a complaint is outlined in the West Texas A&M University Code of Student Life – Appendix IV. The Code of Student Life document is found at <http://wtamu.edu/administrative/ss/code> .

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 Dean.

The basis for an appeal based upon dismissal for failure to adhere to SON 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 SON 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.

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. 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

Acceptable Student Behavior

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (Code of Student Life). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. Inappropriate behavior may result in disciplinary action or referral to the University's Behavioral Intervention Team. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Exam Guidelines

Exams are given by computer tests. Be prepared with appropriate supplies for either. It is the expectation of the SON 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 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 SON course for detailed exam guideline

Transportation Expectations

The SON 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 6: Clinical/Practicum Policies

Clinical/Practicum Experiences

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

Faculty are responsible and accountable for the management of clinical learning. No clinical/practicum experience will commence prior to the establishment of a contractual agreement between the University and clinical facility/agency and completion of orientation requirements. Students should consult faculty regarding verification of a contractual agreement. Furthermore, students are required to complete all WTAMU, SON 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 PMHNP 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 Director

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 WTAMU program accreditation, formal review, and approval of WTAMU 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 WTAMU in a timely manner so as not to delay the student's progression in the program.
- Costs incurred to the West Texas A&M School of Nursing.

SON 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 PMHNP students.

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 SON 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 SON 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 SON 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 WTAMU 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

SON 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 SON abide by [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 \(HIPAA\) regulations](#). In addition, the SON 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 SON 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 SON 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. Post-exposure 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 SON 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 Student Medical Clinic 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 Student Medical Clinic 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 SON 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, CI, 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 West 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.

As health care professionals, the SON 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 SON 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 SON 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 SON. Reports will be sent to the Dean.

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 SON, 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 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

5. 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.

Chapter 7: Student Conduct Code Procedures

The University views the student conduct system as an educational experience that can result in growth in personal understanding of one's responsibilities and privileges in the WTAMU community. Acceptable standards of conduct have been established to protect the rights of others and the orderly operation of the University. 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 WTAMU, students are encouraged to seek clarification and advice regarding procedures before initiating a grievance.

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, SON 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 WTAMU, SON, 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

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 SON 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.

Chapter 8: Graduation & APRN Certification

Graduation Requirements

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

- Complete the coursework with a grade of B or better in all nursing coursework and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- File an application for degree by the designated deadline.
- Pay any associated graduation fees.
- Clear all financial and other obligations Graduation Commencement

As students enter their final semester, WTAMU 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 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

Appendix A

Thesis Committee Guidelines – WTAMU Department of Nursing

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for the functioning of thesis committees in the Department of Nursing, WTAMU. These guidelines augment the guidelines provided by the Graduate School, WTAMU. Development of a thesis committee, the function of the thesis committee, and thesis defense expectations are included. Thesis is accomplished during the final two semesters of study and consists of conducting original research.

Thesis Committee

Appointment of the Committee

A student who expresses interest in completing a thesis will be directed to the Associate Department Head for Graduate Studies, Research, and Grants. The student will complete the application for thesis prior to meeting with the Associate Department Head (Appendix A). The Associate Department Head will guide the student in selecting a thesis chair and thesis committee based on faculty expertise in either subject matter or methodology. The student will then get approval from the members of the thesis committee (Appendix B).

The two thesis courses (NURS 6301 and NURS 6302) should coincide with the students projected last two semesters of coursework in the nursing graduate program.

Number of Members

Each master's thesis committee shall be composed of a minimum of three members. A fourth and/or fifth member may be added to the committee when deemed appropriate/necessary to provide required expertise.

Committee Membership

Committee membership can include faculty from outside the nursing department, but the thesis chair must be a graduate faculty of the Department of Nursing. In order for a member to chair a thesis, he/she must have previously served as a second or third member of a thesis committee.

Thesis Committee Responsibilities

The initial responsibility of the committee is to meet and determine the feasibility of the topic and the thesis plan or proposal, and to permit the student to proceed only after such determination has been made. The committee shall sign off on the student's plan or proposal and a copy should be kept in the student's file in the department. The signing of this document signifies that the student has permission to proceed with the study as outlined in the plan.

The committee shall determine whether the student's research is subject to the university policy on research on human or animal subjects and advise the student accordingly.

The committee shall determine the adequacy of the bibliography.

The committee shall review and approve the methodology and any instrument or questionnaire used in data collection.

Committee members are responsible for reviewing thesis drafts and providing feedback in a timely manner. Depending on circumstances, there should be no more than a two-week turnaround review time for each of the committee members to review the manuscript for a thesis. In addition, committee members should meet periodically, as determined by the thesis chair, to discuss progress of the student. The student need not be present at such meetings but may upon request.

The responsibility of the committee as a whole is to examine the student's work and to meet and make a final determination of the acceptability of the thesis, and to arrange for any oral defense of the thesis in accordance with Graduate School policies.

It should be communicated to the student that it is their responsibility to observe graduate deadlines for the submission of draft and final copies of the thesis. A reasonable amount of time (not more than two weeks) should be allowed for each of the committee members to review the manuscript.

The Chair

The committee chair should inform the student regarding proprietary interests and ownership of data or research product as appropriate and reach agreement about potential publication of this material. Formal written memoranda of understanding are desirable. This needs to be done as early in the process as possible, preferably at the time the proposal is accepted.

The student and the committee chair, insofar as it is possible, should arrive at an agreement on an approximate time schedule, including meetings of the committee, for the accomplishment of thesis/dissertation-related work for each semester or term that the student is engaged in such work. The committee should meet throughout the thesis process. The chair shall have primary responsibility for the supervision of the student's work, setting deadlines, and guiding the student's progress.

The chair shall assume the role of "principal investigator" when the student's research involves human subjects and shall insure the student has completed CITI/ethics training as part of the completion of the Institutional Review Board application process. The chair shall ensure that Graduate School policies in this area are carefully observed.

The chair shall inform the student of university regulations regarding the need to maintain continuous enrollment while working on the thesis.

The chair shall inform the student of the Graduate School process for completion of thesis.

In consultation with the other members of the committee, the chair shall determine the final grade on the thesis and see that it is properly reported to the Associate Department Head. The Associate Department Head will provide appropriate notification to the Graduate School.

The chair is responsible for evaluating the student's progress before assigning an "IP" and final grade for thesis. All "IP" grades will be changed, by the Chair, once the student has successfully defended their thesis.

The chair shall inform the student of the APA style manual along with any deviations for the style manual required by the department for formatting the thesis.

Disputes

In the event that a dispute or disagreement arises between a student and a member of the committee or between members of the committee, the committee chair shall call a meeting of the committee and the student for the purpose of resolving the problem.

If the dispute cannot be resolved through this process, or if the proposed solution is unacceptable to the student or one of the committee members, the committee should consult the Associate Department Head. If the dispute remains unresolved, the Department Head and Dean, Graduate School may be consulted.

Termination of the Committee

The committee has completed its obligations when the final manuscript has been approved by the Graduate Dean, each member has signed the approval page for the publication copy of the thesis/dissertation, and the thesis/dissertation grade is recorded. If the student fails to progress, the thesis chair may terminate the committee.

Application for Thesis
WTAMU Department of Nursing

Student: _____

Date: _____

Student ID#: _____

Proposed Research Project (*Include topic, research question/hypothesis and methodology*):

TOPIC:

RESEARCH QUESTION/HYPOTHESIS:

METHODOLOGY:

Signature

**Thesis Committee Assignment
WTAMU Department of Nursing**

Candidate: _____ Date: _____

ID# _____ Estimated Date of Graduation: _____

The above student is advanced to candidacy, is in good standing at WTAMU, Graduate School, and Department of Nursing, and is recommended for thesis NURS 6301 assignment.

The student and committee members have read the thesis guidelines of the Graduate School and approve the following proposed topic:

Human subjects training has been completed: Yes/No/NA (circle one) Date: _____

IRB approval has been obtained: Yes/ No/ NA (circle one)

Date: _____

**Committee
Chair**

Print Name

Signature

Members

Print Name

Signature

Print Name

Signature

Print Name

Signature

Approved:

Studies,

*Associate Department Head, Graduate
Research and Grants*

WTAMU Graduate Nursing Program Thesis Guidelines

Purpose of the Thesis

The Thesis is the alternative to the Research Paper in the Graduate Nursing Program. It offers the opportunity to (1) access and critically review current and relevant literature regarding a specific research question through the lens of a theoretical framework, (2) design and complete a research project at the master's level, and (3) determine how the findings from the study will improve nursing practice. The master's thesis does not have to be independent or original research but should be the new application of ideas. The Thesis and the related oral comprehensive examination (Oral Comprehensive Examination) offer the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to write and communicate orally (AACN Essentials for Master's Education). The thesis must be written using the guidelines of the WTAMU Graduate School.

Following are the nursing requirements:

Developing the Research Idea

1. The student is encouraged to initiate a meeting with the Assoc. Dept. Head for Graduate Nursing early in the semester **prior to enrolling in thesis**. Once the topic and methodology are approved, the student may be referred to graduate faculty with expertise in the content area or the methodology for course enrollment. Meetings with the graduate coordinator or other graduate faculty are encouraged to facilitate this process. Should human subjects review be necessary, the student will assure that the IRB forms are completed and approved by the IRB Committee before collection of any data.
2. Once the thesis has been completed and the thesis chair and the graduate student are satisfied that it is ready, paper copies of the final draft will be forwarded to other graduate faculty at least 10 working days prior to thesis defense.
3. The Oral Comprehensive Examination (defense) will be scheduled within the last two weeks of the semester. At the Oral Comprehensive Examination:
 - a. The student will make a formal presentation of the thesis (approximately 20 - 25 minutes)
 - b. If the oral comprehensive exam is opened to those outside the committee, questions will be entertained by the graduate student (10 minutes), after which the guests will leave the room.
 - c. The graduate faculty members will engage in scholarly discussion with the graduate student until their questions about the study have been satisfactorily addressed.
 - d. The graduate faculty members will confer in private, and students will be informed by letter of their performance on comprehensive examination. The student's score will be determined by averaging the scores from the graduate faculty.
 - e. The outcomes of the oral comprehensive examination are: approval with editorial changes, conditional approval with substantive changes, and approval denied. Note: a thesis may only be defended two times.
4. Upon approval, all graduate faculty members will sign the "Thesis Title Page" and the "Report of Comprehensive Examination" (forms found in the appendices of the Graduate Handbook for the Nursing Programs). It is the responsibility of the student to bring a copy of the forms, printed on final draft paper (at least ¼% bond) to the oral comprehensive exam ready for signature.

QUALITATIVE THESIS GUIDELINES

Utilize thesis guidelines for the Graduate School

Thesis Approval Form with Signatures

Dedication (if any)

Thesis Title Page

Acknowledgements (if any)

Abstract

Table of Contents (including appendices)

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter I: Introduction

The introduction to the thesis provides the reader with an understanding of the phenomena being studied, its significance to the nursing profession, and the research question. The thesis should address the following areas fully:

1. Identification of the phenomena of interest
2. Description of the author's interest in the phenomena
3. Identification of the purpose of the study
4. Identification of the research question
5. Sensitizing definitions of the concepts surrounding the phenomena
6. Description of the significance of the study to the nursing profession
7. Proposed theoretical framework that will guide the study
8. Identify assumptions and limitations (please note that the design or paradigm cannot be a limitation, so do not identify small sample size associated with qualitative research as a limitation)

Chapter II: Integrative Review of the Literature

For the thesis, write an introductory paragraph that identifies the areas that will be addressed. These areas should contain at a minimum the research literature regarding the theoretical framework and the concepts inherent in the research question(s). Each of these areas should be addressed under its own subheading. The following areas of the research literature are to be discussed under each subheading:

- 1. Comparison of the Quantitative Research Literature:** Compare the research articles to one another, looking for points of agreement and disagreement – paying attention to author/purpose of the study and its significance to nursing, major findings, populations, independent and dependent variables, measurement tools, data analysis, rigor of the study, significance, and effect size)
- 2. Comparison of the Qualitative Research Literature:** Compare the research articles to one another, looking for points of agreement and disagreement – paying attention to author, purpose of the study and its significance to nursing, research questions, qualitative paradigm used, aspects of rigor, and themes that emerge.
- 3. Synthesis of the Relevant Literature:** Integrated discussion of the major findings and their application to an issue of significance to nursing. Consolidate major areas of agreement and disagreement from both the quantitative and qualitative literature relevant to the

student's project. Discuss ways in which the qualitative and quantitative research confirms or contradicts each other.

4. Summary: Discuss the existing state of literature, identify gaps in the knowledge base, and make a link to your study.

Note: In qualitative studies it is expected that the review of literature will be expanded upon conclusion of the study to explore concepts that have emerged through the study.

Chapter III: Methods

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of how the study was conducted including:

1. Introductory paragraph outlining the material that will be included in the chapter
2. Overview of the qualitative paradigm through which the phenomena has been studied, including the philosophical background of the paradigm
3. Description of the setting
4. Description of the researcher's process for gaining access to the population
5. Criteria for inclusion in the study
6. Plan for data collection and analysis
7. Presentation of ethical considerations
 - a. Describe the review process that was used
 - b. Discuss the risks and benefits, and identify steps taken to minimize any risks
 - c. Place examples of cover letter(s) and /or consent forms in Appendices

Chapter IV: Results

The results chapter is written upon completion of the study and provides the reader with a full description of the findings of the study. This chapter will include:

1. An introductory paragraph to overview areas discussed in the chapter
2. Description of the sample characteristics
3. Description of data analysis procedures Results for each research question(s), reported according to the paradigm used: themes that emerged, propositions or theories that emerged, etc. The author should write this section using thick, rich description including quotations that explicated the themes or categories
4. Additional findings that are not related to the research question(s).
5. Discuss the methodological rigor of this study.

Chapter V: Discussion

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of how the researcher interprets the findings, implications for further study, additional review of the literature that was done upon completion of the study to address emerging concepts, and relevance to the profession of nursing. It should address these areas:

1. Introductory paragraph
2. Interpretation of findings
3. Literature review for concepts emerging during the study that were not addressed in the original review of literature
4. Relevance of findings to the nursing profession
5. Identification of specific recommendations for additional research

References

Appendices

QUANTITATIVE THESIS GUIDELINES

Utilize thesis guidelines for the Graduate
School Thesis Approval Form with
Signatures Dedication (if any)
Thesis Title Page
Acknowledgements (if any)
Table of Contents (including appendices)
List of Tables
List of Figures

Chapter I: Introduction

The introduction to the thesis provides the reader with an understanding of the problem being studied, its significance to the nursing profession, and the research question(s) and hypotheses. The thesis should address the following areas fully:

1. Background and significance of the problem
2. Statement of the purpose of the study
3. Clear delineation of the research question(s) and / or hypothesis(es)
4. Proposed theoretical framework that will guide the study
5. Definitions of major variables or concepts, both theoretical and operational
6. State major assumptions, limitations, and delimitations

Chapter II: Integrative Review of the Literature

For the thesis, write an introductory paragraph that identifies the areas that will be addressed. These areas should contain at a minimum the research literature regarding the theoretical framework and the variables being studied. Each of these areas should be addressed under its own subheading. The following areas of the research literature are to be discussed under each subheading:

1. **Comparison of the Quantitative Research Literature:** Compare the research articles to one another, looking for points of agreement and disagreement – paying attention to author/purpose of the study and its significance to nursing, major findings, populations, independent and dependent variables, measurement tools, data analysis, rigor of the study, significance, and effect size)
2. **Comparison of the Qualitative Research Literature:** Compare the research articles to one another, looking for points of agreement and disagreement – paying attention to author, purpose of the study and its significance to nursing, research questions, qualitative paradigm used, aspects of rigor, and themes that emerge.
3. **Synthesis of the Relevant Literature:** Integrated discussion of the major findings and their application to an issue of significance to nursing. Consolidate major areas of agreement and disagreement from both the quantitative and qualitative literature relevant to the student's project. Discuss ways in which the qualitative and quantitative research confirms or contradicts each other.

Summary: Discuss the existing state of the literature, identify gaps in the knowledge base, and make a link to your study.

Chapter III: Methods and Procedures

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of how the study was conducted, including:

1. Introductory paragraph outlining the material that will be included in the chapter.
2. Description of the research design
3. Description of the setting
4. Discussion of the measurement methods
5. Describe each measurement tool, its scoring, and level of data provided
 - a. Attach copies of all measurement instruments in Appendices
 - b. Attach letters of permission to use measurement instruments in Appendices
 - c. Discuss evaluation of validity and reliability of each measurement tool
6. Discussion of procedures
 - a. Explain in detail treatments used
 - b. Provide step-by-step description of procedures
 - c. Place samples of data collection forms in the Appendices
7. Discussion of the proposed methods of data analysis
 - a. Statistical testing proposed for each question and/or hypothesis
 - b. Plans for data management (use of computerized statistical program?)
8. Presentation of ethical considerations
 - a. Describe the review process that was use.
 - b. Discuss the risks and benefits, and identify steps taken to minimize any risks
 - c. Place examples of cover letter(s) and /or consent forms in Appendices
9. Discussion of limitations

Chapter IV: Results

The results chapter is written upon completion of the study and provides the reader with a full description of the findings of the study. This chapter will include:

1. Introductory paragraph outlining the material that will be included in the chapter
2. Description of the sample characteristics reflected in the data
3. Description of the results of statistical analysis for each research question or hypothesis
4. Address issues of reliability and validity of your instruments as they performed with your sample in this study (this is a significant piece of this chapter).

Chapter V: Discussion

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of how the researcher interprets the findings, implications for further study, and relevance to the nursing profession. It should address these areas:

1. Introductory paragraph
2. Interpretations of major findings
3. Discuss conclusions
4. Relevance of findings to the nursing profession
5. Identification of specific recommendations for additional research
6. Conclusion

References
Appendices

Appendix B

Graduation Checklist

- ✓ Have met Requirements for the Master of Science in Nursing Degree (MSN):
 - ❑ 39-40 credit hours for Administration & Education Role Specializations, 46 hours for the Family Nurse Practitioner Role
 - ❑ 18 hours at the 6300-level taken at WTAMU (these 18 hours do NOT include transfer in credits)
 - ❑ Minimum grade of B in all graduate courses
 - ❑ Degree completed within 6 years from date of first course listed on plan of study for MSN degree. This includes any courses transferred in.
 - ❑ Thesis or non-thesis option
 - ❑ Pass Comprehensive Examination (research utilization project or thesis, oral presentation)
 - ❑ In good standing with State Board of Nursing
- ✓ Current Degree Plan, forms have been processed for any changes from original degree plan.
- ✓ Course work including practicum completed.
- ✓ Comprehensive Examination- Synthesis:
 - ❑ Intent to enroll in thesis or research utilization project; thesis will be enrolled in for a minimum of 2 consecutive semesters prior to graduation; research utilization project must be enrolled in fall or spring semester of projected graduation semester; if planning to graduate in August, synthesis must be completed spring semester
- Graduations are held May, August, and December
- ✓ Comprehensive oral exams are scheduled April and November. Discuss Synthesis/Thesis paper plans prior to due date with advisor
 - ❑ Oral presentation of synthesis/thesis
- ✓ Thesis filed in Graduate Office by due date (for those who selected thesis option)
- ✓ Apply for graduation—must do in order to have a diploma made even if you do not plan to participate in the ceremony. Apply at least by semester plan to graduate: Oct. 1, March 1, July 1.
- ✓ Order cap, gown, hood for graduation ceremony (last 2 items or ordered at bookstore)
- ✓ Order WTAMU pin (order in October or February)

Appendix C MSN Comprehensive Exam Study Guide

Purpose

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to ensure that the student is able to demonstrate mastery of the following MSN Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes.

MSN Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes

Upon program completion, the graduate will be prepared to:

1. Incorporate the sciences and humanities into an MSN practice.
2. Demonstrate organization and systems leadership.
3. Incorporate quality improvement and safety into practice.
4. Translate and integrate scholarship into practice.
5. Utilize informatics and healthcare technology into practice.
6. Shape healthcare policy and advocacy.
7. Engage in interprofessional collaboration.
8. Synthesize disease prevention strategies and population health promotion.
9. Practice at the level of a Master's prepared nurse.

Planning for Success

Successful completion of the graduate nursing program is based upon synthesis and application of master's level advanced nursing knowledge taught throughout the program. The comprehensive exam validates that the MSN Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes have been met and knowledge synthesis has occurred.

To study for comprehensive exams, a thorough review of all major core courses is required. Additionally, students are reminded that the best source of review material comes from the list of recommended study textbooks. Students are cautioned not to limit their study resources to summaries of the concepts listed in the study guides below. It is recommended that you utilize your course notes and textbooks from your previous courses.

Testing Procedure

The MSN Comprehensives exams are offered fall and spring. Dates for testing are posted in at the beginning of each semester in the NURS 6120 course. MSN Comprehensive exams are written at the BNLC and are limited to four hours. Students are required to have a Buff Gold Card to sign into the testing room and access the computer. Each exam is blindly graded by at least two faculty members. Students who are unsuccessful will be required to register for NURS 6120 in the next semester that it is available. The exam will be made up of three (3) essay questions. Each question will be answerable in about two double spaced pages.

Research Component Study Guide

Students completing the Master of Science in Nursing degree at WTAMU should be able to:

1. Identify a researchable problem and explain the process and purpose of a review of literature.
2. Generate research questions from theory and practice.
3. Develop a researchable problem statement (PICO/PICOT) or research question and justify that problem selection.
4. Relate research design (experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, descriptive, etc.) to the project objectives, research question(s) and hypotheses.
5. Discuss the validity and reliability of data collection measurements/instruments.
6. Identify and define sampling techniques and strategies as these apply to the research process.
7. Compare and contrast qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and be able to provide a rationale for their use in a research project.
8. Identify and differentiate independent and dependent variables in a variety of research problem statements.
9. Interpret statistical methods employed in research studies. Be able to derive meaning and interpret statistical findings. Examples include p value, confidence interval, effect size, and power.
10. Differentiate between statistical and clinical significance.
11. Describe an approach (systematic plan) for applying research findings in practice setting, including evaluation of outcomes.
12. Describe the purpose and objectives for evidence-based practice as contributing to the development of nursing science.
13. Appraise research studies for quality and level of evidence. Be able to discuss the following: a) type of research, b) need for the study, c) theoretical framework, d) sampling technique, e) study design, f) strengths and limitations of the findings, g) interpretation of outcomes, and h) recommendations for practice or future research.
14. Discuss considerations for inclusion of articles in the review of literature section.

You should expect to be asked to discuss any of the above concepts in detail as well as provide substantive examples and/or analysis of research studies and findings for application in practice.

List of Recommended Research/Statistics Textbooks - Only one textbook is needed.

Any general research and statistics textbook written for the graduate level nurse will suffice for comprehensive exam preparation. In addition to reviewing a recommended textbook, we suggest students evaluate published research articles located in the Cornette Library database for concepts from the above list.

*Grove, S. K., Burns, N., & Gray, J. R. (2013). *The practice of nursing research: Appraisal, synthesis, and generation of evidence* (7th ed.) St. Louis, MO: Elsevier.

Kim, M., & Mallory, C. (2014). *Statistics for evidence-based practice in nursing*. Burlington MA: Jones and Bartlett.

*Melynk, B., & Fineout-Overholt, E. (2011). Evidence-based practice in nursing and healthcare (2nd ed). Philadelphia: Lippincott.

Pyrczak, F. (2013). Evaluating research in academic journals: A practical guide to realistic evaluation (5th ed.). Glendale CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Samuels, M.L. Witmer, F. L., & Schaffner, A. (Author) (2012). Statistics for Life Sciences (4th ed.). Pearson.

Tappen, R. M. (2016). Advanced nursing research: From theory to practice (2nd ed.). Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Theory Component Study Guide

The purpose of theory is to guide nursing research and practice, so the theory should reflect a reality that is substantial and significant. In other words, it should possess clinical or practical importance. Students must understand the underlying premise of a theory in order to appropriately apply that theory to the research process. Select two or more (nursing or borrowed) theories that you feel will guide you professionally and review the following information about each so you can discuss how best to incorporate use of theory into a practice or research problem. Consider the following list of theories/theorists:

Nursing:

Jean Watson' Caring Theory

Rosemary Rizzo Parse Human Becoming Theory

Margaret Newman – Theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness

Betty Neuman Systems Model

Nola Pender – Health promotion Model

Martha Rogers's Science of Unitary Human Beings

Swanson – Theory of Caring

Boykin and Schoenhoffer – Nursing as Caring

Patterson and Zderad – Humanistic Nursing

Vulnerability Model

Borrowed:

Transtheoretical Model

Health Belief Model

Travis Wellness Model

Systems Theory

Application of Theory in Professional Practice

1. Is the theory clear and consistent? Explain.
2. What are the major concepts of the theory and how are they defined?
3. Are relationships described for these concepts?
4. What assumptions, values, and/or beliefs underlie the development of the theory?

5. Does the theory address a problem that is essential to nursing practice?
6. How might the selected theory serve as a framework for a research question?
7. How does the theory help identify meaningful and relevant areas for study?
8. Does the theory provide a plausible approach to management of health problems and/or health promotion?
9. Does the theory help to generate a nursing diagnosis and how would it be usable in a plan of care?
10. Compare and contrast two nursing theories.
11. Appropriately apply a health promotion theory to a given situation (for example, an individual, family, or community healthcare issue or problem).

You should expect to be asked to discuss any of the above concepts in detail as well as provide substantive examples of application of theory in practice. Additionally, you should be able to compare the selection and application of diverse theories under similar circumstances i.e., discuss how a project will change based on theory selection.

List of Recommended Theory Textbooks – Only one of the following theory textbooks is necessary.

Any general nursing theories textbook written for the graduate level nurse will suffice for comprehensive exam preparation. In addition to reviewing a recommended textbook, we suggest students evaluate published research articles located in the Cornette Library database for application of selected theory.

Cody, W. (Ed.). (2013). *Philosophical and theoretical perspectives for advanced nursing practice* (5th ed.). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

Butts, J. B. & Rich, K. L. (2015). *Philosophies and theories for advanced nursing practice* (2nd ed.). Burlington, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

George, J.B. (2011). *Nursing theories: The base for professional nursing practice* (6th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall

Population Health Study Guide

1. Know basic epidemiological data such as IMR, longevity rate, top 3 causes of death for state of residence and US. Know top 3 cause of death of third world countries (in general).
2. Know and discuss meaning of IMR, Causes of death at local, national, and global level.

3. Differentiate between incidences, prevalence, Case fatality Rate (CFR), and index case. Endemic, epidemic, pandemic, epidemiological designs, epidemiological triangle, chain of infection and web of causation. Be able to discuss, apply, and utilize these concepts in a case scenario.
4. Apply a community needs assessment to a case study.
5. Discuss issues related to health literacy and vulnerable populations from a local, national, and global perspective.
6. Discuss health care policy from the global perspective.
7. Be able to identify multiple elements that affect healthcare policy decisions.

You should expect to be asked to discuss any of the above concepts in detail. Additionally, be able to discuss planning necessary for conducting a community needs assessment as well as for utilizing any of the above. or for any of application of the information above.

Recommended Textbook

Any general nursing public health or population's textbook written for the graduate level nurse will suffice for comprehensive exam preparation. In addition to a textbook, it is considered very helpful for students to review NURS 6318 course notes and websites referenced within the course.

DiClemente, R., Salazar, L. & Crosby, R. (2013). Health behavior theory for public health: Principles, foundations, and applications. Burlington, MA: Jones and Bartlett

Any general nursing public health or population's textbook written for the graduate level nurse will suffice for comprehensive exam preparation. In addition to a textbook, it is considered very helpful for students to review NURS 6318 course notes and websites referenced within the course.

Praxis and Practicum Requirements for Comprehensive Students

Praxis and Practicum are clinically based experiences. In praxis, you explore a clinically focused issue in which you are interested, or which is occurring in your place of employment. In Practicum, you explore an issue based on your role specialization (Nursing Education, Leadership, Management, etc.) Praxis is taken when you have completed the 6-core course (Theory, Research, Populations, Pharmacotherapeutics, Pathophysiology and Advanced Assessment) or concurrently with the last of these courses. A caveat to this, Pharmacotherapeutics, Pathophysiology and Advanced assessment must be completed BEFORE you enroll in Praxis. Practicum is taken during your last semester and serves as your graduate capstone course.

You are required to find a mentor to help guide you through the projects. Additionally, the instructor in the course will aid you. Your praxis may be completed in your place of employment and may be completed within the scope of your job description. Neither require travel to WTAMU. If you are not currently employed as a nurse, you will need to find resources for this course. This may mean collaborating with a clinic to explore issues related to, for example, childhood asthma. Your instructor will guide you through this when you enroll in the course. The syllabi reflect in detail the specific requirements for these courses, but here is a brief overview of what to expect:

Praxis. Praxis is clinically focused regardless of your role specialization. Additionally, you will focus on a particular clinical issue/intervention and identify a population of focus - something that piques your interest. For example, you might be the Director of an ICU unit and notice an increase in incidence ventilator acquired pneumonia or read about a new management protocol which would require a change in practice on your unit. Perhaps you have new hires who need more instruction in care of the patient with ventilator acquired pneumonia. Perhaps you believe you want to reduce the incidence to a level below national norms. You would explore this. That could include staff meetings for input, research of practices in other hospitals, walking rounds specific to these issues, etc. - with some end product in mind, such as a new protocol, developing and presenting refresher courses, recommending equipment changes, etc., etc. Your interventions are designed to influence health care outcomes for your specified population. You will be required to keep a log and participate in short activities online as well. You will develop three personal course objectives related to the clinical issue and how you intend to address it.

Practicum. Practicum is similar but is your capstone experience for the program. In it, your question and objectives will specifically address your role specialization (leadership/management, education, holistic nursing, etc.). In education, an objective could be to negotiate with a local nursing school to present a guest lecture on some area of expertise, or lead seminars, or develop an online teaching module. In holistic nursing, you might focus on a need for self-care to address the issue of nursing burnout or “compassion fatigue.”

In both courses you are required to log at least 90 clock hours. This includes time spent researching the issue, planning, and conducting staff meetings, developing a protocol or in-service, presenting it—basically all the time needed to see the project to its fruition. You will find that it is very easy to accumulate 90 hours as you well know in your current role when trying to effect change or address population health as a whole. This can easily be accomplished on your own time, or actually in conjunction with your work duties if working on a work-related issue. Again, specifics about the course requirements will be in the course syllabus, but this should provide guidance in course sequencing and semester planning.