

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

School of Nursing

MSN STUDENT HANDBOOK 2015- 2016

Note: Policies stated within this document relate to any student enrolled in the MSN program in the 2015-2016 academic year.

(Revised August 12, 2015)

GRADUATE EDUCATION

The faculty believes that the purpose of graduate education is to prepare the Nurse for leadership roles and specialization in Nursing. The program further develops expertise in advanced Nursing practice that demands increased accountability, proficiency and leadership. The MSN degree builds upon baccalaureate education, further developing intellectual skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and ethical decision-making. Students are engaged in the application of theory, research and evidenced-based Nursing practice. The faculty believes there are diverse pathways toward achievement of the MSN degree; thus the SON offers four specialty concentrations for BSN prepared Nurses: FNP, psychiatric nurse practitioners, nurse administrators and nurse educators. Entry options for associate degree prepared nurses with a baccalaureate degree in a related field are available in the Nurse educator and nurse administrator concentrations.

Family Nurse Practitioners (FNP) are primary care providers who practice in ambulatory, acute and long-term care settings. The FNP provides Nursing and medical services to individuals, families and groups across the lifespan. Examples of roles and activities performed by the primary care Nurse practitioner include:

- Diagnosing and managing acute and chronic episodes of illnesses.
Providing services related to health promotion and disease management, and promoting the health of clients.
Ordering, conducting, supervising and interpreting diagnostic and laboratory tests.
Prescribing pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies within their scope of practice defined by regulatory and professional organizations.
Teaching and counseling patients.
Advocating for quality patient care and professional roles through involvement in the politics and the development of health policy.

Admission to this FNP program are now at the BSN to DNP level. See to DNP Handbook for additional information.

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners are educationally prepared to provide the full range of psychiatric services, including the delivery of primary mental healthcare services. Primary mental health care provided by the psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner involves the continuous and comprehensive services necessary for the promotion of optimal mental health, prevention and treatment of psychiatric disorders and health maintenance. This includes the assessment, diagnosis, and management of mental health problems and psychiatric disorders including:

- Diagnosing and managing acute and chronic episodes of illnesses.
Providing services related to health promotion and disease management, and promoting the health of patients.
Ordering, conducting, supervising and interpreting diagnostic and laboratory tests.
Prescribing pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies within their scope of practice as defined by regulatory and professional organizations.
Educating and counseling patients.
Advocating for quality patient care and professional roles through involvement in politics and health policy.

Nurse Administrators are prepared as advanced practice Nurse for administrative positions as a Nurse manager or Nurse executive in a variety of health care settings. Nurses who hold Nurse manager or Nurse executive positions are responsible for activities such as:

Management of Nurses and allied health personnel.

- Proper allocation of available resources to provide efficient and effective Nursing care.
- Organizational programming and input into executive level decisions.
- Assuming leadership roles in planning, organizing, implementing and controlling programs and activities that affect patient quality outcomes, staff development, and research.

Nurse Educators are prepared as entry-level faculty positions in academic setting such as universities, colleges and vocational settings. The program of study provides experiences related to the diverse content and roles of Nursing faculty such as:

- Teaching and learning theory and methodologies.
- Curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation.
- Development of the educator role in teaching, scholarship and public service.
- Functioning as a change agent and leader in academic and professional settings.

Graduate education provides the Nurse with a variety of economic, career and professional opportunities. Specialization at the master's level prepares the Nurse for leadership and advanced practice necessary for evolving roles in Nursing that promote health for a global community.

MSN PROGRAM OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate proficiency in the utilization of research and quality improvement, including problem identification, awareness of outcomes, evaluation and dissemination of research.
2. Analyze emerging organizational, financial, political, and technological issues confronting Nursing and society as a basis for enacting change.
3. Practice from an ethical perspective that acknowledges conflicting values and rights.
4. Assume and develop practice and professional roles to meet societal needs to promote high quality, safe, patient care.
5. Integrate theory and research from Nursing and related disciplines as a foundation for advanced practice.
6. Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of human diversity.
7. Integrate theoretical knowledge of health promotion and maintenance and illness/disease prevention to achieve optimal health.

ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK

The BSN and Graduate curricula are based on the philosophical beliefs of faculty regarding client, health, environment, and professional nursing.

The baccalaureate nursing curricula integrates knowledge from the biological, behavioral, and social sciences and liberal arts to provide a foundation for professional Nursing practice. Learning experiences occur in a variety of health care settings and progress from basic to complex activities. The curricula content is based on *The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (AACN, 2008) and *ANA Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (2010).

Building upon the foundation of baccalaureate education, the MSN program prepares the professional Nurse for specialty and advanced Nursing practice roles. The core curriculum is based on *The Essentials of Master's Education for Advanced Practice Nursing* (AACN, 2011). In addition, the program uses the following sets of specialty standards and competencies:

- *ANA Scope and Standards of Practice: Nursing Administration* (2009).
- National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education (NTF) *2008 Criteria for the Evaluation of Nursing Practitioner Programs*.
- National League for Nursing *Nurse Educator Competencies* (2005).

The purposes of the MSN program in Nursing at WKU are to:

1. Prepare FNP and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners, nurse educators, and nurse administrators who can provide high quality, safe nursing care.
2. Prepare graduates who can apply and communicate knowledge for the advancement of Nursing.
3. Provide the knowledge base for doctoral study in Nursing.

MSN education is a process that provides opportunities to expand and extend knowledge for continued growth and competency of the individual and the profession. It requires *intensive study* and *lifelong professional development* and draws on multiple disciplines and involves organized learning experiences that augment basic Nursing knowledge and skills in preparation for advanced practice nursing roles. Nursing education is a *collegial* process which fosters creativity, and *independent and critical thinking*. We value self-directed learners, continual learning, and active engagement in a teaching/learning partnership. The educational process supports personal, social and intellectual development while assisting students to attain academic and professional goals. Through the provision of meaningful learning experiences, nursing education seeks to assist the learner to formulate and structure Nursing knowledge, while distinguishing relevant from non-relevant information and developing safe and effective Nursing practice. The educational program seeks to evoke honesty, excitement of discovery, encourage self-expression while *requiring demonstration of competencies, knowledge (synthesis/analysis), oral and written communication*.

The SON faculty believes that students are active, self-directed adult learners who are committed to and are accountable for integrity of academic accomplishments, professional practice and self-assessment. Learning is a personal responsibility.

POST- MSN CERTIFICATE OPTIONS

Post-MSN Certificate in Nursing Education:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree educational preparation to teach in schools of Nursing in university and community college settings. The required courses focus on theories and strategies that guide instructional process, teaching and evaluation strategies and faculty role development.

Students will complete 12 credit hours of study. This will be comprised of NURS 508, 516, 518, 520, 522. NOTE: This certificate is under revision. Faculty will provide information as requested.

Post-MSN Certificate in Family Nurse Practitioner:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree course of study that leads to eligibility to apply for a national Family Nurse Practitioner certification examination.

The course of study is individualized based upon a review of the students previously earned credits. The courses are evaluated based upon NONPF standards for FNP graduates. All courses transferred can be no older than 5 years by the time of completion of the certificate. All applicants will complete as a minimum 17 credit hours of Nursing courses that includes NURS 508 Advanced Issues, 509 Practice Management, 546 Primary Care of Infants and Children, 547 Primary Care of Child Clinical, 548 Primary Care of Adults, and 549 Primary Care of Adults Clinical, 552 Primary Care Internship (See Graduate Catalogue for course descriptions). Additional courses may be required including: NURS 500 Advanced Patho, 515 Advanced Pharm, and 503/505 Advanced Health Assessment, Advanced Health Assessment Clinical. Previous MSN course work is evaluated to determine transfer, currently of content and alignment with the WKU FNP curriculum.

Post-MSN Certificate Nurse Administrator:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree educational preparation to enhance skills as a nurse leader and manager.

Students will complete 19 credit hours of coursework: Business Management/Finance Support Course; Organizational Theory/Health Care System Support Course; Human Resource Management Support Course; Health Care Ethics/Law Support Course; NURS 508 Advanced Professional Issues for Nurse administrators; NURS 528 Leadership & Management in Nursing Administration; and, NURS530 Leadership Administration Internship.

Post-MSN Certificate Emergency Department:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree educational preparation to enhance skills as a nurse leader and manager.

This certificate is intended for family, adult, and pediatric nurse practitioners currently practicing in emergency departments, critical access hospitals, and urgent care settings. It provides nursing professionals the opportunity to develop skills and competencies identified by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty (NONPF) as essential in these practice settings. The curriculum is built upon the NONFP competencies and the American Nurses Credentialing Commission (ANCC) requirements for advanced specialty certification.

Post-MSN Certificate Emergency Nurse Practitioner:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree educational preparation to enhance skills as a nurse leader and manager.

This certificate is intended for family, adult, and pediatric nurse practitioners currently practicing in emergency departments, critical access hospitals, and urgent care settings. It provides nursing professionals the opportunity to develop skills and competencies identified by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty (NONPF) as essential in these practice settings. The curriculum is built upon the NONFP competencies and the American Nurses Credentialing Commission (ANCC) requirements for advanced specialty certification.

Post-MSN Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree course of study that leads to eligibility to apply for American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) certification examination.

The course of study is individualized based upon a review of the students previously earned credits. The courses are evaluated based upon NONPF standards for PMHNP graduates. All courses transferred can be no older than 5 years by the time of certificate completion. All applicants will complete as a minimum 17 credit hours of graduate nursing courses that includes NURS 507 Adv. Psych NP Assessment, NURS 523 Adv. Psych NP I, NURS 524 Adv. Psych NP I Clinical, NURS 525 Adv. Psych NP II, NURS 626 Adv. Psych NP II Clinical, NURS 527 Adv. Psych NP III Internship, and NURS 511 Adv. Psych NP III Seminar. Additional courses may be required including: NURS 500 Advanced Patho, 515 Advanced Pharm, and 503/505 Advanced Health Assessment/Advanced Health Assessment Clinical. Previous MSN course work is evaluated to determine transfer, currently of content and alignment with the WKU PMHNP curriculum.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION (Revised Oct. 2010)

Applicants must provide evidence of:

1. Completion of a CCNE or NLN accredited BSN program with an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Graduates of a non-accredited BSN program are considered on an individual basis. Applicants with a cumulative GPA of 2.75-2.99 in the BSN degree, will be considered for admission provided they have at least a 3.0 GPA in the last 60 hours of the BSN degree ; and have a satisfactory review of additional required admission materials (goal statement, resume, references); plus a positive interview. Admission if approved will be on a probationary status requiring that the student earn a grade of B in each of the first 12 hours of course work completed.
2. One year of full time nursing experience is required prior to enrolling (following acceptance) in clinical courses in the nurse practitioner program and is recommended for other specialty tracks. New graduates currently practicing will be considered for part-time study. Post MSN NP certificate applicants must also document at least one-year of full time nursing practice prior to admission.
3. All admission materials and criteria must be received by the application deadline. This includes completion of an interview. The interview is scheduled by the MSN program faculty following receipt of a completed application. Incomplete applications will be consider for admission in the next semester.
4. Admission is a two-step process involving submission of materials to the WKU Office of Graduate Studies and Research and the School of Nursing MSN program.
5. Submit to Graduate Studies the following:
 - a. Online application & fee
 - b. Copies of official transcripts of all higher education coursework.
6. Submit to the School of Nursing, attention MSN program coordinator, the following:
 - a. Three professional references on form provided. If the applicant has completed the BSN degree in the last three years, one reference must be from a faculty in that program.
 - b. A professional resume or curriculum vitae.
 - c. A formal writing sample in the form of a professional goal statement. This may be submitted by e-mail attachment or mail. Your statement should be approximately 500 words and should address the following:
 - i. What is your career goal? What specialty concentration are applying to enter and why? Why is this specialty a good choice for you?
 - ii. Why are you choosing to apply to WKU?
 - iii. How are you planning and making adjustments to your life to allow for successful completion of graduate school?
 - iv. Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years following graduation from the MSN program?

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Nurses are legally and financially responsible if another is injured as a result of his/her error or omission; therefore, each student must carry professional malpractice (liability) insurance and coverage must be maintained throughout the program. Copy of current policy (face sheet) must be submitted for file and updated annually. All students in the School of Nursing must purchase Nursing Individual Student Professional Liability Insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000. The

policy must be in effect that first day of class in a Nursing course, and must be kept current throughout the program of study. Students should contact their insurance companies to ensure coverage as a Nurse practitioner student.

PRECEPTOR GUIDELINES

Purpose: The preceptorship is an organized and planned educational program in which preceptors facilitate the integration of nursing students into their role responsibilities in the practice setting. The purpose for utilization of a preceptor is to guide and enhance the practice activities and learning experiences for students.

Accountability and Responsibility: Ultimate responsibility and accountability for Nursing education rest with Western Kentucky University's School of Nursing and its faculty. Faculty is responsible for the application, integration and enhancement of the theoretical constructs of each program's curriculum as it relates to the student's clinical experiences. Faculty is responsible and accountable for the control, direction, delegation, supervision and evaluation of these experiences.

Role expectations of faculty:

1. Contact appropriate administrator and solicit name(s) of recommended preceptor(s).
2. Provide written confirmation of selected preceptor(s) prior to beginning clinical.
3. Provide an orientation program for preceptors, including course and clinical objectives, clinical experiences, and student evaluation criteria.
4. Be available to preceptors and students via telephone, e-mail and/or paper.
5. Make on-site visits to coordinate, supervise, and evaluate student performance and learning experience.
6. Make on-site visits within 24-48 hours if warranted.

Role expectations of preceptors:

1. Provide a copy of resume including documentation of current licensure/certification.
2. Be willing to serve as a preceptor, recognizing the time commitment required.
3. Participate in an orientation to the preceptor role.
4. Collaborate with Nursing faculty on student learning experiences.
5. Orient student to the clinical agency or institution and its policies and procedures.
6. Provide guidance for student achievement of learning objectives.
7. Supervise student performance as it relates to learning objectives.
8. Provide ongoing evaluation of student's progress and performance.
9. Meet with faculty to provide feedback regarding student performance and progress.
10. Inform faculty of unacceptable or problematic student behavior in a timely manner after behavior.
11. Complete and discuss with the student an evaluation at the end of the rotation.

Role expectations of students:

1. Meet with preceptors to share expectations, learning needs, and plan dates and time for clinical experiences.
2. Be prepared/punctual for clinical and schedule make-up with preceptors.
3. Seek-feedback regarding clinical performance from preceptors and faculty.
4. Coordinate site visits with faculty and preceptors, including date and time.
5. Conduct themselves in a professional manner and dress appropriately (business professional attire unless otherwise directed).
6. Document achievement of clinical objectives by keeping a log or journal.
7. Evaluate effectiveness of preceptor at the end of the clinical experiences.
8. Adhere to the policies of the WKU SON and the clinical agency.

Qualifications of Preceptors:

NP preceptors for the MSN student may be Nurse practitioners or physicians or other academically prepared who meet the licensing and/ or certification requirement in the state in which they are practicing. Nursing practitioners in the preceptor role must be either:

1. MSN-prepared with a minimum of one year experience OR
2. In individual cases, exception may be made in consultation with the faculty.

Nurse Educator Preceptors:

Primary Preceptors for the MSN Education students must meet the licensing and/or certification requirements in the state in which they are practicing and be:

1. Nursing faculty, tenured or working towards tenure, with Assistant Professorship rank or above.
OR
2. MSN prepared clinical Nurse educator with a minimum of 1-year experience. OR
3. In individual cases, exception may be made in consultation with faculty.

Nurse Administration Preceptors:

Primary preceptors for the MSN administration students must meet the licensing and/or certification requirements in the state in which they are practicing and be:

1. Master's prepared in appropriate administration field. OR
2. Certified as Nurse Administrator. OR
3. Individual cases, exception may be made in consultation with faculty.

USE OF LIST SERVE

All students are required to subscribe to the MSN program's list serve. The list serve is used extensively to facilitate communication among faculty, staff graduate students. Announcements related to scholarships, grants and seminars are examples of announcements regularly posted on the primary care list serve. It is the student's responsibility to check WKU e-mail frequently and notify appropriate persons if the student is not receiving primary care list serve information. To subscribe to the list serve send an email to primary-care-subscribe@lists.wku.edu

If a student changes the company from whom they obtain e-mail services, the student **MUST** unsubscribe to the list serve from the previous company and re-subscribe using the new e-mail address. Otherwise an error message is received for each message sent. (Graduates may also wish to have their name deleted from the list and should follow the procedure outlined below) To unsubscribe go to the site listed above and follow the directions.

LIST SERVE NETIQUETTE

This list serve should be used for communicating with a group of people (faculty; students as a group or enrolled in a particular course). The list serve should not be used for personal communication. If you have a message for one person their personal e-mail addresses.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid such as traineeships, scholarships and/or graduate assistantships for tuition and other expenses may be available depending upon a student's needs and the specifications of the funding agency. Contact departmental secretary for more information.

PERSONAL REFERENCES

Students must complete and sign a permission form prior to requesting faculty to write or complete a recommendation form. Forms are available in the Nursing department office. Completed forms will be maintained in the student's file for future requests.

COMPUTER-RELATED INFORMATION - *Topper netID*

Your Topper netID identifies you as a member of the WKU community, allowing you to access services on the WKU Information Technology (IT) network. Following admission to Graduate Studies you may access many essential services requiring a netID and associated password:

- 1 **Topper email**, the university's email system
2. **WKU Library** and related system
3. **Blackboard (Bb)** Web-based course management system that allows instructors to post course-related information for students online in a secure environment⁴³.
4. **WKU Portal** a single sign on doorway to all online services.
5. **TopNet** , allows students to access personal academic record information online.
6. **Help Desk** (The IT Helpdesk serves as the initial point of contact for technology support and provides the first level of response for technology related problems and questions. Assistance may be requested either through an [Online Help Request](#) or by calling **270-745-7000**.

You may access IT services through the Information Technology link located in Quick Links at the WKU home page.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK

Suggested curriculum plans for the nurse practitioner, nurse educator, and nursing administration programs follow. These are the recommended sequence for full-time study. Recommended part-time plans are available from your advisor.

NOTE: a 3-credit hour graduate statistics course is required and may be taken prior to admission.

Suggested Course Sequence – Primary Care Nurse Practitioner FULL TIME STUDY – 2 YEARS

Year 1

<i>First Semester</i>		<i>Second Semester</i>		<i>Summer</i>
NURS 503/505 Adv. Assess	3	NURS 510 Research	3	Optional
NURS 506 Trans. APN	1	NURS 546 PC Child	3	Thesis 3
NURS 504 NURS Theory	3	NURS 547 PC Child Cl.	2	
NURS 500 Adv. Patho	4	NURS 515 Adv Pharm	4	

Year 2

<i>Third Semester</i>		<i>Fourth Semester</i>	
NURS 552 PC Adults	5	NURS 554 Internship	5
NURS 512 Research Appl	2	NURS 509 Practice Manage	1
NURS 501 Policy	2	Thesis	3
		NURS 508 Adv. Issues	1

Suggested Course Sequence – Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner FULL TIME STUDY – 3 YEARS

Year 1

<i>First Semester</i>		<i>Second Semester</i>	
Graduate Stats	3	NURS 510 Research	3
NURS 506 Trans. APN	1	NURS 515 Adv Pharm.	4
NURS 504 Nsg Theory	3		

Year 2

<i>Fourth Semester</i>		<i>Fifth Semester</i>		<i>Summer</i>
NURS 500 Adv. Patho	4	NURS 501 Policy	2	NURS 507 Psych
NURS 508 Prof. Issues	1	NURS 503 Adv Assess.	2	Assess. 1
NURS 512 Research App.	2	NURS 505 Clinical	1	

Year 3

<i>Sixth Semester</i>		<i>Seventh Semester</i>		<i>Summer</i>
NURS 523 Adv. Psych I	3	NURS 525 Adv. Psych II	3	NURS 511 Adv.Psych
NURS 524 Adv. Psych I Clin.	2	NURS 526 Adv.Psych II ICl..	2	III. 1
				NURS 527 Adv.Psych
				III Cl. 5

**Suggested Course Sequence – Nursing Educator
FULL Timestudy- 2 Years**

Year 1

<i>First Semester</i>		<i>Second Semester</i>		<i>Summer Term</i>	
Statistics	3	NURS 510 Research	3	NURS 503 Assess.	2
NURS 504 Theory	3	NURS 605 Leadership	3	NURS 505 Clin.	1
NURS 532 Roles & Issues	2	NURS 513 Pharm	2	NURS 606 Adv. Clin.	1
NURS 519 Patho.	2	NURS 556 Teaching Strategy	2		
NURS 561 Technology	2				

Year 2

<i>Third Semester</i>		<i>Fourth Semester</i>	
NURS 512 Research Appl.	2	NURS 522 Teach Internship	2
NURS 531 Clin. Teaching	2	NURS 560 Curriculum	2
NURS 563 Hosp. Ed.	2	NURS 501 Policy	2
NURS 564 Hosp. Ed. Clin.*	1		
NURS 562 Assess. & Eval.	2		

*This is an optional experience.

**Suggested Course Sequence – Nursing Administrator
FULL TIME STUDY- 2 Years**

Year 1

<i>First Semester</i>		<i>Second Semester</i>		<i>Summer Term</i>	
NURS 506 Trans. APN	1	NURS 510 NURS Research	3	Support Course*	3
NURS 504 NURS Theory	3	Support Course*	3	Support Course*	3
Graduate Stats.	3	NURS 501 Policy	2		

Year 2

<i>Third Semester</i>		<i>Fourth Semester</i>	
NURS 512 Research Appl	2	NURS 508 Adv Issues	1
Support Course*	3	NURS 530 Intern.	3

*Support Courses are selected with approval of Advisor from the following categories (suggested courses are included but are not all inclusive):

<p>Business Management/Finance – 3 hrs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA 501 Survey of Economics • ECON 501 Survey of Economics • BA 505 Survey of Accounting • HCA 545 Managerial Finance for Health Services • HCA 401G Fund Health Financial Mgt • NURS 714 Economic & Financial Influences in HC systems 	<p>Organizational Theory/Healthcare Systems – 3 hrs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA 510 Organizational Theory • HCA 540 Health Care Organ. & Administration • HA 544 Health Care Systems Design & Behavior • HCA 547 Decision Making in Health Services
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	<p>Organizational Theory/Healthcare Systems (cont)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAD 500 Effective Leadership Studies • NURS 755 Quality Improvement in Healthcare • LEAD450G Leadership in Global Context
<p>Human Resource Management – 3 hrs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA 542 Health Care Human Resources Admin • PS 520 Public Administration • COMM 525 Interpersonal Support in Workplace • COMM 528 Comm. In the nonprofit sector • COMM 551 Employee Comm • COMM 564 Crisis Comm • COMM 581 Application Organizational Comm • COMM 461G Org. Comm. • BA 560 Human Resources Management • LEAD 540 Leading Teams 	<p>Health Care Ethics/Law – 3 hrs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA 551 Health Services Jurisprudence • HCA 543 Health Care Quality & Accountability • COMM 569 Values & Leadership • PH 447G Human Values & Health Sciences • LEAD 525 Leadership Ethics

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS – MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

The MSN program follows progression policies and degree requirements as published in the *WKU Graduate Catalog*. The catalog can be accessed online at:

<http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Academic/Graduate/>

Additionally the following admission and progression policies apply to all students officially accepted in the MSN program in the SON.

1. **Research Tool.** NURS 510 is the designated research tool. If the student earns a grade less than a B they must retake NURS 510 understanding that this will delay their progress in the program. NURS 510 may only be repeated one time. A second failure in this course will result in dismissal from the program. Students repeating NURS 510 may not progress to a clinical course until a satisfactory grade of at least a B is earned.
2. **Writing/Research Proficiency:** it is the expectation that all students completing the MSN program will demonstrate proficiency and scholarship in writing and research. To facilitate students in accomplishing this competency selected courses include a written paper that includes an aspect of integration/application of research and Nursing theory. Writing and evaluation criteria will be provided for the assignment specific of the course requirements.
3. **Required Grade in Specialty Courses:** A grade of at least a B (80%) is required in each specialty course. Specialty courses require that the student earn a minimum grade of 80% on tests and quizzes prior to adding any additional points earned on papers, projects, SOAP notes, etc. to the final grade. Review the course syllabus for specific course requirements related to student grades and evaluation criteria. A minimum of a B must be earned in a specialty course to progress to the next course in the sequence or another clinical or specialty course. **A student who receives less than a “B” in two specialty courses will be dismissed from the program.**

The following courses are considered specialty courses for each specialty:

FNP: NURS 500, 503, 505, 508, 509, 515, 546, 547, 548, 549, 554

PSY NP: NURS 500, 503, 505, 507, 508, 511, 515, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527

NURSE EDUCATOR: NURS 503, 505, 513, 519, 522, 531, 532, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 605, 606

NURSE ADMINISTRATOR: NURS 508, 528, 530

Reenrollment in the class, to be repeated, is not automatic but is dependent upon available space. If the earned grade results in the student’s overall GPA dropping below a 3.0 the student will be placed on academic probation. Please refer to the WKU Graduate Catalog for policies related to graduate students and academic probation.

Dismissal from the Program:

Students will be dismissed from the program due to the following circumstances:

1. Failure to earn a grade of B on a second attempt of a specialty course (identified above).
2. Failure to earn a B on a second specialty course after successful completion of a repeated specialty course.
3. A student may only repeat one course one time. A second incidence of a failure to earn the required grade of a “B” will result in dismissal from the program.
4. Failure to earn a “B” on a second attempt in NURS 510.

5. A second time a student is placed on academic probation.
6. Failure to remove a grade of incomplete in the agreed upon time.
7. Failure to meet professional standards and SON policies such as the following but not all inclusive:
 - a. Academic dishonesty
 - b. Incivility to patients, preceptors, staff, peers or faculty
 - c. Violation of agency policies
 - d. Failure to follow HIPAA policies, etc.
 - e. Failure to follow professional Scope and Standards
 - f. Any violation of the social media policy (see SON Handbook)
 - g. Failure to notify faculty of actual or potential legal actions that could result in actions on their license.

Transfer from one Specialty Concentration another

Occasionally students find that the specialty concentration they enter does not meet their individual career and/or personal goals. Transfer from one concentration to another is allowed in this instance:

1. The student is in good academic standing in the concentration in which he/she is currently enrolled.
2. A formal letter requesting the change is made to the Graduate Committee explaining the request.

Students are encouraged to request this change early in the curriculum to prevent loss of credit hours. Talk to your academic advisor about the change to discuss how this will impact your time in the program and curriculum path. The change is not automatic. You will be considered with the next group of applicants in the following admission cycle. A transfer **will not** be considered if the request is due to dismissal from a concentration due to academic or any other reason. The student will be notified of the committee's decision. If approved, the student will be notified to meet with the program advisor and to complete a new Form C. As per the Graduate School policy, a transfer to a different concentration requires submission of a new application and may require an additional application fee. A transfer from the new concentration back to the original course of study will not be considered.

4. ***MSN Comprehensive Examination/Capstone Policy:*** The MSN program requires completion of an evidence-based project during the capstone course for each specialty. These courses are NURS 554 for the Primary Care Nurse Practitioner specialty, NURS 527 for the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, NURS 522 for the Nurse Educator specialty, and NURS 530 for the Nurse Administrator specialty. Specific requirements for the project are provided in writing in the specialty capstone clinical course. Prior to completion of the course the faculty will notify the MSN Coordinator of successful completion of the project and a Form E will be submitted to the Graduate School. Failure to pass the evidence-based project and paper will result in a delay in graduation from the program and/or dismissal from the program. One rewrite attempt is allowed with faculty permission. Failure may occur due to violation of the program's writing policy and/or failure to demonstrate proficiency in the program outcomes through completion of the project/paper.

AWARDS AND GRADUATION

SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION

Family Nurse Practitioner/ Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner- Certification. Students are responsible for contacting the State Board of Nursing in the state in which they plan to practice to determine requirements for APRN practice. Information regarding certification can be obtained by either calling the American Nurses Credentialing Center (1-800-284-CERT) or the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program, Capital Station, PO Box 12926, Austin, TX 78711 (1-512-442-4262).

Nurse Educator- Certification. A national certification, through the National League for Nursing, is available for Nurse educators. At this time, no advanced Nursing licensure requirement has been established for Nurse educators that require attainment of national certification. Eligibility requirements and general information are available at the NLN website.

Nurse Administrator- Certification. Certification for Nurse administrators is available at two levels through the American Nurses Credentialing Center. At this time, no advanced Nursing licensure requirement has been established for Nurse administrators that require attainment of national certification.

AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT IN GRADUATE STUDIES

The outstanding Graduate Student Awards program is held each year during the spring semester. The aim of the program is to recognize outstanding graduate students in each of the degree programs offered at Western. Nursing faculty in the MSN program shall identify the recipient (previous August, December, or May graduates) of the award based on the following criteria:

1. Excellence in coursework, reflected in an outstanding grade point average.
2. Excellence in commitment to degree work beyond participation in coursework that might be reflected in original research for papers, thesis, etc.
3. Creative products, projects, papers or theses; participation in professional activities having to do with the student's commitment to the area of the degree or the teaching in the discipline; and/or papers presented or awards earned during the time of the degree program.
4. Other areas of excellence as deemed appropriate.
5. Potential for accomplishment in the profession.

GRADUATION

The WKU Graduate Commence Ceremony recognizes the accomplishments of each graduate student. There is a special ceremony each fall and spring semester for all students completing graduate degrees. Each student is recognized individually by the WKU President. The gown, hat and hood is provided to each student submitting a graduate application at no charge. The MSN Pin is Available from WKU bookstore (purchase optional).