

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

## STUDENT HANDBOOK



**SOUTHEAST MISSOURI**  
STATE UNIVERSITY • 1873<sup>®</sup>

*Revised*  
*Summer 2025*

***MSN PROGRAM***  
***STUDENT HANDBOOK VERIFICATION***

Please complete this form and return it to the Director of Graduate Studies in Nursing by the first day of classes.

This form will be placed in your student file.

“I have read the content of the MSN Graduate Student Handbook, and have had the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers about the content.”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

SEMO Student ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## I. Letter of Welcome

Dear Graduate Nursing Student:

Welcome to the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program at Southeast Missouri State University. Upon completion of the graduate nursing program of study, you will be awarded a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree. This degree will prepare you to practice in an advanced nursing role as a family nurse practitioner, and is the basis for doctoral study. The MSN program has full accreditation through the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

The MSN curriculum is designed to promote your professional growth in advanced nursing. In addition to expanding your knowledge base of advanced nursing, you will be challenged to think critically and communicate effectively as you enhance your ability to provide knowledgeable caring. You will participate in clinical practice experiences that will not only build your advanced knowledge and skills in a select advanced nursing role but also contribute to meeting the health care needs of the community and region.

The faculty and staff hope you will find the MSN Program exciting, thought provoking, and professionally satisfying. We will work with you to promote and facilitate your education at the graduate level. We welcome you to our graduate nursing program and look forward to assisting you to achieve your goals in professional nursing.

Sincerely,

Graduate Nursing Faculty

### A. Purpose of Handbook

This handbook has been prepared by the graduate nursing faculty to supplement but not replace the *University Graduate Bulletin* and to act as an overall guide to policies, procedures, and other information specific to the Department of Nursing. For general Graduate Studies matters, the *Graduate Bulletin* is the only official document.

Information in this handbook is as accurate as is realistically possible; however, the contents may change periodically. Due notice will be given to all students when changes are made to policies contained in the handbook. If there are questions about any of the information contained in this document, do not hesitate to contact the Director of Graduate Studies for Nursing for clarification. Graduate nursing students are responsible for information in this handbook as well as information in the current *University Graduate Bulletin* (<http://www.semo.edu/grad/bulletin.htm>).

### B. Rosemary Berkel Crisp Hall

The Department of Nursing is located in Rosemary Berkel Crisp Hall, on the main campus of the University. The Department of Nursing administrative office is located on the first floor of Crisp Hall (Room 107). The telephone number for the main office is (573) 651-2585, and all graduate faculty and support personnel for the program may be reached through this number.

### **C. Departmental Accreditation and Memberships**

The MSN Program is fully accredited through the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The Department holds membership in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF).

### **D. Department of Nursing Mission Statement**

The mission of the Southeast Missouri State University Department of Nursing is to educate baccalaureate and master's graduate to practice nursing within the context of knowledgeable caring. The department influences the health of the region and beyond by providing graduates who have demonstrated intellectual, personal, and professional growth and can integrate theoretical knowledge, experiential learning, and an interdisciplinary foundation. Faculty encourage graduates to pursue a career of life-long learning.

Reviewed by Total Faculty 08/15/2023

### **E. Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program Vision Statement**

Southeast Missouri State University Department of Nursing's Master of Science in Nursing Program's vision is high quality, available, accessible, and affordable healthcare and education across the life span for all citizens of the Southeast Missouri region and beyond. (Approved 10/09/2018)

### **F. Department of Nursing Philosophy**

At the core of the nursing education philosophy of the Department of Nursing lies a commitment to nurturing students into proficient, empathetic, and culturally competent nurses who are equipped to meet the dynamic demands of healthcare in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We believe in fostering an educational environment that cultivates critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and a dedication to lifelong learning.

#### Guiding Principles:

- **Holistic Development:** We recognize that nursing is not merely a profession but a vocation that requires a holistic approach to education. Our curriculum integrates the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of health to prepare students to care for the whole person.
- **Facilitative Instruction:** Our nursing faculty adopt a facilitative approach to instruction, serving as mentors and guides rather than mere disseminators of knowledge. They leverage various teaching strategies, resources, and technologies to engage students actively in the learning process and foster critical thinking skills.
- **Student-Centered Learning:** We embrace a student-centered approach that acknowledges the diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and experiences of our learners. Through active engagement, experiential learning, and collaborative

opportunities, we empower students to take ownership of their education and become self-directed learners.

- **Evidence-Based Practice:** We emphasize the importance of evidence-based practice as the foundation of nursing care. Our curriculum equips students with the skills to critically appraise research, apply evidence to clinical decision-making, and continually evaluate the effectiveness of their practice.
- **Interprofessional Collaboration:** We promote a culture of interprofessional collaboration, recognizing that effective healthcare delivery requires teamwork and communication among various disciplines. Our students engage in interprofessional education experiences to enhance their understanding of collaborative practice and respect for diverse perspectives.
- **Cultural Competence:** We value diversity and inclusion as essential components of nursing practice. Our curriculum integrates cultural competence education to foster awareness, sensitivity, and respect for the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of individuals and communities.
- **Professionalism and Ethics:** We instill in our students, a strong sense of professionalism, integrity, and ethical conduct. Through role modeling, reflective practice, and ethical dilemmas exploration, we prepare students to navigate complex ethical issues with compassion, honesty, and accountability.
- **Lifelong Learning and Professional Development:** We recognize that learning is a lifelong journey in nursing. Our program fosters a culture of continuous learning and professional development, encouraging students to pursue advanced degrees, certifications, and opportunities for leadership and innovation.

Approved by Total Faculty 03/20/2024

## **G. Glossary for the Curriculum:**

**Patient:** individuals, families, and/or communities who work in partnership with nurses to seek health and healing. Patients of nursing may also include organizations and agencies.

**Creative thinking:** “bringing together bits of knowledge or information that may initially seem unrelated, and formulating them into a plan that leads to effective decision making and solves the problem by finding connections between thoughts and concepts” (Catalano, 2006, p. 100).

**Critical thinking:** a conscious and organized thought process that “underlies independent and interdependent decision making. It includes questioning, analysis, synthesis, interpretation, inference, inductive and deductive reasoning, intuition, application, and creativity” (AACN, 1998, p. 9).

**Full human potential:** the maximum physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being attainable by a specific individual.

**Healing:** the process of bringing together the aspects of mind, body, and spirit in ways that lead toward integration and balance, and result in the realization of full human potential and optimal wellness (adapted from Dossey, Keegan, & Guzzetta, 2000, p. 6).

**Illness:** “the response of the [client] to a disease; it is an abnormal process in which the [patient’s] level of functioning is changed when compared with a previous level. This response is unique for each [patient] and is influenced by self-perceptions, others’ perceptions, the effects of changes in body structure and function, the effects of those changes on roles and relationships, and cultural and spiritual values and beliefs” (Taylor, Lillis, & LeMone, 2008, p. 67).

**Knowledgeable Caring:** “the nurse’s empathy for and connection with the client, as well as the ability to translate these affective characteristics into compassionate, sensitive, appropriate care” (AACN, 1998, p. 8). At the graduate level, knowledgeable caring enables the nurse in an advanced nursing role to make increasingly complex decisions requiring critical thinking as a prerequisite to providing individualized comprehensive nursing care within today’s complex health care environment.

**Learning environment:** any location or situation that is conducive to teaching/learning or that promotes an opportunity for change and growth in attitude, knowledge, and/or behavior.

**Nursing Roles:** a variety of behaviors demonstrated by the professional nurse in response to the patient’s unique needs. These roles exist upon a continuum from basic to advanced levels of practice.

- **Advocate:** supports and encourages clients as they seek information and make health-related choices and decisions
- **Care Provider:** uses theory and research-based knowledge in the direct and indirect delivery of care to patients
- **Collaborator:** seeks the input and participation of the patient, family, and other health care team members in health care decisions and activities
- **Communicator:** communicates effectively with patients, their families, and other members of the health care team through verbal, non-verbal, written, and technological means
- **Educator:** develops and implements teaching plans for patient/family instruction, evaluates their effectiveness, and revises them as necessary.
- **Manager/Leader:** A manager organizes activities and resources when caring for multiple patient groups. A leader influences and/or guides/directs others to achieve desired patient outcomes.
- **Researcher:** demonstrates an appreciation for health-related research by applying research appropriately to practice
- The graduate student will be expected to demonstrate the ability to deliver nursing care as well as evaluate issues pertinent to advanced nursing, provide leadership in order to advance the profession, initiate collaborative professional relationships to promote comprehensive health care delivery, and participate in research activities designed to contribute to nursing science.

**Nursing Settings:** a variety of clinical and community sites and agencies through which the professional nurse fulfills basic and advanced nursing roles.

**Rural:** areas of low population density that affect communication and transportation, interactions between friends, family, and neighbors, and access to services (Condes, 1985).

**Wellness:** an “active state oriented toward maximizing the potential of the individual, regardless of his or her state of health” (Taylor, Lillis, & LeMone, 2008, p. 70).

#### References

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (1998). *The essentials of baccalaureate education*. Washington, DC: AACN.
- Catalano, J. T. (2006). *Nursing now! Tomorrow's issues, tomorrow's trends* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Philadelphia: F.A. Davis.
- Condes, S. M. (1985). Biopsychosocial imperatives from the rural perspective. *Social Science Medicine*, 21(12), 1373-1379.
- Dossey, B., Keegan, L., & Guzzetta, C. (2000). *Holistic nursing: A handbook for practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen.
- Taylor, C., Lillis, C., & LeMone, P. (2008). *Fundamentals of nursing: The art and science of nursing care* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins.

## II. MSN Program Outcomes

The graduate of the MSN Program at Southeast Missouri State University is able to:

1. Safely perform in an advanced nursing role based on a synthesis of theories, concepts, and research from nursing, the sciences, and the humanities.
2. Demonstrate continuing professional development of a life-long pattern of scholarly learning.
3. Engage in intra- and inter-professional collaborations to improve patient and population health outcomes.
4. Demonstrate continuous quality improvement for optimal patient outcomes.
5. Use information systems and technology to enhance the delivery of health care.
6. Implement evidence-based nursing interventions within the context of knowledgeable caring with selected populations.
7. Use the research process to enhance and improve population health outcomes.

8. Apply leadership skills to improve health care advocacy and influence health care policy.

#### **A. Overview of the MSN Program**

The curricula of the graduate and undergraduate nursing programs are responsive to the evolving healthcare needs of the external community. Consequently, based upon faculty and student input and major undergraduate curricular revisions, revisions in the MSN program of study have been made periodically since its beginning.

The MSN curriculum offers a family nurse practitioner (FNP) specialty (43 credit hours). A graduate from the FNP option is eligible to sit for national certification by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) or the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

**B. Family Nurse Practitioner Curriculum Sequence:**

<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
<b>Year 1 Fall 2023</b>		
NS601	Informatics for Advanced Nursing Roles	3
NS625	Advanced Pharmacology	3
NS636	Advanced Pathophysiology	3
<b>Year 1 Spring 2024</b>		
NS614	Evidence-Based Practice & Quality Improvement for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NS603	Advanced Diagnostics and Reasoning for Primary Care	3
NS628	Advanced Health Assessment	3.5
NS627	Advanced Health Assessment Practicum	0.5 (45 hours)
<b>Year 1 Summer 2024</b>		
NS646	Role of the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NS610	Policy, Politics, and Advocacy in Advanced Nursing Roles	3
<b>Year 2 Fall 2024</b>		
NS638	Primary Care I	3
NS637	Primary Care I Practicum	4 (360 hours)
NS656	Women’s Health in Primary Care	2
<b>Year 2 Spring 2025</b>		
NS648	Primary Care II	3
NS647	Primary Care II Practicum	4 (360 hours)
NS654	Primary Care for the Pediatric Client	2
GR698-01	Master’s Final Comprehensive Examination	0 – Must enroll during final semester
<b>Totals</b>		<b>43</b>

a) **Please Note: In order to progress into NS638 Primary Care I, the student must have achieved a grade of “B” or higher in NS636 Advanced Pathophysiology, NS625 Advanced Pharmacology, NS628 Advanced Health Assessment, and NS627 Advanced Health Assessment Practicum. + A minimum grade of “B” or better is required to successfully complete NS638 Primary Care I, NS648 Primary Care II, NS637 Primary Care I Practicum, and NS647 Primary Care II Practicum.**

### III. GENERAL POLICIES

#### A. Student Responsibility

Students should be familiar with MSN Program policies and review them periodically to educate themselves changes. Additional policies, procedures, and regulations pertinent to the MSN Program are found in the University's current *Graduate Bulletin* (<http://semo.edu/grad/bulletin.html>).

All provisions of the *MSN Graduate Student Handbook* are in effect for the year in which the graduate student enters the program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to change the regulations and policies in the *MSN Handbook* at any time and to add, modify, or withdraw courses at any time. Program changes may be required during a student's program of study, and students are responsible for following the most recent revisions. Due notice of required changes will be given to all students in writing.

Certain behaviors are essential for safe and ethical nursing practice. Students are referred to the *American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses* and the Missouri Nurse Practice Act.

#### Application Process:

- Apply to the university's graduate school: <https://semo.edu/grad/>
- Apply to the Department of Nursing's graduate program: Contact the department at (573) 651-2585 or email [nursinggradstudies@semo.edu](mailto:nursinggradstudies@semo.edu)

Violations of safe and ethical nursing practice are defined below so that each student may be aware of the seriousness of such actions. Unsafe and/or unethical nursing practice may result in a clinical failure and suspension or dismissal from the program. Unsafe or unethical nursing practice may be evidenced by one or more of the following non-exclusive list of behaviors:

- Performing activities for which the student is not prepared or which are beyond the capabilities of the student;
- Performing activities which do not fall within the legal realm of advanced professional nursing practice;
- Recording or reporting inaccurate data regarding client assessments, care plans, nursing interventions, and/or client evaluations;
- Failing to recognize and/or report and record own errors (incidents) performed in relation to client care;
- Having physical, mental, and/or cognitive limitations which endanger or impair the welfare of the client and/or others;
- Disclosing confidential or private information inappropriately;
- Behaving in a disrespectful manner toward clients, other health team members, and/or faculty;
- Attending clinical experiences while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription medications which may impair performance; and
- Committing or omitting actions which result in violations of laws related to nursing such as negligence, malpractice, libel, slander, etc.

## B. Civility/Academic Honesty:

Students will complete all course assignments with civility, respect, and academic honesty as described in the current *Southeast Missouri State University Statement of Student Rights and Code of Student Conduct*.

1. **Academic Honesty:** Students will be expected to abide by the University Policy for Academic Honesty regarding plagiarism and academic honesty. Refer to: <https://semo.edu/student-support/academic-support/registrar/bulletin/policies.html>
2. **Civility and Harassment:** A major determinant of a successful educational experience is a shared sense of respect among and between the students and their faculty. Some of the texts and issues discussed may cause disagreements. Multiple viewpoints are an essential component of any college course; therefore, disagreement is acceptable. However, rude, disrespectful, aggressive, offensive, harassing, or demeaning behavior —either face-to-face or in an online discussion toward anyone will not be tolerated; students are expected to abide by the Code of Student Conduct <https://semo.edu/student-support/academic-support/registrar/bulletin/policies.html>

A student who believes someone has acted inappropriately toward him/her should speak with the faculty at once so the situation can be addressed. The faculty for the course has the right to ask a student to leave the classroom or the online discussion for any inappropriate behavior, and if the situation warrants, may call campus security to remove the offending student from class.

## C. Student Expectations:

The following student expectations apply to all graduate nursing courses:

1. Providing own transportation to and from assigned clinical experiences.
2. Completing a course's required prerequisites prior to enrolling in any course.
3. Adhering to Department standards of nursing practice appropriate to the student's level, and for independent learning activities.
4. Maintaining current licensure as a professional registered nurse (RN) that allows practice within the state of Missouri.
5. Purchasing and maintaining current personal professional nursing liability coverage. MSN students will hold professional nursing liability coverage as a Nurse Practitioner Student. All students are automatically covered by the department's liability insurance policy. The annual premium will be added to the student's account upon enrollment in NS627 and NS647. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase and maintain personal health and car insurance. Personal health insurance for the student may be required by individual clinical sites.
6. Caring for, maintaining, and replacing any departmental materials and equipment used during independent practice.
7. Completing and submitting assignments when due or making alternate arrangements with the instructor **PRIOR** to the due date.
8. Following the current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* guidelines in preparing written course work.
9. Presenting a well-groomed and professional image at all times.

10. Recreational marijuana use is not allowed for students enrolled in the MSN program. Southeast Missouri State University is a recipient of federal funds, and is subject to the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, as well as the Drug-Free Workplace Act, both federal laws that prohibit illegal drug use. All marijuana remains illegal under federal law, with the federal government classifying marijuana as a Schedule I drug. SEMO risks losing its federal funding, including student aid and grants, if it does not comply with these laws. In addition, health care facilities, where students engage in clinical practica, also prohibit recreational marijuana use. Contact the Office of Student Conduct at 573-651-2264, if you have questions.
11. Wearing Southeast University Department of Nursing identification photo name badges during all clinical experiences. The badge will identify the student as an “FNP Student.”
12. Uploading all required documentation to CastleBranch prior to beginning graduate course work.

#### **D. Clinical Readiness Requirements**

Prior to the beginning of any clinical experience, the following information should be current and uploaded to CastleBranch. Instructions on establishing a CastleBranch account and uploading information to the account were included in the student packet for admitted students. Failure to complete all documentation may prevent students from beginning coursework and will prevent students from participating in clinical experiences until documentation is completed.

#### **E. Procedure: Graduate Student Clinical Agency and Preceptor Requirements**

The requirements for graduate program clinical sites and preceptors are as follows:

- Preceptors must have a minimum of one (1) year of program-relevant experience in their current position
- Preceptors are required to be board-certified and licensed to practice in the State of Missouri
- Preceptors are required to be academically and professionally prepared to serve in their current role
  - The following documents are evidence of these requirements and hard copies are kept on file with the department secretary:
    - Current copy of RN and APRN, or PA, MD, DO, Missouri license on file
    - Current copy of Board Certification
    - Current CV
    - Current clinical contract for each site at which the student wishes to complete clinical hours with their preceptor.

Upon admission to the graduate program, students should engage with potential preceptors. Students are provided information regarding appropriate preceptors and clinical sites upon admission into the program.

During new student orientation to the program, this information regarding how to make written request for preceptor and clinical site authorization for each clinical experience. is again provided, and the lead faculty or program director addresses any lingering questions

regarding the process or challenges that students have identifying appropriate clinical sites and preceptors.

If the program identifies that saturation of the region can no longer accommodate student clinical practica, the program reserves the right to restrict the number of students admitted into the program.

The following information is submitted by the student to the lead faculty or program director.

- Semester and Course Number and Name
- Preceptor, including licensure and board certification (ex. Gina Koch, APRN, FNP-BC)
- Clinical Site – Must be appropriate to meet the course objectives

This process ensures that the lead faculty or program director has ample time to review and approve student requests. This also allows time for faculty to assist students who have been unable to secure a clinical site and preceptor. The department secretary assists in retrieving required documentation from the Missouri Board of Professional Registration, the preceptor, or the preceptor's credentialing office.

- The student may not complete any clinical hours prior to receipt of written approval.
- Any clinical hours completed prior to approval will not count toward required clinical time.
- The student may not attend clinical with another preceptor, nor at any other clinical site without written approval from the lead faculty or graduate director, following submission and review of all documentation.
- For example, the student may not travel to additional clinical sites with their approved preceptor unless permission is granted following student submission of the additional clinical site request.

To evaluate clinical sites and preceptors, the lead faculty or graduate director obtains a Student Early Evaluation of Preceptor and Clinical Site, completed by the student. This evaluation is obtained after the student has completed approximately 50 to 100 clinical hours. This touch point provides an opportunity for the faculty to ensure that the student is receiving an appropriate clinical experience by addressing preceptor/student compatibility, adequacy of clinic resources, and sufficient support for the student to meet the course objectives. If it is determined that the student's clinical site or preceptor is insufficient or inappropriate, the lead faculty or graduate director can address the concerns immediately. Student Early Evaluation of Preceptor and Clinical Site results are aggregated and reviewed during Graduate Program Committee monthly meetings.

Upon completion of clinical hours with each preceptor, students submit a Student Evaluation of the Preceptor. Additionally, preceptors are asked to complete and submit a Preceptor Evaluation of the Student. These evaluations, in addition to the Student Early Evaluation of Preceptor and Clinical Site, provide information necessary to evaluate each student's clinical experience, and

the adequacy of preceptors and clinical sites. The evaluations, as well as review of student clinical logs, case studies, and opportunities to discuss clinical scenarios during the face-to-face didactic co-requisite course, provide the opportunity for faculty to further evaluate the student's clinical experience.

## F. Additional Clinical Requirements

- The only requirement beyond the required number of patients and clinical hours is that a total of 75 pediatric patients, and a total of 75 women's health patients are seen during the second year of the program, NS637 and/or NS647.
- Students may not complete clinical practica in the department where they work.
- These patient requirements may be completed during either semester but must be completed by the end of NS647.
- Additionally, while students are encouraged to seek preceptors from a variety of clinical experiences, a minimum of 50 hours should be spent with each individual preceptor. The rationale is that a preceptor must be able to spend a sufficient amount of time with a student to effectively evaluate a student's performance.
- A student may not initiate clinical time with a preceptor without receiving written permission. A student who begins clinical practica without written permission from the director or lead faculty, will be dismissed from the program. Engaging in clinical practica without verification of completion all student and clinical partner requirements puts the student, clinical partners, and most importantly, patients, at significant risk for which there is no acceptable excuse.
- All clinical hours must be completed on a 1:1 basis with your preceptor. You may not "share" a preceptor with another student on the same day. Your preceptor may have other students during the same semester; however, if so, the student must be able to coordinate his/her schedule to avoid attending clinical the same day as the other student/new hire.
- If a student is absent from clinicals due to an injury, extended illness, or pregnancy, the student must provide a release from their health care provider, that they are eligible to return to clinicals.
- Students are encouraged to seek out preceptors at least six months prior to the clinical start date. Clinical practicum approval can be a very lengthy process and clinical approval can be delayed due to circumstances beyond the student's control.
  - Suggested Clinical Sites, but not limited to:
    - Community Health Centers
    - Walk in clinics at Family Practice facilities
    - Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Rural Health Clinics
    - For Women's Health: University/Campus Health Clinics, Planned Parenthood, OB/GYN practices.
- No practicum hours can be performed before the semester officially begins or after the final date of the semester as coordinated by each course faculty.
- Students cannot count any work hours (i.e. cannot be paid) for practicum hours.
- Students cannot "bank" or "roll over" hours from one practicum semester to another.
- If a student is unable to complete the number of expected hours per semester, he/she must contact the course faculty as soon as possible to create a plan. Exceptions will not be granted outside of extenuating circumstances.
- Students must wear their SEMO student ID badge at all times during clinical rotations. Students may also be required to wear an ID badge provided by the clinical site.

- Dress Code is dependent upon the requirements of the clinical setting. A lab coat is not required by SEMO; if your clinical site requires a lab coat, it must be a short, white lab coat.
- Students must see a minimum of two patients per hour during each practicum rotation. This is the bare minimum; the goal during clinical hours is to see as many patients as possible.
- Students may complete clinical hours on weekend, holidays, and breaks as long as they fall within the semester start and end dates.

### **G. Student Representation on Departmental Committees**

Students in the MSN Program are eligible and encouraged to serve as representatives on the following department committees: Graduate Program and Total Faculty. The Graduate Program Committee is responsible for all factors involving the development, implementation, evaluation, and revision of the MSN curriculum, for student admission/ readmission to the program, and for selection of award recipients related to the MSN Program. The Total Faculty Committee includes all faculty and involves discussions and issues regarding policies for the Department of Nursing.

### **H. Confidentiality of Student Records**

In accordance with federal statutes and regulations, all student records are confidential. Students may have access to their personal student record upon request. Disclosure of any information contained in student records to anyone other than the student will be made only with written permission of the student. However, it should be noted that individual health information, CPR certification status, professional liability insurance status, and criminal background check results may be released by the Department of Nursing to clinical agencies upon request, as required for clinical practice, and/or to satisfy requirements of accrediting bodies.

### **I. Performance and Competency Standards**

Students who wish to qualify for admission and progression in the MSN program must meet both academic requirements and performance standards. Academic requirements are described in Section III Academic Policies of this handbook and in the current University *Graduate Bulletin*. Performance standards include cognitive, sensory, affective, and psychomotor competencies. A student must, **with or without reasonable accommodation**, satisfy the following:

Competencies and Performance Standards	Examples of Necessary Activities (not all inclusive)
<p><b>Critical/Analytical Thinking/(Cognitive Ability):</b> Critical thinking, (both short and long term memory, and intellectual ability) sufficient to exercise sound clinical judgment.</p>	<p>Identify cause-effect relationships in clinical situations, predict outcomes, and interpret situational contexts. Reasoning skills sufficient to perform deductive/inductive thinking for nursing decisions. (Sufficient math skills to calculate medication dosages. Ability to transcribe data correctly.)</p>
<p><b>Interpersonal:</b> Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.</p>	<p>Establish rapport with patients and colleagues. Work cooperatively on interdisciplinary health teams.</p>
<p><b>Communication:</b> Communication abilities sufficient for interaction with others in both verbal and written English; ability to operate information technology systems.</p>	<p>Explain treatment procedures, initiate health teaching, document and interpret nursing actions, interventions, and patient responses.</p>
<p><b>Mobility:</b> Physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room, maneuver in small spaces, and to access all clinical sites.</p>	<p>Move about in densely occupied locations, such as patient rooms, work spaces and treatment areas. Ability to administer cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.</p>
<p><b>Motor Skills:</b> Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care.</p>	<p>Gross motor skills sufficient to provide full range of safe and effective nursing care activities such as positioning patients, obtaining and processing specimens. Fine motor skills sufficient to perform manual psychomotor skills such as the ability to calibrate instruments, operate equipment, prepare and administer medications.</p>
<p><b>Physical Endurance:</b> Physical stamina sufficient to perform patient care activities for entire length of work role.</p>	<p>Physical endurance for extended administration of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, assisting with surgery or other procedures which might require standing for long periods of time, working shifts of 12 hours or longer duration, or working during late evenings or nighttime hours.</p>
<p><b>Physical Strength:</b> Physical strength sufficient to perform full range of required patient care activities.</p>	<p>Muscular strength sufficient to transfer patients from bed to chair, etc., support patients during ambulation, and to assist in other activities of daily living.</p>
<p><b>Hearing:</b> Auditory ability sufficient for accurate observation and assessment necessary in nursing care.</p>	<p>Auditory ability sufficient for physical monitoring and assessment of patient health care needs. Ability to detect alarms, emergency signals, cries for help, and auscultatory sounds.</p>
<p><b>Visual:</b> Visual ability sufficient for accurate observation and assessment necessary in nursing care.</p>	<p>Read graphs, scales, computer screens, oscilloscopes, and use microscopes. Observe patient responses. Prepare and administer medications. Recognize emergency signals.</p>
<p><b>Tactile:</b> Tactile ability sufficient for physical monitoring and assessment of health care needs.</p>	<p>Perform palpation, detect heat and cold, functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic interventions, e.g., insertion of a catheter, administration of medication.</p>

<b>Smell:</b> Olfactory ability sufficient to detect significant environmental patient odors	Ability to detect various breath odors, urine odors, wound odors, ability to detect smoke or chemical odor.
<b>Emotional Stability:</b> Emotional ability sufficient to assume responsibility/accountability for actions.	Ability to manage hostile or emotionally disturbed individuals or those under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, ability to support patients/ families in crisis or to support fellow workers in crisis, and ability to function in a high stress work environment.

**J. Other Essential Behavioral Attributes:**

The student must have the ability to engage in activities consistent with safe nursing practice without demonstrated behaviors of addiction to, abuse of, or dependence on alcohol or other drugs that may impair judgment. The student must demonstrate responsibility and accountability for actions as a student in the Department of Nursing and as a professional nurse.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Department of Nursing Graduate Program Committee of any existing disability, either physical or otherwise. Such disclosure is necessary before any accommodations may be made in the learning environment or in the program’s procedures. Information about disabilities is handled in a confidential manner. It is the policy of the Department of Nursing to comply with federal guidelines regarding students with disabilities and to provide appropriate academic adjustments to otherwise qualified students with disabilities so they can meet these required performance standards. Whether or not a requested accommodation is reasonable will be determined on an individual basis. Requests for accommodation must be submitted in writing, allowing sufficient time prior to matriculation for action on these requests. Determining what is a reasonable accommodation is an interactive process that the student should initiate with the Department of Nursing and Accessibility Services.

A student who has been excused from clinical responsibilities due to medical reasons must furnish a primary care provider’s full release for unlimited practice prior to returning to clinical.

**K. Students with Disabilities:**

Students who believe that they may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor to arrange an appointment to discuss their individual needs. Instructors rely on Accessibility Services, and a student with a disability will be encouraged to do so also. In other words, accommodations for a disability will need to be requested through Accessibility Services (573- 651-5927) or the website: <https://semo.edu/ds/index.html> The accommodation(s) will need to be confirmed on a semester-by- semester basis and for each course for which the accommodation(s) are being requested. If a student has a special need that is addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires materials in an alternative format, please notify the instructor at the beginning of a course. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate special needs.

## L. Infection Control in Clinical Settings

1. Students and faculty will treat contact with tissues, blood and other body fluids (e.g., semen, vaginal /rectal secretions, respiratory secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, periorbital fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid) from ALL patients as potentially infective.
1. Unprotected Exposure is defined as being exposed to blood/body fluids through needle stick or other percutaneous or per mucosal exposure. If a student or faculty member comes into contact with blood or other body fluid through puncture, cut, splatter, or aerosol, then the student or faculty member will:
  - a. Report the incident immediately to the clinical instructor and/or appropriate employee health representative of the agency or institution where the incident occurred.
  - b. Complete the appropriate health care agency forms if required. The institution's blood/body fluids (Hepatitis B/AIDS) policy should be followed.

The faculty member should notify the Department of Nursing Chairperson and the University's Campus Health Clinic. The Clinic staff can arrange for follow-up testing at appropriate intervals. When a student experiences an unprotected exposure to blood/body fluids while in a clinical agency, the student should be made aware that the agency policy will mandate that an incident report be filed. While the University will make every effort to maintain confidentiality, the University cannot be held responsible for actions taken by the clinical agency. The supervising faculty member will follow the procedure for reporting accidental exposure as outlined above.

2. The Department of Nursing **does not** assume responsibility for costs of any resulting health care.
3. The Department of Nursing **strongly recommends** that students carry health insurance.

## M. Graduate Assistant Appointments

Information regarding Graduate Assistantships may be found in the current *Graduate Assistant Handbook, Policies and Procedures* ( <https://semo.edu/academics/grad/assistantship-openings.html> )

Should the student find any discrepancies between information found in this section and the *Graduate Student Handbook*, the student should follow information in the *Graduate Student Handbook* unless the information specifically relates to GA positions in the Department of Nursing.

Graduate assistants in the Department of Nursing must provide documentation of current unencumbered licensure as a registered nurse that allows for practice within the state of Missouri, current CPR certification, and current malpractice insurance; a criminal background check; updated immunization status; and completion within the previous year of selected Safety Training Modules (see Director of Graduate Studies for Nursing for list of modules and how to access any needed modules). Graduate assistants will also wear a photo identification badge with designation as "Grad Assistant" obtained through the Department of Nursing.

Please note the following: During the first academic year of graduate nursing studies, MSN students will be considered for a full GA position (an average of 20 hours of commitment per week).

During the second academic year of graduate studies, MSN students will be considered for a half-time GA position (an average of 10 hours of commitment per week with associated changes in tuition/fees and stipend allocation equal to that of half of a full-time position).

Under extenuating circumstances, second academic year MSN students may appeal to the Department of Nursing's Graduate Program Committee requesting consideration for a full-time GA position. It is the student's responsibility to present the case for extenuating circumstances and to provide a plan for time management to meet the responsibilities of the GA position, the demands of the second academic year coursework and clinical requirements, and personal and work responsibilities. The appeal and time management plan should be sent in written form to the Department of Nursing Graduate Program Committee via the Director of Graduate Studies for Nursing.

#### **N. Financial Assistance for Graduate Research**

The University Graduate Assistance Research Fund provides limited monetary resources to assist graduate students who incur extraordinary expenses completing research projects. Application guidelines are available in the office of Graduate Studies. In addition, funding for addictions research is available through the Department of Nursing's Office of Addictions; Lambda Theta Tau, the local chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, also has a Research Award with monies available to qualified graduate student applicants.

#### **O. Inclement Weather**

Southeast Missouri State University recognizes that transportation problems result from inclement weather and hazardous road conditions. When conditions dictate, decisions to close the campus will be made by appropriate University officials and communicated through the appropriate media channels as soon as possible. Regardless of decisions regarding inclement weather, it is the student's responsibility to assess local and regional weather conditions and make prudent decisions regarding the safety of traveling when hazardous road conditions are or may become apparent. If unable to travel to class or clinical sites, the student must notify the appropriate faculty and clinical site(s) and preceptor(s).

#### **P. Class Session Recording Restriction:**

Recording of any class or clinical session is prohibited except with the expressed consent of the course instructor/presenter at the time of the recording. Should consent be granted, the posting of class or clinical session recording(s) to ANY social media site (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snap Chat, etc.) is strictly prohibited.

#### **Q. Capstone- Comprehensive Exams**

A 3P Exam will be required at the end of NS628 Advanced Health Assessment and will assess student knowledge of pathophysiology, physical assessment, and pharmacology. Success on a 3P Exam indicates clinical readiness to begin didactic coursework in the primary care courses. Additional information regarding the 3P exam will be provided during the first week of NS628.

Additionally, during the final semester of the FNP program, students will be required to complete a board certification predictor exam, to meet the requirements for GR698-01 Master's Final Comprehensive Examination. Additional information regarding the predictor exam will be provided during the first week of NS648.

#### **R. Retention of Graded Course Material**

When graded assignments (course papers, projects, etc.) are returned to students during a course, students should retain these materials until the grading and appeal periods have been completed, as designated by the appeals process. Capstone course assignments, along with their graded rubrics, should be retained until the completion of the program and their inclusion in the student's MSN Portfolio.

#### **S. Department of Nursing Mental Health Policy**

The Department of Nursing is committed to the success of all students, including those with depression, anxiety, or other mental health conditions. The Department of Nursing will:

- Acknowledge but not stigmatize mental health problems;
- Encourage students to seek help or treatment that they may need;
- Ensure that personal information is kept confidential;
- Allow students to continue their education as normally as possible by making reasonable accommodations; and
- Refrain from discrimination against students with mental illnesses, including punitive actions toward those in crisis.

#### **T. Counseling and Mental Health Services**

Students are encouraged to seek counseling and mental health treatment through campus services or other available avenues. Counseling services and mental health treatment are available to students or other members of the campus community directly or indirectly affected by a student's depression or other mental health issues.

Emergency psychiatric services are available to students at all times. (Call the University Police Department at 651-2911 for emergency situations, after hours, on weekends, or during session breaks. The University Police Department will contact the University's Crisis Response Team).

Counseling and Disability Services is located on the second floor of the northeast side of Crisp Hall. Call 573-986-6191 for an appointment with a counselor. For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.semo.edu/ucs/counseling.html>

All services are provided on a voluntary basis, and it remains the student's decision whether or not to seek services.

The Department of Nursing will recommend a student seek care at the counseling center when it learns that:

- The student exhibits academic, behavioral, or other difficulties that appear to be due to depression or another mental health condition or

- The student has engaged in a para-suicidal act or is known to be contemplating suicide.

## IV. ACADEMIC POLICIES

### A. Admission

Admission to the MSN FNP Program and the post-master's certificates occurs once a year in the fall semester. Information about admission to the MSN Program may be obtained online by accessing the Nursing Department webpage (<http://www.semo.edu/nursing>) and the MSN Program webpage (<http://www.semo.edu/nursing/msn/index.html>) or by contacting the Nursing Department by telephone (573-986-6413). The MSN admission application may be found on the MSN webpage at: <http://www.semo.edu/nursing/msn/index.htm>

**A Graduate Studies application should occur in conjunction with submission of an application to the MSN Program.** A University application form and information concerning the University entrance requirements can be obtained online through the Office of Admissions. Completion and submission of the Graduate Studies application can be conducted online. Questions regarding the University Graduate Studies Admissions process can be answered by calling the Graduate Studies Office at (573) 651-2192.

Completed MSN admission applications should be mailed to the address on the application. Admission to the MSN Program is competitive and based upon a review of the total pool of applicants submitting completed application packets by the designated deadline of **April 1**. MSN admission applications are reviewed by Graduate Program Committee (GPC). For individual applicants not meeting regular admission criteria, probationary or provisional admission consideration may be considered by the GPC, if required criteria are met (see below) and seats are available. Written notification of acceptance or non-acceptance into the MSN Program occurs as soon as possible after the application submission deadline.

Applicants to the MSN Program must meet all admission requirements for Graduate Studies as outlined in the current *Graduate Bulletin* as well as MSN admission criteria. Students not meeting regular MSN admission requirements will be evaluated individually and may be considered for provisional or probationary admission. At Southeast Missouri State University, graduate students may be admitted in only one of three categories: regular, provisional, and probationary.

### B. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIC FOR FNP SPECIALTY:

1. Regular admission status is for applicants who fully meet all MSN Program admission requirements.
  - a. A baccalaureate degree with an upper-division major in nursing from a program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).
  - b. A minimum grade point average (G.P.A.) of 3.25 on a 4.0 scale.
  - c. A current licensure as a registered professional nurse (RN) that allows for practice within the state of Missouri.

- d. A course in health assessment or demonstrated proficiency in health assessment which includes physical examination and history taking with a grade of “B” or higher.
  - e. An introductory course in statistics (graduate or undergraduate) with a grade of “B” or higher.
  - f. Current CPR (professional level) certification.
  - g. Statement of academic goals and objectives for graduate study/advanced practice (Appendix A).
  - h. Clinical experience as a registered nurse prior to admission is strongly recommended.
2. Provisional admission is for applicants who do not meet all of the MSN Program’s pre-requisites. In order to remove a provisional admission status, a student must meet the recommendations of the Department of Nursing Graduate Program Committee as stated in writing to the student upon provisional acceptance into the MSN Program. (Normally, provisional admission will be granted for one semester only so that the applicant may meet regular admission criteria.)
  3. Probationary admission is for applicants who have a grade point average (GPA) (on a 4-point scale) between 2.90 and 3.24 with a GPA of 3.25 during the last 60 hours of undergraduate work. In order to remove a probationary admission status, students must achieve a grade of "B" or better for the first 9 credit hours in the MSN Program. Students not meeting the coursework grade requirement are subject to dismissal.

Applicants who are denied admission may appeal to the Department of Nursing, Graduate Program Committee.

Upon admission to the MSN Program, students will meet with their assigned advisor to establish an individualized plan of study. Unsatisfactory academic conditions that may increase time in the student’s program of study can be discussed at that time. In addition, admission to specific courses will be subject to seat availability with preference being given to those students following their original plan of study.

### **C. Progression and Retention**

As per University standards, to be retained in the MSN Program, students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0. If a student receives a grade below a C in any graduate nursing course, he/she may submit a request to the GPC for approval to repeat the course. If the course is repeated, the student must achieve a grade of B or higher. If a second grade below a C is received in any graduate nursing course, including a repeated course, the student will be dismissed from the program, and will be permanently ineligible for readmission.

A student who has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 may not continue in the MSN Program until obtaining the written approval from the Department of Nursing’s Graduate Program Committee and the Provost. Failure to follow this procedure will result in suspension from Graduate Studies at Southeast Missouri State University. To be removed from academic probationary status, the student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. A student who receives a grade below a "B" in any

graduate course is encouraged to repeat the course. Completion of a Repeat Card and permission from the Provost are necessary to repeat a course. Only courses taken at Southeast Missouri State University may be repeated.

Students in the Family Nurse Practitioner Program should note that in order to meet pre-requisite criteria for enrollment in NS638 Primary Care I, the student must have achieved an exam average of 80% or higher in NS636 Advanced Pathophysiology, NS625 Advanced Pharmacology, NS628 Advanced Health Assessment, and a grade of “B” (80%) or better in NS627 Advanced Health Assessment Practicum.

In addition, an exam average of 80% or higher is required for NS638 Primary Care I and NS648 Primary Care II, and a grade of “B” (80%) or better is required for NS637 Primary Care I Practicum and NS647 Primary Care II Practicum. Students not achieving the exam average or grade requirements are eligible to reapply to the Department of Nursing Graduate Program Committee for continuation in the MSN Program. Following application and acceptance for continuation, an individual remediation plan to promote academic achievement will be developed for each student. If a student withdraws from a course with a failing grade(s) or withdraws from the University with a failing grade(s), for readmission purposes, these courses will be considered the same as having received a failing grade(s). Students with extenuating circumstances may appeal the first failing grade, and individual exceptions may be made by the Graduate Program Committee, after consultation with appropriate faculty.

Students receiving a grade of “F” in any Practicum course (NS627, NS637 or NS647) must repeat and pass that course prior to enrolling in any other MSN course, AND must simultaneously audit the corresponding theory course (NS628, NS638 or NS648), even if a passing grade was received. Individual exceptions may be made only by the Graduate Program Committee, after consultation with the appropriate instructor(s).

Students receiving a grade of Incomplete (I) in any MSN course cannot progress to any other MSN course until the Incomplete grade is removed. Any request for an exception to this policy must be approved by the instructor of the course in which the “I” was received, the instructor(s) of the course(s) in which the student wishes to enroll, and the Graduate Program Committee.

The Department of Nursing adheres to University deadlines for withdrawing from classes. Late withdrawals will not routinely be approved. Any student wishing to make a late withdrawal and the involved faculty must submit a written request to the Department Chairperson whose decision will be final.

At whatever point deemed necessary by an instructor that it is impossible for any student to pass a practicum course (NS627, NS637 or NS 647), the student may be asked to withdraw from the course. A nursing student who withdraws from a Practicum course (NS627, NS637 or NS647) must also withdraw from the corresponding theory course (for example, if a student withdraws from NS637, the student must also withdraw from NS638). Withdrawn courses will be converted to a failing grade after one year, per University policy. If a student believes that they cannot continue in the program due to medical or personal circumstances, the student may apply for a Compassionate Leave or a Medical Leave. The student should discuss this possibility with the Director of Graduate Studies in Nursing as soon as possible, prior to withdrawing from courses. The forms and instructions may be found in Appendices G and H.

If a student is found to be convicted of a serious crime (e.g., felonies or substance abuse), continuation in the MSN Program will be reviewed by the Department of Nursing's Graduate Program Committee. Suspension from the nursing program may occur.

#### **D. Transfer of Credits into the MSN Program**

Information about transfer credit for graduate work at Southeast can be found online on the Graduate Studies website, specifically the current edition of the *Graduate Bulletin*. In all cases, over one-half of the coursework required in a degree program must be completed at the Cape Girardeau campus, the University's Regional Campuses and Center, or through Southeast Online. Transfer courses do not count toward meeting the residence or 600-level requirements.

No more than 12 hours of transfer credit may be applied to the MSN Program, and any potential transferred course must have the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies for Nursing. Credit older than 6 years may not be applied to the MSN Program, per university policy. With approval, a maximum of 12 credit hours of graduate level coursework completed prior to admission may be applied to a degree program. If currently enrolled in the MSN program, the student is advised that before enrolling for credit at another institution, prior approval must be obtained from the major advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies for Nursing.

Approved transfer credit will be applied to the student's transcript upon admission. Only coursework with a grade of "B" or better earned from a regionally accredited institution will be accepted as transfer credit.

#### **E. Graduation**

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree is conferred by Southeast Missouri State University following completion of criteria outlined in the current *Graduate Bulletin*. Students are referred to the Registrar's website to find specific information about completion of the Graduation Application and the deadlines appropriate to the completion of that application. Completion of the Graduation Application should be completed by the end of the semester prior to the semester in which the student plans to graduate. In other words, if a student plans to graduate in the Spring semester, then the graduation application should be completed and submitted prior to the end of the preceding Fall semester.

**All academic requirements for the MSN degree must be completed within a 6-year period.** This time period includes any transfer courses counted toward the degree. **Under extenuating circumstances, students may apply in writing to the Department of Nursing's Graduate Program Committee to extend the program of study.**

The Department of Nursing sponsors a Graduate Recognition Ceremony twice a year – in December and in May. Any student is eligible to participate in the ceremony if that student is within 3 months of graduation and in good academic standing with the Department of Nursing.

#### **F. Semester Load**

Full-time graduate students are enrolled in at least 9 credit hours during a regular semester. Enrollment in fewer credits than 9 during a regular semester constitutes part-time study by University definition.

## G. Grades

Southeast Missouri State University is on a 4.0 grade point system. Graduate courses are graded A, B, C, and F. There is no D at the graduate level. The following grading scale for the MSN Program is:

90%-100% .....	A
80%-89% .....	B
70%-79% .....	C
69% and below .....	F

## H. Absences

Students are expected to be diligent in the pursuit of their studies and regular in their class and clinical attendance. Absence in any course may require that the student repeat the course. Students have the responsibility of making arrangements satisfactory to the instructor regarding all absences. Such arrangements should be made prior to the absence if possible. Policies for making up work missed as a result of absence are at the discretion of the instructor, and students should inquire at the beginning of each semester concerning the policies of their instructors. The Department of Nursing in consultation with the faculty member(s) involved reserves the right to withdraw a student from a course because of excessive absences that interfere with attainment of course objectives.

Clinical learning experiences represent a commitment and responsibility to clients as well as essential application of knowledge. Satisfactory completion of course requirements and demonstration of clinical competency are necessary for successful completion of the course. Should absences occur, it is the student's responsibility to consult with the instructor about the effect upon course progression. An unsatisfactory grade or withdrawal from the course may be necessary.

## I. Incomplete (I) Grades

An incomplete grade may be given when students are unable to meet course requirements due to circumstances beyond their control, not for unsatisfactory/substandard work. Incomplete grades may not be approved by an instructor prior to the drop date. Incomplete grade forms are available from the Department of Nursing administrative office. The completed form should be copied to the student, faculty member, department (for the student's file), the Registrar, and the office of Graduate Studies. All incompletes should be satisfied four weeks prior to the student's intended graduation date.

A grade of 'Incomplete' must be removed during the next academic year, exclusive of the summer semester, or a grade of 'F' will be recorded, and the student will be placed on academic probation. When completed, upon receipt of a signed grade change card in the Registrar's Office, the final grade will be recorded in place of the grade of 'I'. If, after six years, the grade of 'I' in the research project is not replaced, a grade of 'F' will be recorded in place of the 'I' grade.

## J. Withdrawals

Withdrawals must be made through the Office of the Registrar or a failing grade(s) will be recorded. Deadlines for withdrawal are provided on the Registrar's web site.

#### **K. Dismissal from the MSN Program Policy**

The graduate nursing faculty reserves the right to review a student at any stage of the student's program of study. A review process will automatically be triggered by a grade less than a "B". This review has the potential to result in the dismissal of the student from the MSN Program. Dismissal from the MSN Program may occur due to:

1. Loss of registered nurse license;
2. A failing grade in any course in the MSN Program;
3. An overall GPA of less than 3.00 at any time in the program of study;
4. An incomplete grade that is not converted to at least a grade of "B" within the designated contractual period;
5. Two failing grades during the MSN program of study, including two failing grades in the same course, resulting in permanent ineligibility for readmission;
6. Failure to complete the degree in a six-year period.

#### **L. Readmission to MSN Program Policy**

Under extenuating circumstances, students who are dismissed from the MSN Program may apply in writing to the Graduate Program Committee for consideration of readmission to the program. It is the student's responsibility to make the case for readmission. The student must successfully meet all stipulations for readmission; any decisions regarding readmission to the MSN Program will consider seat availability prior to approval of readmission. All requests for readmission in the MSN Program will be considered by the GPC on a case-by-case basis. This policy also applies to requests for continuation in the MSN Program.

Readmission procedure if it has been less than 2 years since nursing course enrollment (less than 2 years from the end of the semester when the student was last enrolled in the full time MSN curriculum sequence):

1. The student must reapply in writing to the Department of Nursing's Graduate Program Committee and include what actions will be taken to help ensure success in the program.
2. Upon receipt of the request for readmission, the Director of Graduate Studies in Nursing will send a "Faculty Evaluation of Student Seeking Readmission" form to all instructors of courses the student successfully passed during the last semester of student attendance in the nursing program. These forms may be accessed on the MSN web page under "Forms." Readmission to the MSN program will be based on the recommendation of the Graduate Program Committee and space availability.
3. Upon readmission, if a student receives a failing grade in any course during any semester, the student will be permanently ineligible for readmission.

4. Students who are experiencing significant personal health or family difficulties that might necessitate a temporary withdrawal from the program should meet with the Director of Graduate Studies in Nursing immediately. Students can formally request leave from the program by means of a “Request for Documented Medical Withdrawal” Form or a “Request for Documented Compassionate Withdrawal” form. The completed form must be submitted to the Graduate Program Committee for consideration. These forms may be accessed in the Appendix.

Readmission procedure if it has been 2 years or longer since nursing course enrollment (2 years or longer from the end of the semester when the student was last enrolled in the full time MSN curriculum sequence):

1. The student must reapply for COMPETITIVE ADMISSION based upon a review of the total pool of applicants submitting completed application packets by the designated deadline of April 1 (see III. Academic Policies, A. Admission).
2. The following MSN courses (previously passed or failed) must be repeated and passed with an exam average of 80% or higher: NS625 Advanced Pharmacology and NS628 Advanced Health Assessment. NS627 Advanced Health Assessment Practicum must also be repeated and passed with a grade of ‘B’ (80%) or better.
3. Readmission to the MSN program will be based on the recommendation of the Graduate Program Committee and space availability.
4. Upon this readmission, if a student receives a failing grade in any course during any semester, the student will be permanently ineligible for readmission.

## **M. Academic Advising**

Advising of all students upon admission to the MSN Program is provided by assigned graduate faculty members who will continue to provide academic advising to students as they progress through their program of study. University advising guidelines and deadlines are followed throughout this process. In addition, MSN students are expected to refer to their DegreeWorks audit at any time to evaluate progress toward the degree.

## **N. Confidentiality and Privacy in Practice**

The student is expected to adhere to the American Nurses Association’s *ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses*. Confidentiality is the protection of a patient's privacy through careful use of oral and written communications and by judicious protection of confidential information. The student is expected to protect patient information according to the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act* (HIPAA) of 1996.

An individual can withhold any personal information desired. Nursing students must be especially careful regarding the invasion of the patient's privacy. Students should use only the **INITIALS** of the patient when completing history forms, care plans, and any other documents that are a part of their educational experience. Care should be taken when in public places so that conversations are not overheard and any clinical documents are maintained confidential.

Under no circumstances may a student copy chart documents or remove chart documents from the clinical agency.

The graduate student must be particularly concerned with the process of informed consent in the implementation of research during completion of a thesis. The actual procedure used in obtaining informed consent and the basis for the Thesis Committee's determination that the procedures followed by the student are adequate and appropriate shall be fully documented.

## **O. Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their academic activities. Receiving and/or giving unauthorized assistance in a testing situation (or related to a test) or passing off as one's own, the work of another (plagiarism) is totally unacceptable. A student is expected to maintain the professional standards of the nursing discipline and follow the guidelines for academic

honesty set forth in the university's Academic Policies: <https://semo.edu/student-support/academic-support/registrar/bulletin/policies.html>

and in the *Graduate Bulletin*: <https://semo.edu/student-support/academic-support/registrar/bulletin/grad-bulletin.html>

## **P. Grade Appeal Procedures**

Students are responsible for meeting the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled. Establishment of the criteria for grades and the evaluation of student academic performance are responsibilities of each course instructor.

Should a student believe that grading practices and procedures were not consistently and accurately followed in the determination of a final course grade, then the student has the right to appeal; first with the faculty member teaching the course, then the department chairperson, and finally a committee of faculty members. It should be noted that grade appeals are not for a review of faculty evaluation of the student's academic performance but for instances in which the student believes that: 1) the grade was assigned on the basis of criteria other than performance in the course; 2) the particular student was held to a more stringent standard than other students in the course; or 3) assignment of the grade was based upon criteria that greatly differed from the evaluative criteria announced at the beginning of the course. It is the obligation of the student to prove the inconsistent or inaccurate grading. Detailed processes are in place for students to follow when appealing a grade and failure to follow the process can result in nullification of the student's appeal. The Grade Appeal Procedure can be found at:

<https://semo.edu/dean/appeals/index.html>

## **Q. Sexual Harassment Policy**

The University is committed to providing an environment free of sexual harassment, intimidation, or abuse. Students who believe they have been victims of such behavior should consult the *Code of Student Conduct*. Should the situation not be addressed to the student's satisfaction at the departmental and college levels, the student may also contact the Associate Dean of Students.

<https://semo.edu/student-support/dean/team-directory.html>

## R. Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background checks for the state of Missouri are required for all graduate students prior to clinical practica. The process for completing the criminal background check is included in CastleBranch.

Since it can take several weeks to obtain results, students must begin the process upon admission to the program. Failure to obtain the required background check will jeopardize the student's participation in coursework. The fee for the background check is the responsibility of the student.

## S. Substance Abuse Policy

Southeast Missouri State University seeks to maintain an environment free from the effects of intoxicants or other substances that may alter behavior. The use of illegal/designer drugs or the abuse of alcohol, prescription drugs, or over-the-counter drugs may pose serious safety and health risks not only to the user, but also to all people coming in contact with the user.

Students are permitted to take legally prescribed and/or over-the-counter medications consistent with appropriate medical treatment plans. However, when such prescribed or over-the-counter medications interfere with the student's mental or physical performance, the student may be required to take an excused absence from clinical experience to preserve the safety of others.

For the purposes of this policy, a **chemically impaired person** is one who is under the influence of a substance that interferes with mood, perception, or consciousness resulting in physiological and/or behavioral characteristics. This impairment affects the individual's ability to meet standards of performance, computing, and safety in clinical settings, skills labs, classrooms, and office settings. *Students of the Department of Nursing are expected to refrain from using any substances that would prevent them from performing safely and effectively in all department and clinical settings.*

### a) "For Cause" Testing

1. If a student exhibits behavior that in the opinion of the faculty member, is considered to be consistent with the use of drugs and/or alcohol, the student will be required to submit to a urine, blood, or breath analysis test.
2. The faculty member will remove the student to a private area and will discuss the observed behaviors with the student. The student will be allowed to provide a verbal explanation of the suspicious behavior. This discussion will be conducted in the presence of a third person: either another professional who has reason to be made aware of the situation, or one who is aware of the significance of chemical impairment to the student and those with whom the student interacts.
3. The faculty member will request immediate drug testing if deemed appropriate. Failure to cooperate or to provide a timely sample upon request will result in disciplinary action, up to dismissal from the program. The cost of the testing will be the responsibility of the student.
4. The student will be dismissed from the classroom or clinical site after testing is completed and until the results are available. Prior to such dismissal, the faculty member will supervise the student in making arrangements for someone else to drive the student home. If possible, the student should also arrange to have someone stay with them until they are at less risk for further drug use and/or for other self-

destructive behavior, as people are more prone to suicide after experiencing such a confrontation.

5. The results will be reported to the appropriate Director and Department Chairperson.
6. Students who present positive results (other than for properly administered prescription or over-the-counter medications) will not be allowed to continue in the program. They will be notified in writing. In addition, those students will be immediately referred to appropriate professional counseling. Students may apply for readmission at a later date, but must provide documentation regarding treatment and counseling received, and record of attendance at appropriate support group meetings.

#### **b) Handling of Test Results**

1. All student test results will be maintained by the Department Chairperson in locked files until the student has completed degree requirements.
2. Any action taken as a result of the above policy may be appealed according to the policy stated in the *Statement of Student Rights and Code of Student Conduct* for Southeast Missouri State University. This document may be obtained from the Office of Judicial Affairs.
3. In accordance with the nursing licensing regulations of the State of Missouri, students found to be convicted of serious crimes (felonies or substance abuse) will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee and may be suspended from the nursing program.

#### **T. Evaluation by Students:**

1. Evaluation of Courses, Clinical Facilities, and Instructors.
  - a. Students are given the opportunity to complete evaluation forms for courses, clinical facilities, preceptors, and instructors at the end of each semester in the MSN Program as appropriate.
  - b. Each semester, students will complete evaluations of appropriate graduate courses using the Department of Nursing Graduate Course Evaluation Form (Appendix E).
2. At the end of their program of study, students will be asked to complete an evaluation of the MSN Program.
3. A one-year post graduation alumni survey will be sent to gather addition evaluation data.

## V. MISCELLANEOUS

### A. Campus Health Clinic

Health services are available in the Campus Health Clinic to students enrolled for one or more credit hours per semester at the University. The Campus Health Clinic is located on the first floor of the Rosemary Berkel Crisp Hall of Nursing. For the Clinic's fee structure and hours, students should refer to the Campus Health Clinic website at: <http://semo.edu/healthclinic/>

### B. Career Services

Career planning and placement services are available through the Office of Career Services located in Academic Hall. Individual counseling and small group workshops are available concerning job search techniques, resume preparation, interview strategies and videotaped mock interviews. There is no fee for these services.

### C. Scholarships and Honors

Students are encouraged to discuss scholarship possibilities with the Financial Aid Office in Academic Hall. Scholarship information is also available on the Department web site. There is one endowed scholarship specifically for graduate nursing students.

#### 1. Nancy S. Risko Endowed Scholarship in Nursing

Nancy Risko attended Southeast Missouri State University and used her education to vault her into a 20-plus year nursing career. She always believed that Southeast was where she started her life and career. Nancy and her husband, Georgi W. Risko, provided the bequest to establish this scholarship.

The recipient of this scholarship shall be a student enrolled at Southeast Missouri State University. The scholarship will support one or more financially needy and academically distinguished Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) students. The scholarship is renewable, but recipients must reapply each year.

#### Scholarship Amount and Timeline Details

Number of Awards: One (1) or more than one (1)

Amount of Award: Not to exceed \$5000 per year

Submission Deadline: March 1<sup>st</sup> Year One of MSN course work

Recipient Notified: Prior to the end of the Spring Semester of Year One of MSN course work and applied to the student account the following Fall and Spring semesters

### Additional Student Considerations

- Demonstration of financial need as verified by the FAFSA.
- Completion of a one page or less essay further expressing areas of financial need that may not be addressed by completion/results of the FAFSA such as multiple family members in College or recently leaving place of employment in order to complete course requirements
- Student will submit to scholarship committee a letter of appreciation addressed to the family of Nancy S. Risko. After review by committee, this letter will be submitted on Academic Works by the student to be shared with the person/persons making the endowment.
- The recipient(s) may be required to attend the scholarship reception.

### **2. Membership in academic and professional honor societies.**

#### a. Sigma Theta Tau International

Sigma Theta Tau is the International Honor Society of Nursing to which eligible graduate students may be invited for membership. It is committed to fostering excellence, scholarship, and leadership in nursing to improve health care worldwide. Invitations are extended in the spring semester for each academic year. A 3.5 GPA with completion of at least 9 credit hours in the MSN Program is necessary to be eligible for membership in Sigma Theta Tau and its local chapter of Lambda Theta.

#### b. Phi Kappa Phi

Phi Kappa Phi is a national honor society founded in 1897 to recognize and encourage superior scholarship in all fields of study. Members are elected to the Society for not only superior academic achievement but also character. Members are elected from all curricula of the University environment. The Society funds numerous fellowships and awards for graduate study and publish a national newsletter and journal.

### **D. Writing Center**

The Writing Center is available to all graduate students who think they might benefit from an experienced tutor's advising regarding writing. For more information, visit the Writing Center's web site at <http://ustudies.semo.edu/writing/>

### **E. Information Technology (IT) Help Desk**

1. Contact Help Desk for assistance with any concerns related to online and Internet technologies connected to the University. Contact information can be accessed at: <http://semo.edu/it/helpdesk/>, by telephoning 573-651-4357, or email at [helpdesk@semo.edu](mailto:helpdesk@semo.edu)

2. Refer to the following when checking and setting up a home computer to prepare to take an online course:

Recommended system requirements: <http://online.semo.edu/help/requirements.asp>

Other helpful downloads and resources from the Center for Scholarship, Teaching, & Learning (CSTL) and Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) at <http://cstl.semo.edu/cstl/>

## VI. GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN MATERIALS

### A. General Information:

1. Students should retain a copy of all coursework to protect against loss or inadvertent damage.
2. At the instructor's discretion, a paper which does not meet the criteria of form, style, and/or neatness may be returned to the student for correction before review by the instructor. If time does not permit corrections to be made and submitted by the required deadline, it will be considered a late paper.
3. Use nonsexist language, e.g., avoid "she" for the nurse and "he" for the physician.
4. Graduate nursing students should sign all clinical documentation as FNP Student after their name; for example, J. Doe, RN, FNP Student.

### B. Criteria

1. Professional Format
  - a. Papers must be written according to the current **Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association**. Use of headings and subheadings where appropriate is strongly encouraged.
  - b. Correct grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation are expected.
  - c. Writing should be smooth, clear, concise, and well organized.
  - d. All papers must be typed and present a neat appearance.
2. Documentation of Sources (Evidence)
  - e. Very careful citation of materials quoted or paraphrased is essential.
  - f. An adequate number of references appropriate for the assigned course paper is expected.
  - g. Quality of references (e.g., relevant to subject, recent or continued validity of older publication established) is to be at a high level.
  - h. Current references.
  - i. Variety of references (e.g., nursing, medical, periodicals, texts, documents, etc.) as appropriate.

### 3. Content

- j. Ideas are relevant and valid to subject. Focus is clearly identified.
- k. A degree of creativity is evidenced.
- l. Adequacy and completeness of thought development are evident.
- m. Depth and breadth appropriate to needs of topic; limitations are clearly specified.
- n. Conclusions must be clearly supported by content.
- o. Recommendations, if any, are appropriate in scope to the subject.