

# *SCHOOL OF NURSING*



1780 E University Ave,  
Las Cruces,  
NM 88003

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Student Handbook  
for the

Master's of Science in  
Nursing Program

**2020-2021**

**Master's of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program**

**Student Handbook**

**2020-2021 Academic Year**

**School of Nursing**

**College of Health and Social Services**

**New Mexico State University**

*Information in this handbook is subject to change without notice.*

*The handbook is updated and distributed to all students  
at the beginning of each academic year.*

*Changes that occur during the academic year are communicated by email.*

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## FOREWORD

Welcome to the School of Nursing (SON) in the College of Health and Social Services (CHSS) at New Mexico State University (NMSU). It is our sincere wish that you find personal and career satisfaction in your pursuit of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree or Post Master's (also known as Post Graduate) APRN Certificate.

This student handbook contains policies and procedures, and should be used in conjunction with the *NMSU Student Handbook* (available online at: <https://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu>) and the *Graduate Catalog* (available on-line at <http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/>). The information provided in this handbook is to assist students with academic program planning for the purpose of successfully meeting the School of Nursing and the Graduate School requirements for completing the DNP degree or post Master's APRN certificate. This information supplements the information in the NMSU Graduate Catalog. Students are expected to know and follow the requirements described in these handbooks. This handbook is subject to updates and changes.

Please do not hesitate to consult with the Associate Director for the Graduate Programs, specialty track directors, program faculty or the graduate advisor if further information is needed. We are here to help you attain your goals.

## **SCHOOL OF NURSING MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of NMSU School of Nursing is to promote health and improve the quality of life in the people of New Mexico through nursing education, research, practice, and public service recognizing the state's multicultural heritage and dynamic border environment. The mission of the School of Nursing reflects a commitment to the mission of the university and the standards of professional nursing practice by demonstrating excellence in nursing education, research, practice, and public service.

The primary responsibility of the School of Nursing is to provide the highest quality professional nursing education including preparation for practice at the BSN, and MSN and doctoral levels. The intent reflects a commitment to the attainment of excellence in practice by designing innovative and challenging educational experiences valuing diversity, providing evidence-based nursing care, and fostering lifelong learning for the professional nurse in a multicultural society.

## **ACCREDITATION**

New Mexico State University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The last comprehensive visit for the Las Cruces and Grants campuses was in 2016-17 resulting in a recommendation of a ten-year review to be conducted in 2027-2028.

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master's degree program in nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice program, post-graduate APRN certificate program at New Mexico State University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791.

## SCHOOL OF NURSING COMMITMENTS

1. Provide a rigorous education to support a comprehensive core of knowledge and professional skills for students at baccalaureate and graduate levels that prepares them for professional practice roles.
2. Offer students educational opportunities that enable them to function in emerging nursing roles in health care including those in practice, leadership, management, and health promotion.
3. Recruit and retain students and faculty from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
4. Provide educational experiences that acknowledge, support and advance health care for vulnerable and disparate populations.
5. Promote, participate, and collaborate in scientific inquiry, clinical reasoning and judgment, research utilization, and evidence-based practice related to issues in health and nursing care.
6. Demonstrate leadership in identifying and addressing a range of health care issues in the local, regional, national, and global community.
7. Demonstrate and promote responsibility, safety, and accountability in nursing education, research, outreach, and practice.
8. Achieve competence in the use of technological and communication resources related to health care and the professional role.
9. Promote the highest ethical standards at all levels of nursing education, research, outreach, and practice.

(Approved 12/2015)

## MSN DEGREE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The **Master's of Science in Nursing (MSN)** program provides graduate level education and training in the field of nursing administration. Students enrolled in the Nursing Administration MSN program acquire the knowledge and experience to assume leadership positions in a wide range of health care systems and fulfill the fundamental requirements to secure middle and top-level administrative positions in health care agencies.

The MSN Administration degree option is available to nurses who possess an RN license and a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing (BSN). Courses for this degree are delivered through distance education (i.e., online), which allows nurses to advance their careers while working and remaining in their communities.

All SON graduate students are registered as NMSU Online students and pay the NMSU graduate [NMSU Online tuition rate](#) (click on the current semester). Additional fees may be applied by the SON for clinical courses.

SON faculty have developed a curriculum that is designed to provide the graduate with a sound foundation in nursing administration and leadership. In this curriculum, theory, evidenced-based practice and reflective practice experiences are integrated, just as they are in actual practice. In addition, the program offers students the opportunity to study their individual interests through a selection of field experiences. A Master's level project in the second year of the program provides students the opportunity to synthesize and integrate concepts from nursing and non-nursing courses into his or her own professional role.

Students may choose to take additional courses to obtain a minor approved by the NMSU Graduate School, with the approval of their MSN faculty advisor. Students also have an option to complete a thesis supervised by a SON faculty member.



## MSN EXPECTED PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The MSN expected program outcomes are based on the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's [Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing](#) (2011). Upon completion of the MSN program in Nursing, the graduate is prepared to:

1. Incorporate advanced knowledge and theoretical frameworks from the biophysical, psychosocial, and nursing sciences to promote and maintain human health through advanced specialty practice, education, or administration.
2. Demonstrate competence and critical thinking in the advanced roles of nurse generalist or nurse administrator.
3. Identify researchable problems, participate in the development of evidenced-based practice and research utilization.
4. Collaborate in the use of therapeutic nursing strategies and interventions in health promotion, disease prevention, and illness care of individuals, families, groups, and communities in multi-cultural settings.
5. Assume leadership positions and develop collaborative relationships that identify policy issues that address access to economically responsible, quality health care.
6. Demonstrate cultural, ethical, legal, and professional competence in advanced nursing roles.
7. Demonstrate communication competence using effective written, verbal, nonverbal, and electronic modalities in advanced nursing roles.
8. Demonstrate knowledge and competence in the use of technological resources related to health care, which includes but is not limited to, electronic resources, computer use, and web research skills.

## DISTANCE EDUCATION AUTHORIZATION

New Mexico is a member of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and New Mexico State University is SARA institution. Members of SARA agree to honor the regulatory requirements of each member state. If you live in a state where SARA authorization is limited, we may not be able to accept your application. Please check the [SARA authorization map](#) if you are planning to apply to the NMSU School of Nursing and reside outside of New Mexico. For more information please visit the [NMSU Online website](#) and the [NMSU SARA website](#).

Please note that some Boards of Nursing regulate nursing education. Some states will not allow out-of-state programs with clinical practicum experiences to be offered in their jurisdictions, or have specific requirements, although field experiences not involving direct patient care are often exempt. The NMSU School of Nursing is not responsible for nursing education program requirements imposed by states other than New Mexico. We reserve the right to choose not to submit applications for approval to conduct nursing education activities to out-of-state boards of nursing or other state agencies that will require substantial administrative time to complete and/or are cost prohibitive.

Please refer to the [National Council for State Boards of Nursing](#) and look up the requirements for the state where you reside and wish to conduct your clinical training. Note that much of the information on the NCSBN website pertains to pre-licensure programs (i.e., ADN/BSN). The SON graduate advisor may have more information about graduate distance education in your state.

Graduate Advisor: Karen Pech, [kpech@nmsu.edu](mailto:kpech@nmsu.edu), 575-646-7770

# GENERAL SCHOOL OF NURSING INFORMATION AND POLICIES

## SCHOOL OF NURSING GRADUATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

School of Nursing Director

Dr. Alexa Doig  
[adoig@nmsu.edu](mailto:adoig@nmsu.edu)  
575-646-1668

Associate Director for Graduate Programs

Dr. Wanda Borges  
[wjborges@nmsu.edu](mailto:wjborges@nmsu.edu)

MSN Specialty Track Director

Dr. Anita Reinhardt  
[acrein@nmsu.edu](mailto:acrein@nmsu.edu)  
575-646-1919

SON Graduate Advisor

Karen Pech  
[kpech@nmsu.edu](mailto:kpech@nmsu.edu)  
575-646-7770

SON Graduate Secretary

Betty Adaime  
[adaime@nmsu.edu](mailto:adaime@nmsu.edu)  
575-646-2041

### **SON MSN PROGRAM FACULTY** (profiles on the [SON website](#)):

Conni DeBlieck, DNP, RN

Anita Reinhardt, PhD, RN

Lori Saiki PhD, RN

Lindsey Schweiger DNP, PMHNP

Jacqueline Williams, PhD, PMHNP

## COMPUTER AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students enrolled in a distance education program must have consistent and reliable access to a computer and the internet. Familiarity and proficiency with technology is the student's responsibility. Hardware, software and network limitations or issues are not acceptable reasons for late, missing or incorrect assignments. Both PC and Mac environments are supported at NMSU.

### The following is a list of required computer technologies:

1. Access to a desktop or laptop computer with high speed internet connection;
2. A web browser that supports the [Canvas learning management system](#) and [Zoom](#), a videoconferencing platform;
3. A current version of **JAVA** ([www.java.com](http://www.java.com));
4. Microsoft Office 2010 or higher (Word, Excel and PowerPoint) – NMSU students may download [Office 365](#) for free;
5. Adobe Reader (for opening PDF files at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com));
6. Webcam and microphone/headset for videoconferencing.

### Student must be proficient at the following computer skills:

1. Navigate and search the Internet
2. Use e-mail
3. Attach document files in an email
4. Download and save files
5. Software: Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, Adobe Acrobat, Zoom

Please note that there may be other hardware, software and network limitations or issues that are not identified in this document.

NMSU's Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) Customer Service Center is equipped to answer your information technology (IT) questions.

Phone: 575-646-1840

E-mail: [help@nmsu.edu](mailto:help@nmsu.edu).

Website: <http://help.nmsu.edu/>

## COMMUNICATION

The NMSU email system is the official communication avenue for the School of Nursing. Faculty, staff, and students have an email account (@nmsu.edu) on the University's centralized mail server. Web access to e-mail is available when you log in to [My.NMSU.edu](https://my.nmsu.edu). Email sent to our central server can also be redirected to any other existing email accounts on or off campus. Please email NMSU faculty and staff from your NMSU email account.

# ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION

Admission to the MSN program is a competitive process. Selection of candidates is based on the following criteria:

### Minimum Requirements:

1. Successful admission to the NMSU Graduate School;
2. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree from a nationally accredited nursing program (CCNE or ACEN);
3. BSN cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better (or graduate degree GPA  $\geq$  3.0).
4. Current unencumbered RN license from one of the 50 U.S. States or Territories.
5. Evidence of a statistics course at the undergraduate or graduate level.
6. Applicants may be asked to participate in a interview (face-to-face or videoconferencing) with graduate faculty members.

### Admission decisions are based on:

- BSN GPA and overall academic preparedness;
- Strength of references;
- Alignment of career goals with the MSN degree in Nursing Administration;
- Work and clinical experience (general and in chosen specialty area);
- Quality of writing in submitted documents;
- Responses to interview questions during interview (if applicable).

## GRADUATE SCHOOL PROVISIONAL STATUS

An applicant who has a cumulative BSN GPA of less than 3.0 can be admitted to NMSU on provisional status by submitting a letter to the Graduate Advisor with a copy of their unofficial transcripts. This request is subject to approval by the MSN Specialty Track Director. Students admitted on provisional standing must take courses recommended by the MSN Specialty Track Director and maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA in the first semester for eligibility to continue in the MSN program. Failure to do so may result in program dismissal. Students may take a maximum of 9 credits as a non-matriculated student.

### MSN Program Admission Policies:

1. Candidates selected for admission will be required to notify the SON of their intent to enroll in the MSN program by the deadline in the admission letter.
2. MSN students are required to attend an **online 1/2-day program orientation** at the start of Fall semester in their first year.
3. MSN students should attend the university's [New Graduate Student Orientation](#) or complete the online training prior to the SON's program orientation.
4. MSN students will have to meet all of the SON's clinical clearance requirements (including criminal background check and toxicology screen) prior to enrolling in their first clinical/fieldwork course. Students who do not meet these requirements will not be allowed to enroll in that semester's courses, which will affect progression or may result in program dismissal. The SON assumes that RNs employed at most clinical facilities/agencies are required to pass similar clinical clearance requirements, which is why we do not require the submission of this documentation upon admission. Students are responsible for ensuring that they will meet these clinical clearance requirements (see page 28 in Student Handbook).
5. The SON cannot defer admission to a subsequent year. Applicants who decline admission for any reason are required to re-apply during the next application cycle.

### **PETITIONING FOR EXCEPTIONS TO ADMISSION CRITERIA**

Exceptions to any of the program admission criteria are considered on an individual basis and are at the discretion of the Graduate Committee and the Associate Director of Graduate Programs. Requests for exceptions are made in writing to the Associate Director of Graduate Programs. The SON Graduate Committee will consider the petition at a regularly scheduled meeting during the Spring or Fall semesters.

## TRANSFER POLICIES

Students who were dismissed from a Master's degree, DNP degree or certificate program are generally not eligible to apply to the NMSU SON graduate programs.

Students who have partially completed a MSN degree program at another school and left in good standing may be eligible to apply to the NMSU DNP program.

Please contact the Graduate Advisor to determine eligibility.

Graduate Advisor: Karen Pech, [kpech@nmsu.edu](mailto:kpech@nmsu.edu), 575-646-7770



## ACADEMIC POLICIES

### ADVISING

The formal academic advisor for MSN students is the MSN Specialty Track Director. See page 8 for contact information. The student should contact their advisor for information related to procedures and requirements for degree planning, changes in the program of study, course advisement and transfer of credit from other institutions.

### DEGREE PLAN/PROGRAM OF STUDY

NMSU official [requirements for School of Nursing graduate programs](#) include all the didactic and clinical requirements necessary for the awarding of the graduate degree (or certificate) and eligibility for certification and licensing (where applicable). The School of Nursing has developed degree plan documents that outline the required sequence of courses and the total number of credits required for the MSN degree in Nursing Administration. The 32-credit MSN degree plan has a 2-year option (6-7 credits per semester) or a 3-year option (3-6 credits per semester). Students must follow the posted degree plan. The most up-to-date degree plans can be found on the NMSU [MSN webpage](#).

### MSN in Nursing Administration Courses

**NURS 506:** Health Policy for Advanced Nursing Practice

**NURS 507:** Evidence-Based Practice for Healthcare Leaders

**NURS 509:** Quality Improvement for Healthcare Leaders (or **NURS 651:** Quality Improvement in Healthcare)

**NURS 530:** Promoting Health Behaviour

**NURS 549:** Management of Fiscal & Human Resources in Nursing

**NURS 565:** Advanced Leadership in Healthcare

**NURS 566:** Seminar in Nursing Administration Roles

**NURS 567:** Nursing Informatics

**NURS 595:** Advanced Field Work in Nursing

**NURS 649:** Innovations and Health Care Organizations

Note: MSN students complete a total of 320 supervised clinical hours

After a student has completed 12 credits of graduate work beyond the Master's degree, or its equivalent, in residence at New Mexico State University, they should complete the "[Program of Study for Master's Students](#)" form as instructed. For courses already completed, grades must be listed. After completing and signing the form, forward it to the Graduate Advisor (Karen Pech, [kpech@nmsu.edu](mailto:kpech@nmsu.edu)) who will collect the rest of the required signatures.

## **RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT**

Courses taken via distance education are considered in-residence courses, provided they are a part of the student's approved plan of study.

## **TRANSFER OF CREDIT**

The MSN degree consists of a minimum number of graduate level didactic course credit hours as well as a minimum number of clinical hours. The total number of required credits is based on the specialty area and/or program and is outlined on the current degree plan. For more information about NMSU policies on transfer credit, please visit the online [NMSU Graduate Catalog](#).

The transfer of graduate credit from other universities or programs is not automatic. Students may seek approval for transfer credit or course waiver. All requests for credit transfer are subject to approval by the MSN Specialty Track Director, Associate Director for Graduate Programs, CHSS Associate Dean and Dean of the Graduate School.

Only courses from an accredited institution in which a grade of B or better was earned may be considered for transfer or waiver. No credit toward a graduate degree may be earned through correspondence or through extension work for another institution. Courses taken at a college or university on the Quarter system will transfer to NMSU with a reduced number of credits, and therefore may not meet program credit requirements.

Immediately after initial enrolment in the Graduate School, students must submit a request for formal permission to transfer graduate-level course work. Please contact the Graduate Advisor (Karen Pech, [kpech@nmsu.edu](mailto:kpech@nmsu.edu), 575-646-7770) to obtain the correct form and for information about the process.

At least 50 percent of the course credit toward the MSN degree must be completed at New Mexico State University.

## **TIME LIMITATIONS FOR COMPLETION OF DEGREE**

All coursework must be completed within 7 years of the date the first MSN credit is earned. Adhering to the SON's degree helps ensure a steady progress towards degree completion.

Students will be dismissed from the MSN for failure to progress if this time limit is exceeded. A petition for an extension may be submitted to the Graduate Advisor. The petition must be approved by the MSN Specialty Track Director and the Associate Director for the Graduate Programs. If the petition is approved in the SON, it is then forwarded to the Graduate School for approval.

## **ABSENCES**

If you must miss a class session, assignment/exam or a field experience, please notify the course faculty and supervisor (e.g., preceptor) in advance, if possible. If there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious illness, injury, or personal emergency) that might require a prolonged absence, please contact the course faculty immediately and notify them as to the circumstances. Please do not plan extended vacations during the semester. The course faculty will notify your Specialty Track Director, and if necessary, the Associate Director for Graduate Programs if a review of policy is required. It is at the discretion of the course faculty whether or not make-up work will be permitted.

### **Leave of Absence (LOA)**

A student wishing to discontinue study for one or more semesters must submit a [Graduate School Leave of Absence form](#) to the SON Graduate Advisor. The request should include the beginning date and the anticipated ending date for the period of absence. LOAs must be approved by the MSN Specialty Track Director, the department head (i.e, SON Director) and the Graduate School.

A graduate student on leave of absence will be expected not to use university facilities and place no demands upon the university faculty and staff, and, therefore will pay no fees. Time spent in the "leave-of-absence" status will not be counted toward the advanced degree time limits.

A graduate student who fails to obtain a LOA from the Graduate School will be considered withdrawn from the university by the Graduate School. In order to resume studies after such absences, the student must go through the formal readmission process.

In making a decision whether or not to grant a LOA to a student, the School of Nursing will take into consideration if faculty or other program resources will be available for students upon return to the program.

## **ACADEMIC RECORDS**

Students may have access to their academic records maintained in the School of Nursing Student Advising Office. Students may request access to their file by making an appointment with their Specialty Track Director or the Graduate Advisor.

## **GRADING POLICIES AND GRADE REQUIREMENTS**

### **SON Graduate Programs Grading Scale**

**A** – 90% – 100%

**B** – 80% -89%

**C** – 70% -79%

**D** – 60%-69%

**F** – 60%

**S** (satisfactory) – > 80%

**U** (unsatisfactory) – < 79%

Each course syllabus contains specific information about how grades are calculated.

### **S/U Grading**

Under S/U grading, the instructor assigns an S grade for satisfactory achievement of the course learning objectives (equivalent to the letter grade of B or higher) and a U grade for unsatisfactory performance in the class. U indicates that the student has stopped work or is doing work of unacceptable quality.

If a student accumulates a total of two U (unsatisfactory) grades in courses numbered either NURS 595 the student will be placed on provisional status. If three U (unsatisfactory) grades are reported for any of these courses, the student will be dismissed from the program and Graduate School.

## **Incomplete Grades**

The letter grade of I (Incomplete) is assigned for passable work that could not be completed due to circumstances beyond the student's control that develop after the last day to withdraw from the course. In no case is an I grade to be used to avoid the assigning of D, F, or U grades for failing work. The School of Nursing follows the [NMSU policy for Incomplete "I" grades](#). Receiving an "I" grade may affect student progression in the program. When making up an I grade, work submitted for grades in the course cannot be resubmitted. "I" grades need to be completed before the student may progress in the MSN program.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRESSION**

In accordance with NMSU Graduate School policies, MSN students maintain at least a 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA). Students must earn a grade of B or better in all required courses in order to progress to the next semester. MSN coursework is leveled, therefore in most instances all courses assigned to each semester must be completed before progressing to the next semester.

A student who does not register for or withdraws from one course in the student's degree plan will be placed on academic probation (see page 20). Not completing a course in the degree plan may result in substantial delays since many courses are pre-requisites for others. If the student does not register for or withdraws from more than one course during the same semester (or in a future semester) they must write a formal appeal to the SON Graduate Committee to remain in the program. If this appeal is denied, the student is eligible to re-apply to the program and re-interview with program faculty. If approved to return by the Graduate Committee they will be placed at the appropriate level of the curriculum if there is space available.

## **CONDITIONS FOR READMISSION**

MSN students who do not enroll in courses for one (1) academic year must make a formal request to the SON Graduate Committee for readmission. If the request is granted, the student's Specialty Track Director will, in consultation with the Associate Director for Graduate Programs, stipulate any coursework to be repeated. If during the student's absence, the curriculum or admission standards have changed, the student is expected to meet any new admission standards and/or fulfill the requirements of the current curriculum.

Students not in good standing with the NMSU SON or Graduate School, have not met current NMSU program requirements, or have committed academic or non-academic misconduct shall not be readmitted to the program.

## **ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE POLICY**

Students who wish to appeal a decision or awarding of a grade by a faculty member must follow the student grievance procedure outlined in the [Graduate Student Academic Grievances \(Policy 5.14\)](#) in the *NMSU Student Handbook*.

It is recommended that students who wish to question a course or assignment grade exhaust informal procedures before enacting the formal appeal/grievance process. The informal process begins with discussing the issue/concern with the individual faculty member. If a resolution is not found, the student and faculty member can seek guidance from the MSN Specialty Track Director. Unresolved issues at this level may then be brought to the attention of the Associate Director for Graduate Programs.

Students who wish to formally appeal a decision or awarding of a grade by a faculty member are advised to contact the Associate Director for Graduate Programs or the SON Director for assistance with this process.

## CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO PROGRESS

### Academic Probation and Suspension

Academic standing is based on both the student's GPA in the program and cumulative GPA. Academic records of all graduate students are reviewed at the end of each semester. If a nursing graduate student earns a **C** grade in any course, they must repeat that course and cannot enroll in any subsequent course for which the course is a prerequisite. A subsequent grade of **C** in a course or any 2 **C**'s across the MSN curriculum will result in dismissal from the program. In addition, a grade of **D**, **F**, or **U** in any course results in dismissal from the MSN program. See the [NMSU System Academic Regulations](#) under the heading of "Academic Probation and Suspension" for policies specific to graduate students.

If the course for which the student earns a "**C**" grade includes a clinical component, the clinical hours must also be repeated even if the student had achieved satisfactory performance. Receiving an unsatisfactory grade may substantially affect student progress towards graduation. Re-enrollment is not automatic and is contingent upon a space available basis. Thus, if the student falls out of course sequence, the student may have to wait until space is available in another cohort.

### Program Dismissal

Dismissal from the MSN program may result from the following:

1. The student earns two (2) C grades (in the same or different courses).
2. The student earns a grade of D or F in a single course;
3. The student earns three (U) grades including failure to make progress in the MSN project.
4. Failure to enroll in classes (see page 18 – Academic Progression)
5. Serious academic misconduct as defined in [NMSU Student Academic Code of Conduct](#).
6. Unsafe or unprofessional behavior in clinical practice (see page 38 in handbook).
7. Any other violation of the [NMSU Student Academic Code of Conduct](#) or the [NMSU Standards for Student Social Conduct](#).

## Dismissal Appeals

The School of Nursing uses the [NMSU grievances procedures](#) for appeals of **program dismissal**. Please contact the SON Director for assistance with this process.

## POLICIES CONCERNING SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

- All assigned papers and projects will be typed or word-processed and double-spaced.
- All students are required to use the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)* for all written papers.
- Any assigned papers and projects will be considered late if they have not been presented to the course professor at the announced time and date due. Any late papers may have a penalty attached or may not be accepted. Students with extenuating circumstances are expected to contact the course faculty prior to the assignment deadline.
- Students may use editors for their papers. Editing of student work by others is limited to assistance with grammar, punctuation, and style only; the substance of the paper must be the student's original work. If an editor is used, the student must provide the course professor with the draft of the paper at the point it is given to the editor when the final paper is submitted.
- Student papers for School of Nursing graduate courses must be submitted through a plagiarism analysis software application called Turnitin that is accessed through the Assignment tool in Canvas (see below).

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND PLAGIARISM

Students are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures related to academic integrity found in NMSU Graduate Catalog and NMSU Student Handbook. For further information you may refer to the NMSU Student Handbook, specifically the [Student Academic Code of Conduct-Academic Integrity \(Policy 5.10\)](#). The School of Nursing follows the university's [Procedures to Respond to Allegations of Student Academic Misconduct \(Policy 5.11\)](#), including guidelines for sanctions.



## Use of Turnitin

Student papers for School of Nursing graduate courses must be submitted through a plagiarism analysis software application called Turnitin that is accessed through the Assignment tool in Canvas. Students will be permitted to check their analysis prior to the final submission, therefore it is recommended that this check is conducted well before the assignment deadline. The analysis must indicate an overall source similarity content of 20% or less (without references and citations). Papers with a similarity index of greater than 20% will not be accepted or will receive a grade of zero (0). SON faculty reserve the right to submit any and all student work, including but not limited to course papers, discussions, presentations, written exams, and DNP project papers, to Turnitin or a similar plagiarism checker at the faculty member's discretion.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another person's work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one's own. Any ideas, words, pictures, or other intellectual content taken from another source must be acknowledged in a citation that gives credit to the source. The prohibition of plagiarism applies irrespective of the origin of the material, including the Internet, another person's work, unpublished materials, or oral sources. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct.

A special case of plagiarism is the unacceptable practice of "self-plagiarism" in which an author will use segments of his/her own material (e.g., a paper from a previous course) in a new assignment without reference. Unless given explicit permission from the course faculty, work from one course may not be submitted as work for another course. The exception is using written work from course assignments in the MSN project papers or PowerPoint presentations.

**Assignments and other types of submitted student work that contain plagiarism is not acceptable as scholastic work and may, at the very least, result in a zero for submitted work.** The SON follows the university's definitions and policies in the [NMSU Student Code of Conduct](#). All incidences of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct (e.g., cheating, misrepresentation, etc.) identified by faculty or administrators will be reported to the NMSU Academic Conduct Officer who will provide guidance on consequences and sanctions.

## ETHICS

All students in the School of Nursing are expected to behave with the highest of ethical standards. To guide the student along the path of ethical nursing practice, the SON uses the [\*American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses\*](#):

1. The nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.
4. The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and determines the appropriate delegation of tasks consistent with the nurse's obligation to provide optimum patient care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to preserve integrity and safety, to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse participates in establishing, maintaining, and improving healthcare environments and conditions of employment conducive to the provision of quality health care and consistent with the values of the profession through individual and collective action.
7. The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to practice, education, administration, and knowledge development.
8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public in promoting community, national, and international efforts to meet health needs.
9. The profession of nursing, as represented by associations and their members, is responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy.

American Nurses Association, *Code of Ethics* (2001)

The SON also expects all students to follow the [\*NSMU Student Code of Social Conduct\*](#).

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION/ONLINE LEARNING**

The MSN degree program is a distance education program that use a variety of educational methodologies for the delivery of the didactic courses. Online learning, sometimes referred to as e-learning, is a form of distance education. Online courses are delivered over the internet and are accessed from a computer with an internet/web browser (e.g., Chrome, Safari, Fire Fox, etc.). All NMSU courses use [Canvas](#) as the learning management system for course delivery.

Online courses can be asynchronous or synchronous. Most distance education courses in the School of Nursing blend asynchronous and synchronous methods.

### *Definitions:*

Asynchronous – no scheduled class sessions, however there are generally regularly scheduled deadlines and other requirements.

Synchronous – students meet with their faculty online at a specified time.

### **Online Course Policies**

Distance education programs are ideal for students whose work schedule or family commitments don't allow them to attend classes on campus. Distance education can provide you with the opportunity to meet your educational goals as an advanced practice registered nurse while remaining in your community. However, online learning requires self-discipline and motivation—you will be primarily responsible for your own learning!

Because of the amount of content and the complexity of concepts covered, online courses at the NMSU School of Nursing do not have flexible scheduling. The following are the School of Nursing course policies (additional policies are listed in each course syllabus):

1. Students are expected to meet deadlines for assignments, which may include papers, quizzes, exams, online discussions, group projects and learning experiences.
2. Students are required to participate in on-line discussions and activities on a regular basis.
3. Student are expected to participate in scheduled video discussions/meetings using video conferencing (Zoom).

## **GRADUATION**

Students who successfully complete their plan of study/degree and MSN project are eligible for graduation. Students apply for graduation through their [myNMSU](#) account during the [graduation application period](#).

To officially graduate from NMSU in a particular semester, all work must be completed according to the deadlines in the calendar on the [NMSU Graduate School calendar](#). In addition, the student must apply for graduation prior to that semester's deadline. Failure to apply for graduation will result in delays in degree posting. In some cases, the student may not graduate until the following semester, which can affect their ability to become employed.

For more details, please review the [Graduate School's graduation information](#).

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON SON COMMITTEES**

Student representatives to the School of Nursing committees afford students the opportunity to influence school and program policies. The committees on which student members may serve are the Graduate Programs Committee and the Student Affairs Committee. Student members of a school committee must be in good academic standing. Student members may vote, but may not serve as a Committee Chair or secretary.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Students are included in the ongoing process of program evaluation through end of semester course evaluations and periodic town hall meetings with program administrators. Graduates of the program are encouraged to participate in alumni surveys (sent upon graduation and within 1 year following graduation) and to keep the School of Nursing informed of licensing and certification status.

## CLINICAL COURSE/FIELD EXPERIENCE POLICIES

### GENERAL CLINICAL PRACTICUM POLICIES

1. All SON clinical experiences are conducted with clinical affiliates only when there is an approved and signed affiliation agreement between NMSU and the clinical partner. A list of current affiliation agreements and preceptors used in past semesters is posted on the Graduate Programs Canvas course.
2. All clinical experiences are directly supervised by a qualified preceptor (varies by course objectives). Students are responsible for identifying an appropriate clinical preceptor, however these preceptors must be approved by faculty.
3. One credit is given for 64 hours of supervised clinical practice.
4. For each clinical course, the NMSU SON faculty member assigned in the NMSU course schedule has the responsibility of 1) approving practice sites and preceptors, 2) orienting preceptors, 3) providing indirect supervision, and providing feedback/determining the student's grade in the course.
5. Clinical experiences will not start until all clinical forms/paperwork (preceptor approval, clinical clearances, etc) have been approved by course faculty. An approval letter will be sent to the HR department and/or the preceptor when all approvals are finalized. Clinical hours obtained before approvals are issued are nullified.
6. Clinical hours must be documented on course forms.
7. The clinical practicum component of a course will be graded pass/fail. A passing grade in the clinical component of the course is required to pass the full course. A passing grade means that a student has met all of the clinical competencies listed on the courses' clinical evaluation tool as determined by the assigned faculty member with input from the preceptor. If a student fails the clinical component of the course, then the course faculty will assign a grade of 'C' or 'F' depending on 1) the degree to which the clinical competencies were not met and 2) the student's performance in the didactic portion of the course.

## CRITERIA FOR PASSING CLINICAL PORTION OF COURSE

1. Completion of required clinical hours for the semester.
2. Submit Clinical Evaluation Tool by assigned date (student self-evaluation + ensure preceptor evaluation has been submitted to course faculty).
3. Submit documentation of clinical hours for each rotation by assigned date.
4. Meet expectations for all competencies as documented on the evaluation tool for the course.
5. Meet all of the 'Student Responsibilities' as outlined in the course syllabus.
6. Submit all clinical assignments as designated by the course syllabus and/or posted in Canvas.

Student clinical performance is evaluated by the assigned course faculty, with input from the preceptor, as 'Satisfactory' or 'Unsatisfactory'. A student must achieve a 'Satisfactory' evaluation in order to pass the course. Student clinical performance does not count towards the final grade in the course.

**Satisfactory:** Achieves the clinical course objectives. Meets clinical competencies with supervision (Fall semester) or with minimal supervision or independently (Spring and Summer semesters) within the defined time frame. Demonstrates professionalism, as well as safe and ethical practice.

**Unsatisfactory:** Fails to demonstrate learning consistent with the clinical course objectives. Fails to seek opportunities to achieve clinical competencies. Requires more than expected levels of supervision for one or more clinical competencies. Requires continuous verbal cues to function in the clinical setting. Demonstrates a lack of professionalism, unsafe practice or unethical behaviors.

## CLINICAL PRECEPTORS AND AFFILIATION AGREEMENTS

Students are responsible for identifying and contacting potential preceptors for their clinical courses (including leadership practica) and submitting a completed Preceptor Biographical Data Form along with a current (< 2 years old) resume and the preceptor's license/certification. This form and supporting documentation sent to the MSN Specialty Track Director. Preceptor biographical and CV information will be reviewed for suitability and fit with the particular clinical experience requested. Students **may not** conduct clinical experiences in units where they are currently employed.

SON clinical experiences are conducted with clinical affiliates only when there is an approved and signed affiliation agreement between NMSU and the clinical partner. A current affiliation agreement must be in place for the facility/agency where the MSN project work will be conducted.

Review the SON Affiliation Agreement document posted on Canvas to determine if the SON already has an affiliation agreement with this agency. If there is no affiliation agreement, the student must submit a completed Affiliation Agreement Application Form (posted on Canvas) and provide the name of the agency, the name of a contact person (with email and phone number) to the Graduate Secretary with faculty approval of the preceptor. The Graduate Secretary will begin the process of approval by contacting the agency and is responsible for tracking those agreements through each level of approval. The student will be notified when the affiliation agreement has final approval.

Students should plan to initiate an affiliation agreement with an institution where none exists at least 3-6 months in advance of the start of the clinical course. Affiliation agreements have to be approved by the NMSU Office of General Counsel and often the agency's legal department. Therefore, you should be anticipating your "next" semester's clinical placement and **PLAN ahead**. Delay in establishing your clinical experience may delay your progression in the program.

The following policies apply to clinical hours for the MSN program:

1. Students in the DNP program MAY NOT complete clinical hours in their workplace unit. All clinical experiences and preceptors are subject to approval by clinical course faculty.
2. All clinical practice hours must be satisfactorily completed for a passing grade in a course. Unsatisfactory work or incomplete clinical practice hours, as determined by course faculty, will result in a failing grade in that course.
3. Students may not complete clinical hours outside of the official semester (e.g., during semester breaks). Completing clinical hours specifically to "**bank**" them for another course is not permitted. Each practicum course has specific learning objectives that must be met within the semester that course is taught.
4. Students may not begin any clinical experiences until the course faculty have verified that the clinical clearance documentation is complete.

## ALTERNATIVE CLINICAL CREDIT

Clinical hour substitutions are not granted by the NMSU SON Graduate Programs.

## CLINICAL CLEARANCES

Prior to starting each clinical course, students will be required to meet all of the clinical clearance requirements for the School of Nursing (and the clinical agency if any additional items are required). All costs associated with these clearances are the responsibility of the student. Failure to complete clearance requirements will result in program dismissal. Positive toxicology results and/or criminal background checks that do not meet the NM Department of Health (DOH) clearance standards will result in an inability of the student to enroll in the clinical course and/or dismissal from the program. Clinical clearance requirements at specific clinical agencies may change during the academic year. Students will be required to meet any new requirements.

Clinical agencies require that each of these requirements is valid through the **end of an academic semester**. It is the student's responsibility to assure documentation of all required clearances are received/uploaded by the required deadlines. The School of Nursing sends students information about how to obtain background checks and drug testing.

### *Background Check*

Criminal background and fingerprinting checks are required **annually** for all students enrolled in clinical courses/practicum hours. These requirements are subject to change as federal, state and agency regulations change.

### *Drug Testing*

In order for students to participate in clinical experiences at affiliated healthcare agencies, a 10-Panel drug screening test is required **annually**. Clinical agencies and the School of Nursing reserve the right to require random drug testing at any time. Pending return of the drug screening results from a random test, students may not be permitted to attend clinicals within the specific agency. Furthermore, if a student-caused delay in testing occurs (e.g., student fails to show up to a drug testing appointment), the student will not be able to attend their clinical practicum.

In the event of a "positive" test, the student may appeal the findings as outlined by the procedures for the drug testing company or specific health agency. A student with a substantiated "positive" drug test will be referred to the Associate Director for the Graduate Programs. A "positive" drug test may prevent the student from enrolling in the clinical course and may result in program dismissal.



The School of Nursing is automatically sent a copy of your results, therefore, there is no need to forward your results to the nursing office.

*Required Screening for Disease and Immunizations*

It is essential that nursing graduate students do everything possible to prevent spreading communicable diseases to their patients and to the community. For this reason, the School of Nursing and the local health care agencies have established minimum guidelines for immunization for nurses and other health care workers.

If you need immunizations, you may obtain them from your primary care provider. If you are a full or part-time student at NMSU, you may obtain your immunizations from the [NMSU Aggie Health & Wellness Center](#) on the Las Cruces campus.

The following is a summary of the clinical clearance requirements:

REQUIREMENT	ACCEPTED	NOT ACCEPTED
<input type="checkbox"/> Background check	Required Annually: New Mexico residents are screened through the NM DOH Criminal Caregivers program. Out of state students are screened through <a href="http://www.CastleBranch.com">www.CastleBranch.com</a> .	Minor offenses (e.g., traffic tickets) are ok. Major offenses against people (e.g., child abuse, drug trafficking). Background checks conducted through employment are not accepted.
<input type="checkbox"/> Drug Testing	Required Annually: 10 panel test on urine through <a href="http://www.CastleBranch.com">www.CastleBranch.com</a> .	A screen with fewer than 10 substances. <u>Positive</u> results (without a validated medical reason, use of medical marijuana not permitted). Drug screens conducted through employment are not accepted.
<input type="checkbox"/> Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	American Heart Association (AHA) approved Basic Life Support (BLS) for health care providers or other approved CPR course <u>with</u> a face-to-face/in-person component.	American Red Cross or other online-only certifications.
<input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis B	3 vaccines (usually the 2 <sup>nd</sup> is given 1 month later and the 3 <sup>rd</sup> is given 4-6 months later) of any of these brand names: Energix B, Recombivax HB, or Twinrix AND a <u>positive</u> titer of antibodies in the blood. Students can begin with 1 or 2 vaccines and then complete the series later.	Havarix A vaccine. <u>Negative</u> or <u>Equivocal</u> titer requires revaccination of the series but not an additional titer. The student has presumptive immunity after the second series per CDC guidelines.
<input type="checkbox"/> Influenza (flu)	Flu immunization (injected or intranasal) annually during flu season. Deadlines may vary by facility.	Pneumonia vaccine (this is for a different organism). The injectable form can be given to pregnant women, but not the intranasal form.

		If the immunization is declined, then many agencies require personnel to wear a mask.
<input type="checkbox"/> Measles (Rubeola) Mumps Rubella (German measles)	2 doses of the MMR vaccine that are at least 28 days apart (if born before 1957, then 1 dose) AND a <u>positive</u> titer to <u>each</u> virus. <u>Note</u> : Titers to all 3 are required.	<u>Negative</u> or <u>Equivocal</u> titer to <u>any</u> virus requires revaccination of the series but not an additional titer. The student has presumptive immunity after the second series per CDC guidelines. <b>Note</b> : Rubella vaccine should NOT be given to pregnant women (a provider note is needed).
<input type="checkbox"/> Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Tdap)	A vaccine (or booster) within the last 10 years containing Pertussis.	Tetanus and Diphtheria only
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuberculosis (TB)	Required Annually: 2-step TB Skin Test (TST, PPD, Mantoux) that is <u>negative</u> (less than 15 millimeters of induration). The 2-step process is one skin test and reading followed by a second skin test and reading 7-21 days after the first test; <b>OR</b> a negative blood test (T-Spot TB test or QuantiFERON®-TB Gold); OR if person ever had a positive skin test result, then one <u>negative</u> chest x-ray AND a yearly <u>negative</u> screening of TB symptoms (form is posted in Canvas).	<u>Positive</u> skin test <b>Note</b> : people who had the BCG vaccine can have TB tests.  <u>Positive</u> chest x-ray or symptom report.  <u>Positive</u> blood test
<input type="checkbox"/> Varicella (Chicken pox)	Adults: 2 vaccines that are at least 28 days apart; OR 1 vaccine given before 13 years of age; AND a <u>positive</u> titer	Reports from providers or from individuals that they have had the disease. <u>Negative</u> or <u>Equivocal</u> titer requires revaccination of the series but not an additional titer. The student has presumptive immunity after the second series per CDC guidelines. Varicella vaccine should NOT be given to pregnant women (a provider note is needed).

<input type="checkbox"/> Blood borne pathogen training (OSHA)	<p>Required annually: Students may submit a certificate of completion from their work or any other online training (<a href="#">Memorial Medical Center</a> has free training modules – create a student account).</p>	<p>No documentation of training.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Clinical Agency Orientations	<p>Students may need to complete orientations and pass quizzes for their facility/organization. Currently both Las Cruces hospitals (MMC and MVRMC) require the completion of their online orientation annually. Additional orientations may be required for other agencies.</p>	<p>No documentation of orientation completion.</p>

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES IN CLINICAL COURSES**

1. Identify clinical site and preceptor for the upcoming semester and present this information to the course faculty for approval.
2. Ensure chosen clinical site meets individual goals and course objectives;
3. Submit all required clinical clearance documentation to course faculty as outlined in the MSN Student Handbook;
4. Submit the completed Preceptor Bio Form, a copy of the preceptor's license/certification, and CV/resume to the course faculty approval.
5. Contact preceptor and arrange the clinical schedule and meet planned time commitments.
6. Complete clinical goals form with input from course faculty and preceptor.
7. Provide preceptor with the evaluation tool at the beginning of the rotation.
8. Review course clinical competencies on the Clinical Evaluation Tool with the preceptor.
9. Maintain ongoing communication with preceptor and assigned course faculty regarding progress, expectations, needs, and limitations.
10. Demonstrate accountability for actions and safe practice.
11. Display professionalism, including professional appearance, and appropriate social behaviors.
12. Maintain accurate records of practicum time and experiences.
13. Complete the clinical log and/or student journals at designated intervals.
14. Take initiative and actively participate in the learning process.
15. Submit all course forms to course faculty by assigned due date.
16. Provide feedback to course faculty on preceptor and clinical site.

## **PRECEPTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Submit all required documents related to the preceptorship.
2. Orient student to the field experience setting, organizational policies, and key personnel.
3. Discuss the student's learning needs in order to meet their individual goals and course objectives.
4. Align the practicum experience to provide opportunities for the student to practice the identified competencies/goals.
5. Provide appropriate supervision during the field experience.
6. Utilize appropriate teaching methods to help student meet course objectives and competencies.
7. Evaluate whether the student is achieving their individual goals and competencies during the field experience.
8. Provide feedback to the student about performance throughout the practicum experience.
9. Initiate informal conferences with student if a student's performance is unsatisfactory on any given clinical day.
10. Monitor student's performance, and if there are concerns, contacting the SON faculty to discuss and develop a formal written corrective plan.
11. Demonstrate leadership skills and interdisciplinary collaboration.
12. Provide student the opportunity to integrate evidence-based practice in the field experience.
13. Complete the student evaluation form and submit to course faculty at mid-point during the rotation/semester (formative evaluation) and at the end of the rotation/semester (summative evaluation).

## **COURSE FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Provide guidance to the student on the selection of the preceptor and clinical site.
2. Approve preceptors and field experience sites.
3. Provide guidance and feedback to the student on individual goals, as well as strategies to meet course objectives and competencies.
4. Communicate to preceptor about course objectives, competencies, required clinical hours, and time commitments.
5. At a minimum, initiate communications with the preceptor (by phone or videoconference, or in person) the start of the rotation, at midpoint during the rotation and at the end of the rotation. If the student's clinical practicum is less than a full semester, the faculty is required to communicate at the start of the practicum and at the end of the practicum. These communications must be documented.
6. Maintain ongoing communication with preceptor and student regarding needs, expectations, limitations, and progress.
7. Verify student clinical documentation and hours to ensure that students are meeting course objectives and program requirements.
8. Perform the final evaluation of the student's performance with input from the preceptor and assign the final grade in the course.
9. Evaluate the preceptor and the site in relation to course objectives.

## **LIABILITY INSURANCE**

MSN students who are participating in school-sanctioned clinical experiences are covered by the New Mexico Risk Management Pool. It is not necessary to provide documentation of additional malpractice insurance for student clinical experiences. The NMSU coverage is only valid for participation in activities required for specific nursing courses and does not cover nursing or nurse practitioner activities performed beyond the requirements of the nursing program.

## PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

Projecting a professional appearance is a responsibility of all students and faculty. Proper attire and appearance enhances both your credibility and that of the University with clients, their families, and agency personnel.

Please follow the following guidelines: Perfumes, colognes, and body odor should be avoided. Your hair and body should be clean and free of offensive odor. Use deodorant, bathe daily and practice good oral hygiene. Your clothing should be clean, of good repair, and appearance. The smell of tobacco odor on clothing, breath, skin, or hair is an impediment to health, can be offensive, and is not acceptable. While students are expected to bring smart phones to clinical for access to references only. Students should not access email, text messaging, or call features while engaging in their course-related fieldwork.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

It is the responsibility of every nursing student to safeguard the patient's or client's right to confidentiality. It is the patient's or client's right to determine the degree of self-disclosure and to whom. Revealing self-disclosed information potentially damages a person's reputation or employment opportunities.

Elements of patient or client information are to be discussed only within the realm of the appropriate clinical/educational setting; e.g., planning conferences, post-clinical conferences, classroom seminars. It is a serious breach of confidentiality to discuss information outside of clinical conferences, seminars, client-centered conferences with agency staff, and appropriate classes. A nursing student who breaches confidentiality is subject to clinical probation or dismissal from the program. One's nursing practice must honor the element of trust given by patients and clients as they share potentially vulnerable aspects of their lives. A breach of confidentiality is grounds for dismissal.

Students *may not* photocopy/duplicate any patient/client record from any clinical agency. Your clinical agencies may require you to sign a confidentiality statement prior to participating in agency activities.

## **PATIENT/CLIENT SAFETY**

The safety and well-being of the patients and clients with whom students work while in the graduate program are of utmost importance and concern to faculty, the program, and the department. The following are guidelines to assist students in ensuring the safety and well-being of patients/clients. Violation of these guidelines may be grounds for corrective action or dismissal from the program. Unsafe and/or inappropriate clinical practice includes, but is not limited to, situations where the student:

1. Violates or threatens the biophysical, psychosocial, and cultural safety of the patient/client;
2. Assumes inappropriate independence in actions and decisions, including failure to maintain regular and timely communication with faculty about clinical objectives and performance;
3. Fails to recognize and to act upon own limitations, incompetence, and/or responsibilities;
4. Fails to interact effectively with other members of the health care team;
5. Fails to function in a legal manner as defined by the nurse practice act of the state or territory in which the student is practicing/conducting clinical practice;
6. Fails to function in an ethical manner as identified in the ANA *Code of Ethics for Nurses* (2001).



## **MSN PROJECT POLICIES**

MSN students must successfully complete a final project, in lieu of a thesis, to complete the requirements for the degree. This project is supervised by the student's MSN Project Committee. The MSN Project is the culmination of MSN program and represents a capstone exemplar of student learning outcomes. The scope of the project is to reflect application of theory and scholarly literature appropriate to the MSN role and the generalist MSN program of study. The expectation is that this final project and its associated paper will demonstrate scholarship worthy of the Master's degree in Nursing.

Students begin formulating the MSN project in NURS 565, Advanced Nursing Leadership, by developing a project outline. Continued project development takes place in NURS 549, Management of Fiscal and Human Resources. A project prospectus (i.e., proposal) is submitted during the first semester of NURS 595, Advanced Fieldwork in Nursing. In the last semester of studies, the student completes the project in the final NURS 595 course. If necessary, students may repeat NURS 595 to complete the project.

### **COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

Since the MSN project is the culmination of a course of graduate studies, it is expected to showcase the student's knowledge and skills acquired from the student's Master's coursework. Therefore, the final paper serves as the written comprehensive exam. If this project is not judged to be satisfactory by the committee, the student will need to undertake a comprehensive oral exam before the Graduate School deadline for holding a final exam for that semester ([https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/graduate\\_calendar/](https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/graduate_calendar/)) if the student wishes to graduate that semester.

### **FINAL EXAM**

After the final project paper has been completed (see below), the student must complete an oral final defense of the project which serves as the MSN non-thesis Final Exam. The deadline for the Final Exam for Master's non-thesis students can be found at: [https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/graduate\\_calendar/](https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/graduate_calendar/). The Final Exam form for non-thesis students must be submitted to the Graduate School at least 10

business days before the scheduled exam is held. The MSN student should contact the Graduate Advisor (Karen Pech) as soon as the Final Exam is

scheduled. The Graduate Advisor will complete the form, collect the required signatures and submit the completed form to the Graduate School. Please be aware that the Graduate Advisor may need up to a week to collect the required signatures. If this form is not submitted on time, you may need to reschedule your exam.

## **OVERVIEW OF MSN PROJECT**

Final projects for the MSN in Nursing Administration are evidence-based improvements to administrative structure/processes or healthcare system change. The project is a proposal for an evidence-based change, however the student is not expected to implement the project.

Examples of MSN project topics which promote administrative or system-level changes are:

1. Planning and conducting a quality improvement project. For example, evaluating the rate of catheter infections and revising protocols to meet a predetermined benchmark, developing a presentation of the project to pursue approval from appropriate stakeholders, and possibly developing a new or modified policy, and a teaching presentation.
2. Reviewing and revising unit policies for a practice change with the most current evidence and then presenting the new policies to the director and professional staff.
3. The development of a position for chief safety officer for a unit or institution, to include position description based on current evidence, job responsibilities, and a presentation to the appropriate facility leaders.

## **FINAL PROJECT PAPER**

The final project paper is in lieu of the graduate comprehensive exam. The final paper must include the following:

1. description of the clinical problem or issue identified;
2. presentation of a scholarly literature review on the topic;
3. plan to address the problem identified, with proposed outcome measures;
4. description of the theoretical framework identified, as well as one alternate theory;
5. specific and measurable implementation plan;
6. explicit and measurable outcomes developed and discussed.

APA format is expected, and will count toward 10% of the total grade for the project.

## **MSN PROJECT COMMITTEE AND SUBMISSION OF FINAL PROJECT PAPER**

In the last semester of study, a graduate committee is convened to review the MSN final project papers. The committee must have at least 2 members from the School of Nursing and one dean's representative. The chair of the committee must have graduate faculty status. The dean's representative cannot be a member of the School of Nursing and is generally appointed by the committee chair. One of the SON faculty members must represent the specialty track (i.e., Nursing Administration).

Graduate committee members will have 14 working days to review the final project paper. The committee will assign an assessment of 'pass' or 'fail' or 'adjourn'. Students will be notified of the committee decision by the chair.

A student may 'pass' with no revisions needed or may be required to rewrite parts of the final project paper ('adjourn' or 'fail' depending on the extent of the revisions required) and then resubmit the revised paper to the committee. If a rewrite is required, it is done in conjunction with guidance from the committee chair and members. Students must resubmit the revised paper within a reasonable period of time for review by the committee. If the student's revised paper is graded as 'fail' by the committee, the student will be required to revise the paper until it meets the committee's approval and successfully complete an oral comprehensive exam before graduating.

## ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers issues relating to disability and accommodations. If a student has questions or needs an accommodation in the classroom (all medical information is treated confidentially), contact:

#### **Student Accessibility Services (SAS)**

Corbett Center, Rm. 244

Phone: (575) 646-6840

E-mail: [sas@nmsu.edu](mailto:sas@nmsu.edu)

Website: <https://sas.nmsu.edu/>

#### **Student Responsibilities:**

1. Register with SAS and obtain accommodation documents early in the semester.
2. Deliver the completed accommodation and testing form(s) to the instructor(s) within the first two weeks of beginning of classes (or within one week of the date services are to commence).
3. Retrieve the signed form(s) from faculty and return to SAS within five (5) days of receipt from faculty at least one week before any scheduled exam, and
4. Contact the SAS Office if the services/accommodations requested are not being provided, not meeting your needs, or if additional accommodations are needed. Do not wait until you receive a failing grade. Retroactive accommodations cannot be considered.

#### **Faculty Responsibilities:**

1. Sign the ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM and TESTING ACCOMMODATION FORM (when presented), retain a copy and return the original to the student within five (5) working days of receipt;
2. Contact SAS immediately if there are any questions or disputes regarding accommodation(s), disruptive behavior, etc.; and
3. Refer the students to SAS for any additional accommodations.

## DISCRIMINATION

NMSU policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation and protected veterans status.

Furthermore, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment and retaliation. For more information on discrimination issues, Title IX or NMSU's complaint process contact:

Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), O'Loughlin House

**Phone:** (575) 646-3635

**E-mail:** [equity@nmsu.edu](mailto:equity@nmsu.edu)

**Website:** <https://equity.nmsu.edu>

## OTHER NMSU RESOURCES

NMSU Police Department	(575)-646-3311/www.nmsupolice.com
NMSU Police Victim Services	(575)-646-3424
NMSU Counseling Center	(575)-646-2731
NMSU Dean of Students	(575)-646-1722
For Any On campus Emergencies	911

## WRITING CENTER

Students are encouraged to use the Writing Center to improve their writing skills and the quality of their papers (located in Room 102, English Building; phone 575 646-5297). Please note this is an on-campus resource only.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

NMSU offers a variety of support and services for students. A listing of services is available online at: <http://success.nmsu.edu/>.

## **CHILDREN IN THE ACADEMIC WORKPLACE**

New Mexico State University is a thriving center of education and research which encourages supervised events on campus for children as well as adults.

However, the ability to concentrate for extended periods of time is a prerequisite within a healthy academic environment. Students, staff, faculty, and administrators can expect to attend and teach class, or complete work or research in laboratories, libraries, offices, and other workplaces with a minimum of distractions or interruptions. Consequently, the following regulations have been established, and will be enforced by the appropriate dean or administrative supervisor, to ensure that an appropriate academic environment is maintained.

1. Children visiting campus must be closely supervised by an adult at all times.
2. Children will be prohibited from entering dangerous settings such as labs and equipment rooms without the approval of the appropriate dean or administrative supervisor.
3. Children may not attend a class in session without the prior approval of the class instructor. Children under the care of the instructor may not attend class without the prior approval of the immediate supervisor.
4. Children may, on rare occasions and with the approval of the supervisor, accompany a parent to the workplace. However, the expectation is that parents will make alternate arrangements for the care of their children during normal working hours.
5. Children taking part in programs and/or special events on campus are expected to abide by the rules and regulations established by the program or event sponsors.