School of Nursing and Health Studies

GRADUATE NURSING STUDENT HANDBOOK

Revised and updated July 29, 2016
Please review all materials in this document AFTER ADMISSION TO THE NURSING PROGRAM.

The guidelines, policies, and procedures in this handbook provide an orientation to the graduate nursing programs and a resource which should be referred to throughout your education.

NOTE: Announcements are made periodically when the handbook is updated. Newer policies replace the previously published policies unless noted otherwise.
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Preface

This handbook is intended to provide students with reference information and to provide answers to the most commonly asked questions posed by new and returning students as they progress through their graduate program. The purpose of this handbook is to complement, NOT replace, the Northern Illinois University Graduate Catalog (http://catalog.niu.edu/index.php?catoid=23).

It is the responsibility of students to know and observe all regulations and procedures related to the program they are pursuing. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because students plead ignorance of or contend that they were not informed of the regulations or procedures.

Each student has access to the Nursing Graduate Student Handbook on the Nursing Program website (http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/) under the “Resources” for M. S. in Nursing (MS) and Post-Master’s Nursing Certificate links. It is the responsibility of the student to refer to this handbook as well as any e-mails sent to their NIU student e-mail address.

Calendar and Personal/Academic Information for NIU Students

Be sure to check MyNIU (https://myniu.niu.edu/psp/ps/?cmd=login) for information about enrollment dates. Registration for classes is done online via MyNIU; schedules for each semester are posted about 3 months prior to the semester. MyNIU also lists your current specialization, progress toward meeting degree requirements, personal contact information (name, address, phone, etc.), and the application for graduation/degree. Graduation deadlines and other current Graduate School policies are found on the Graduate School website (http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/index.shtml). If you click on the “Current Students” button at the top of page, you will see current, pertinent forms, and information.

Important Telephone Numbers

- Main NIU Operator 753-1000
- School of Nursing & Health Studies Office 753-1231
- Director of Nursing Graduate Studies 753-0662
- Nursing Program Coordinator 753-6553
- APN Internship Coordinator 753-2163
- College of Health and Human Sciences 753-1891
- Graduate School 753-0395
- Student Financial Aid Office 753-1395
- NIU Police Department 753-1212
- Bursar's Office 753-1885
- NIU Library Information 753-1995
- Weather Closing Information 753-6736 (Local)
  (888) 464-8673 (Long Distance)
Important Information Resources

1. School of Nursing & Health Studies website: http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nuhs/
2. Nursing Program website: http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/
Welcome from the Chair

The Graduate Faculty members of the School of Nursing and Health Studies are delighted to welcome you to our graduate program in nursing.

The Northern Illinois University School of Nursing and Health Studies is a great place for you to prepare for a career as an advanced practice nurse or a nurse educator. NIU is the suburban Chicago area’s premier public university with more than 23,000 students. It is ranked by the Carnegie Foundation as a research university with high research activity.

The School is located within the College of Health and Human Sciences, but as a graduate program, it is under the jurisdiction of the Graduate School. Dr. Derryl Block is Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences, while Dr. Bradley Bond is Dean of the Graduate School.

You will find an outstanding level of support and commitment to your graduate education at NIU. There are several program personnel who are particularly involved in helping you meet your educational goals: a) your personal graduate faculty advisor; b) Ms. Susan Andersen, the Graduate Internship Coordinator, c) Ms. Pamela Taylor, the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies, d) Dr. Mary Elaine Koren, Area Coordinator for Nursing.

Now you need to embrace the exciting, yet demanding curriculum designed to prepare you for the challenges of twenty-first century nursing practice and nursing education. Continuous, extensive study is essential to be successful in this program and to prepare you for safe, effective practice in the years ahead.

With warm wishes for personally fulfilling and richly satisfying years of graduate study at NIU,

Jan Strom PhD, MPH, RN

[Signature]

Professor and Chair
INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL OF NURSING & HEALTH STUDIES

History of the School of Nursing and Health Studies

The baccalaureate program in nursing at Northern Illinois University began in 1959 with 19 basic nursing majors and two faculty members. Dr. Annette S. Lefkowitz was appointed the Director of the program and Dr. Ann M. Hart the Assistant Director. The baccalaureate curriculum has been approved by the Committee of Nurse Examiners of the Illinois Department of Regulation since its inception. The School of Nursing has had continuous accreditation by the National League for Nursing for the baccalaureate program since 1965 and for the master's program since 1973. In 2001, the Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education became the accrediting agency for both programs.

The original School of Nursing (SON) was located in a former private residence on Normal Road on the current site of the Founders Library. In 1969, the School of Nursing celebrated its 10th anniversary with a move into the north wing of the newly constructed Montgomery Hall. The new facility was large enough to accommodate the over 400 students and 22 faculty members and provided classroom space for all the nursing classes. In 1987, the School of Nursing again moved to new facilities to accommodate the still growing program. The new nursing building, located at the corner of Normal Road and Ridge Drive, is in a completely remodeled elementary school building. It is large enough to accommodate the offices for faculty, staff, academic advisor, and graduate research and teaching assistants and provide classroom and laboratories for students.

Registered nurses (RNs) were first admitted to the baccalaureate program in 1964. In the late 1970s, the School of Nursing began offering nursing courses in a number of off-campus locations. By the mid-1980s, RNs could complete the nursing component of the baccalaureate degree in Rockford, in the Fox Valley area, or on-campus. In 1992, RN-BS degree completion courses were offered off-campus at Hoffman Estates Educational Center, and in 1995 these courses were offered at the Rockford Regional Academic Center. Currently the school offers this program online as well as off-site at several Community College locations.

The master's program in nursing was implemented in 1968. The program is designed so that students can continue employment and pursue their graduate studies; most graduate students are part-time and commute to Northern from all parts of northern Illinois. In 1994, the School of Nursing received authority to offer the master's degree off-campus, and classes were offered at the Hoffman Estates Educational Center.

In the fall of 1995, the School of Nursing began a post-master's family nurse practitioner course of study. In 1999, the Graduate School recognized the program for certificate status. Candidates in the certificate program must have a master's degree in nursing from an NLN- or CCNE-accredited program. The curriculum is configured for part-time study and takes a minimum of 4 semesters to complete.
The first online course was developed and offered in 1999 for students in the Post-Master’s Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate of Graduate Study program. By 2000, there were four online courses developed. As the School of Nursing continues to set the pace for the 21st century, it currently offers the RN-BS Degree Completion program and a large proportion of its graduate programs as online courses to enhance student access and flexibility in advancing their education and professional career options.

In 2000, the School of Nursing was awarded a $1,039,000 grant from the U.S. Public Health Service, Health Resources Services Administration, Division of Nursing. The grant was written to expand the Adult Health Practitioner program, develop a rural-health nursing course, and offer courses via distance technology in the northwestern sections of Illinois. In 2001, the School of Nursing was awarded a Helene Fuld Grant to enhance the integration of Community Health throughout the undergraduate curriculum.

In 2006, a Nurse Educator Specialization was added to the graduate program. The Nurse Educator specialization prepares nurses to plan and develop nursing curricula for both classroom nursing programs and a variety of health care settings. A post-master’s certificate in nursing education is also offered.

Updated 7/29/16
NURSING PROGRAM MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES

Nursing Program Mission: To prepare students for ethical, evidence-based nursing practice.

Nursing Program Vision: To offer the premier nursing programs in the Midwest

Four Core Values (from AACN resources below)

Commitment:
A pledged action to serve altruistically with respect for human dignity (AACN, 2013).

Integrity:
“is acting in accordance with an appropriate code of ethics and accepted standards of practice. Integrity is reflected in professional practice when the person is honest and provides care based on an ethical framework that is accepted within the profession“ (AACN, 2013, pg. 1).

Social Justice:
“is upholding moral, legal, and humanistic principles. This value is reflected in professional practice when the person works to assure treatment under the law and access to quality health care” (AACN, 2013, pg. 1).

Responsiveness:
“is fundamental, because it relates to basic human rights. Health systems, education, economic, political and cultural systems share responsiveness as a goal. Each system to be successful must respond to the legitimate needs of its constituents” (Darby, Valentine, Murray, & De Silva, n.d.).

References

Approved by NURS General Faculty Council 12/2/2013
Purpose and Goals of Northern Illinois University’s Master of Science (MS) in Nursing Program

Title: Northern Illinois University Master of Science (MS) in Nursing

Purpose: The purpose of the Northern Illinois University’s Master of Science (MS) in Nursing program is to prepare students with broad knowledge and practice expertise in advanced practice nursing and nursing education. The Master’s prepared nurse from NIU is able to effectively integrate nursing and related sciences in the delivery of healthcare to promote health and well-being to diverse populations. The Master’s prepared nurse from NIU implements ethical, evidence-based healthcare using technology, collaboration, and leadership skills within an interprofessional team. Our core values are commitment, responsiveness, integrity, and social justice.

Program Goals:
1. Build on the knowledge and skills of Baccalaureate-prepared nurses to provide ethical, evidence-based practice at a Master’s level.
2. Prepare students to promote health and well-being of patients, aggregates, and populations through the use of technology, collaboration, leadership, and service.
3. Foster life-long learning.

Approved NURS: 12/2/2013

Northern Illinois University Master of Science in Nursing Conceptual Framework

Introduction

The Northern Illinois University (NIU) Master of Science (MS) in Nursing was developed to exemplify components of direct care roles at the graduate level. The Conceptual Model is based upon the Essentials of Master’s Education in Nursing (American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), 2011) and the core values of the NIU Nursing Program: commitment; responsiveness; integrity; and social justice. The Model is the framework that describes and guides the MS in Nursing program at Northern Illinois University.

Northern Illinois University Master’s Degree in Nursing Conceptual Framework

The Northern Illinois University MS in Nursing Model (see Figure 1) was developed in 2013. The Model defines the nine Essentials for Master of Science in Nursing education that comprise Master’s level nursing practice: 1) underpinnings from the sciences and humanities; 2) organizational and systems leadership; 3) clinical scholarship for evidence-based practice; 4) informatics and healthcare technology; 5) health care policy and advocacy; 6) interprofessional collaboration; 7) quality improvement and safety; and 8) prevention and population health. These eight Essentials contribute to the ninth Essential, to build knowledge, skills, and attitudes for master’s level nursing practice. Each Essential is fluid and capable of change over time in response to the needs of the profession and population served. The Essentials do not function exclusively; rather all influence and are influenced by the current healthcare environment.
All students in the MS in Nursing program complete the core curriculum. Following foundational courses as outlined in the *Essentials of Master’s Education In Nursing* (AACN, 2011), and in keeping with program standards by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) (CCNE, 2013), the student proceeds to role development as an Advanced Practice Nurse (Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist) or Nurse Educator.

The Family Nurse Practitioner curriculum is based on the *Core Nurse Practitioner Competencies*: 1) scientific foundation competencies; 2) leadership competencies; 3) quality competencies; 4) practice inquiry competencies; 5) technology and information literacy competencies; 6) policy competencies; 7) health delivery system competencies; and 8) ethics competencies (The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, 2012).

Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner curriculum is based on the *Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Competencies*: 1) health promotion, health protection, disease prevention, and treatment; 2) nurse practitioner-patient relationship; 3) teaching-coaching function; 3) professional role; 4) managing and negotiating healthcare delivery teams; 5) monitoring and ensuring the quality of health care practice; and 7) cultural and spiritual competence (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2010).

The Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist curriculum is based on the *Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist Competencies*: 1) direct care competency; 2) consultation competency; 3) systems leadership competency; 4) collaboration competency; 5) coaching competency; 6) researcher competency; and 7) ethical decision-making, moral agency, and advocacy (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2010).

The curriculum of the Nurse Educator specialization is based on the *Core Competencies of Nurse Educators*. The Master’s prepared Nurse Educator will: 1) facilitate learning; 2) facilitate learner development and socialization; 3) use assessment and evaluation strategies; 4) participate in curriculum design and evaluation of program outcomes; 5) function as a change agent and leader; 6) pursue continuous quality improvement in the nurse educator role; and 7) engage in scholarship (National League for Nursing, 2005).

**References**


NURS Approved 12.2.2013

Figure 1. Northern Illinois University Master of Science in Nursing Model.
Master of Science (M.S.) in Nursing
Student Learning Outcomes

1. Integrate nursing with related sciences and the humanities to promote health and well-being. (Essential I)
2. Apply organizational leadership skills to improve healthcare environments. (Essential II)
3. Apply principles of quality initiatives to improve safety in healthcare environments. (Essential III)
4. Integrate evidence-based scholarship into advanced nursing practice. (Essential IV)
5. Analyze technology to promote quality healthcare processes and outcomes. (Essential V)
6. Integrate legal and regulatory policies to promote health and well-being. (Essential VI)
7. Function as a professional nurse leader collaborating within interprofessional teams to promote health and well-being. (Essential VII)
8. Implement effective clinical prevention and health promotion in population-based, culturally diverse settings. (Essential VIII)
9. Demonstrate master’s-level nursing practice. (Essential IX)

Approved by NURS 12/2/13
SECTION II

ACADEMIC NURSING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Nursing Graduate Programs Orientation

Orientation material, including the guidelines, policies and procedures for the nursing program, are published in this Graduate Nursing Student Handbook. Beginning in fall 2014, each newly admitted graduate nursing student is required to review the content in the Graduate Nursing Student Handbook and submit signed verification of having done so as part of submitting Clinical Requirements documentation.

Additional detailed guidelines specific to internships, planning your program of study/course sequence, the master course schedule for the next few years, additional requirements (e.g., Clinical Requirements documentation), and how to apply for certification examinations after graduation are published on the nursing website under the link to “M.S. in Nursing” or “Post-Master’s Nursing Certificates.”

The current NIU Graduate Catalog can be found online at the NIU Graduate School website and provides official Graduate School policies. This Graduate Nursing Student Handbook contains policies that are aligned to the Graduate School policies, but that provide specific detailed information on areas relevant to study in nursing.

Revised 6/12/14

Student-At-Large Status

An individual who has not yet applied for regular admission to the Graduate School, who has applied but has not yet been admitted, or who was admitted to one of the post-master’s certificate programs may be permitted to register for graduate work as a student-at-large. For degree-seeking students, a maximum of 9 semester hours of credit earned as a student-at-large may be applied to degree requirements with the approval of the student’s faculty adviser. Exceptions to this 9-hour limit are made for students who are admitted to the post-master’s certificate programs because they are not degree-seeking students.

Application to become a student-at-large is made online at the Graduate School website (http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/index.shtml). However, it should be noted that admitted degree-seeking and post-master’s certificate students receive priority over students-at-large in registering for courses.

Academic Advising

Each student is assigned a faculty adviser upon admission and confirmation of that admission to the Graduate School. The Director of Nursing Graduate Studies appoints faculty advisers. Advisers assist in planning the student’s sequence of courses in their program of studies.
Advisers also serve as role models, mentors, and resource persons. Every student admitted to a graduate nursing program should make an appointment to meet with the faculty adviser early in the first semester of study as an admitted student. Most faculty advisers are not on contract during the summers (mid-May to mid-August).

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

**Faculty Adviser**

1. Assist student in planning an official program of study, called a “sequence of courses” in their program of study for their specialization. The adviser reviews and approves the plan and then submits it to the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies for final approval.

2. Explore career goals with advisee.

3. Revise planned program of study as needed and resubmit to the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies for approval if student’s plans change.

4. Address other issues that arise related to the advisee’s progress in the program.

**Advisees**

1. Schedule an appointment with the faculty adviser as early as possible in your first semester as an admitted student to plan an official program of study (i.e., “sequence of courses”) for your specialization.

2. Review Nursing Program orientation materials in the *Graduate Nursing Student Handbook* and seek clarification from faculty adviser as needed.

3. As needed, submit online requests for transfer credits, change of specialization or re-entry into the Graduate School after an absence of 12 months or more (available at http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/audience/current_students.shtml). A variety of forms are available at the Graduate School website: http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/audience/student-forms.shtml

4. Use the *Graduate Nursing Student Handbook*, Nursing Program website information, Graduate Catalog, and other current online materials as reference sources.

5. Notify the Graduate School and the Nursing program of changes in name, phone number, and address. Changes can be made via MyNIU, but the nursing program does not receive an automatic update or notification of changes. NOTE that the name on current nursing license in IL should agree with the name under which student is registered at NIU; this will eliminate potential discrepancies when applying for professional positions, the certification examination, and/or advanced practice license after graduation.
6. Use your NIU e-mail address, since it is used for official communications related to enrollment at NIU.

7. Ensure that your specialization is listed correctly in MyNIU; look at your degree progress report (called “Academic Requirements” in the Student Center) or unofficial transcript for current semester.

8. Register for classes at the earliest possible time each semester. Adhere to your planned sequence of courses when enrolling for courses or revise your sequence of courses.

9. Consult with your faculty adviser and provide documentation to address any deficiencies or stipulations placed on your admission as specified in your letter of admission from the Nursing Program.

10. Contact the Graduate Internship Coordinator, Ms. Susan Andersen (sandersen@niu.edu), one year prior to each internship. Deadlines for contacting Ms. Andersen to receive a preceptor referral one year prior to each internship are as follows: September 1 – November 1st for Fall Internships, January 1-March 1 for Spring Internships, June 1-August 15th for Summer Internships. If you do not contact Ms. Andersen by email (email) during the above periods of time, you will be required to retrack your internships on a space available basis.

Revised 7/10/15

**Master of Science Degree in Nursing**

The Nursing program offers a program of graduate studies leading to the Master of Science (MS) degree with a major in nursing that is fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Graduates are prepared for an advanced nursing role in a selected field of clinical study as either a nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, or nurse educator. Graduates are eligible to sit for national examinations for certification as a family nurse practitioner, an adult-gerontology primary care nurse practitioner, or an adult-gerontology clinical nurse specialist.

Students may pursue the master’s degree in nursing on either a full-time or part-time basis. Those who wish to maintain full-time status might need to take additional courses to ensure a full-time course load as defined by the Graduate School (i.e., 9 - 12 credits of graduate course work). An undergraduate research methods course is required prior to enrollment in NURS 604 (613). An introductory health assessment course must be taken prior to enrolling in NURS 606 (619) and NURS 607 (620).

The graduate student plans a sequence of courses in their program of study in consultation with an assigned nursing faculty adviser. Per Graduate School policy, all courses in the program of study must be completed within six years from the time the first course was taken. The nursing program policy is that each student may **transfer a maximum of 6 semester hours of credit** from another college or university after admittance to a program of study; the student’s six year clock begins whenever the transfer course was originally taken.
All graduate students must have access to a computer and possess a basic proficiency in the use of computers. Internet access is also required since nursing courses are either online or web-enhanced. The ability to communicate with faculty using e-mail is an expectation. All graduate students must use their NIU e-mail address. E-mails should not be forwarded to personal e-mail addresses since mass mailings from the University/program may be blocked and identified as “spam.” Additionally, students must have access to a word processing program, PowerPoint, and Excel software.

Revised 7/29/16

Program Requirements

Core Courses - Required for ALL Nursing M.S. Students (26 to 27)
NURS 601 Master’s Level Nursing Practice (2)
ETR 521 Educational Statistics I (3)
OR PHHE 605 Biostatistics in Public Health (4)
OR BIOS 670 Biostatistical Analysis (3)
NURS 602 Advanced Pathophysiology across the Lifespan (3)
NURS 604 Advanced Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing (3)
NURS 605 Advanced Pharmacology across the Lifespan (3)
NURS 606 Advanced Physical Assessment across the Lifespan (2)
NURS 607 Lab: Advanced Physical Assessment (1)
NURS 701 Advanced Nursing Leadership (3)
NURS 704 Clinical Prevention in Advanced Nursing (3)
NURS 706 Informatics for Evidence-Based Practice (3)

One of the following tracks or specializations (15-24)

Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) Core Courses – Required for all APN Students (5)
NURS 608 Diagnostic Reasoning (2)
NURS 650 Primary Care: Women across the Lifespan (1)
Two of the following courses (1 total):
NURS 681 X-ray Interpretation (0.5)
OR NURS 682 Suturing and Office Procedures (0.5)
OR NURS 684 Electrocardiogram Interpretation (0.5)
OR NURS 685 Orthopedic Skills (0.5)
OR NURS 686 Billing and Coding Processes (0.5)
NURS 698 Capstone: Program Synthesis (1)

Family Nurse Practitioner Track (19)
NURS 651 Primary Care: Infant, Child, and Adolescent (3)
NURS 652 Primary Care: Adults across the Lifespan (3)
NURS 654 Primary Care: Women during Reproduction (1)
NURS 653 Internship: Infant, Child, and Adolescent (4)
NURS 663 Internship: Women across the Lifespan (4)
NURS 673 Internship: Adults across the Lifespan (4)

Specialization in Nursing Education (15)
NURS 621 Foundations in Nursing Education I (3)
NURS 622 Foundations in Nursing Education II (4)
The current online *NIU Graduate Catalog* lists the currently required courses with their pre- and co-requisite courses as well as policies related to graduate students at NIU.

Sequence of course forms for each specialization can be found at the Nursing Program website under the links for “M.S. in Nursing” or “Post-Master’s Nursing Certificates.” ([http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nurs/](http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nurs/)) under “Planning Courses”.

Revised 7/10/15
Program Length and Scheduling of Classes

The curriculum is configured for part-time or full-time enrollment. Full-time students can complete the program in a minimum of four to six semesters, depending on the selected area of specialization. Students may enroll in courses during the fall, spring, or summer term. A full-time course load is 9-12 semester hours; part-time study is less than 9 semester hours. If students wish to maintain full-time status throughout their academic program of studies, it will be necessary to take some additional cognate courses.

Most face-to-face courses, with the exception of internship courses, are offered in the late afternoon or evening just one day per week to better meet the needs of adult learners. Starting Fall 2015 many courses will be held on-line or in a hybrid format to accommodate the student who is working and has family and personal commitments.

Sample Schedules and sequence of courses can be found on the School of Nursing & Health Studies website (http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/ms/planning.shtml).

Graduate Internship Tuition Waiver Policy/Procedures

Currently, graduate student internship tuition waivers continue to be awarded. These waivers, designed for degree-seeking students (not certificate students) pay the tuition costs (not fees) for semesters during which the student is enrolled in an internship. However, the graduate internship waiver program will be phased out between Fall 2014 and Summer 2017.

The phase-out plan allows students who began or will begin their programs prior to Summer 2013 to be eligible for the waiver for all hours in which they are enrolled through Summer 2017. Students admitted to a program in Summer 2013 or later will be eligible to receive the waiver for up to 9 hours of internship hours through Summer 2017. After Summer 2017, the internship waiver program will cease to exist.

Those who are qualified to receive internship waivers, should complete the Selective Service Compliance Form posted on the nursing website under "Nursing (MS)/Internships" (see http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/_documents/select_service.pdf). Submit this form to Ms. Susan Andersen well in advance of the start of each semester. NOTE: An original signature is required on the Selective Service Compliance Form; the form will not be accepted if it is faxed or emailed.

There is an additional form verifying eligibility that the nursing program will complete and then forward to the Recruitment Office. Requests will not be accepted after the start of the semester.

Changing a Specialization in Nursing

Because each student is admitted to a particular specialization in nursing and there are limited enrollments available in each specialty (i.e., specialization), requests for changes are reviewed and approved on an individual basis. Making a request does not guarantee approval.

If a student has changed professional goals and recognizes that a different specialization might better facilitate meeting those goals, a request can be made to change the specialization. These requests will be evaluated each fall and spring semester when the Graduate Nursing Admissions
Committee meets (about 2 weeks after the graduate application deadlines of October 1 for spring admissions and February 15 for fall admissions). Requests for changes in specialization should be submitted by the October 1 or February 15 deadline dates.

To submit a request, the student must first submit a request for a “Change of Major;” an electronic form can be found on the Graduate School website on the Forms Page [http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/audience/student-forms.shtml](http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/audience/student-forms.shtml). The student should also submit a one-page goal statement to the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies. This can be sent electronically to the Director. The goal statement should address the student’s professional goals and how changing the specialization will help meet those goals.

Each request and goal statement will be reviewed by the Graduate Nursing Admissions Committee. After review, the student will be notified by the Graduate School regarding the decision regarding the request to change specialization.

Revised 7/10/15

**Graduation**

A student planning to graduate must apply for graduation by the Graduate School’s deadline. Deadlines are posted on the Graduate School website [http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/index.shtml](http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/index.shtml). In addition, several electronic e-mail notifications are sent by the Graduate School to matriculated graduate students each academic year. Deadlines are usually about 9 months prior to the desired graduation date. All degree-seeking students must apply for graduation whether or not they want to participate in the commencement exercises.

Application for graduation is made through MyNIU. Students can also monitor their progress toward meeting degree requirements on MyNIU; refer to Student Help at MyNIU for how to obtain information about reviewing the Academic Requirement report in the MyNIU Student Center [http://www.niu.edu/myniu/](http://www.niu.edu/myniu/). All students who apply for graduation by the deadline are put on the preliminary graduation list for that term. If unforeseen circumstances arise, the applicant for graduation can defer their graduation. An online form to request deferral is available at the Graduate School website on the Forms Page.

**Summer Graduation and Requests to Participate in Graduation Exercises**

Students who will complete their degree requirements and graduate in summer sessions may petition the Graduate School to participate in either the spring or fall commencement exercises. Requests are made to the Graduate School. Approval of requests is not guaranteed and is dependent on the number and timing of requests. For those who want to participate in the spring exercises before the summer graduation date, it is recommended that the student submits the application for graduation at the earliest possible time and then make the request to participate in spring exercises about midpoint during that semester.

Revised 6/12/14
Completion of Post-Master's Certificate Programs

A student enrolled in a post-master’s certificate program should monitor their own progress toward completing program requirements and consult with the faculty adviser periodically throughout the program of study. After grades are posted during the last semester of study, notify the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies. To show program completion on the official transcript, the Director must send documentation of certificate completion to the Graduate School.

6/12/14
Section III

General Information

Student Services

There are a variety of student services available and tailored to the needs of graduate students. Detailed information is available online at the Graduate School website and in the Graduate Catalog.

Bookstore

Two bookstores serve the NIU community. The University Bookstore is located in the lower level of the Holmes Student Center. The Village Commons Bookstore is located on Lucinda Avenue at Annie Glidden Road. Required and recommended course materials are available at these locations each semester. You may also order the books online at the Bookstore website: (http://www.niubookstore.niu.edu/Home.aspx).

There are often options to buy used books or to rent books.

Required Course Textbooks

There is information about the books required for each course on MyNIU. This includes a link to the NIU bookstore.

Drug Information Software

All students in advanced practice specializations are required to purchase software with current drug information. This needs to be purchased no later than when enrolled in the NURS 605 (618) course (i.e., Pharmacology). Currently, NIU students receive a discount when they purchase the Lexi-Comp Suite. Instructions are provided in pertinent courses and on the Nursing and Health Studies Community area on Blackboard.

Bulletin Boards

A variety of information concerning upcoming events, professional meetings, job postings, and announcements can be found on the bulletin boards at various locations in the Nursing building.

Computers

Each semester, all graduate students are charged a computer fee that cannot be waived.

All graduate students are expected to have a beginning level of computer skills. (a) Most graduate courses use web-based media or group discussions as a means of enhancing teaching-learning strategies. (b) Electronic literature searches and downloading of available abstracts and
full-text articles are available through the NIU Founders Memorial Library. (c) In addition, graduate students are responsible for learning how to access and use Blackboard (Bb). Blackboard is the online software program used by the NIU nursing program faculty for teaching with web-based course enhancements or for teaching online or blended/hybrid courses. Students login to Bb using their NIU user name and password at (webcourses.niu.edu). “Student Help” is available at the Blackboard site if needed.

Networked personal computers, supporting Microsoft office, electronic mail, and web browser software, are available in the Nursing Building computer lab. To learn how to login to NIU computers, visit the NIU Information Technology website (http://www.its.niu.edu/its/index.asp).

Printing in the computer labs in the Nursing Building should be limited to essential materials only! Please plan ahead and do not wait until your class time to print materials. Printing in the computer labs is only available to nursing students; please be prepared to show your ID if asked. All students at NIU are required to use their NIU e-mail account for correspondence. The Graduate School, the Nursing Program, and NIU use the e-mail system to send important announcements.

Revised 7/10/15

School of Nursing and Health Studies Blackboard Community

Soon after admission and enrollment in graduate nursing courses, students will be given access to the School of Nursing and Health Studies (NUHS) “Community” on Blackboard (Bb; webcourses.niu.edu). Announcements and a variety of materials (e.g., internship planning packets, program of study sequence forms, etc.) are posted on the NUHS community site. The site is also used to send mass e-mail notifications to graduate students.

Occasionally, a student is “missed” and inadvertently not enrolled in this Bb community. Any student who is not enrolled in the NUHS Community on Bb should notify the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies during the first semester after admission and enrollment in graduate nursing courses.

The NUHS Blackboard Community is also used to post professional positions available to students during or upon graduation! Announcements about scholarships and other forms of financial aid are also posted on this Community/Organization in Blackboard.

Copy Machines

There is a copy machine in the Nursing Building for student use. Copiers require an OneCard or copy card. Information is available at the Information Technology Services website (http://www.its.niu.edu/its/copiers/index.shtml).

Health Care

The University Health Service (UHS) provides primary healthcare to all registered students, full or part time, who have paid on-campus tuition and fees. Students are required to show their
current valid NIU photo ID before service is provided. Students may use the Health Service whether or not they are enrolled in the Student Health Insurance program.

The UHS offers hours to meet the scheduling needs of most students. During fall and spring semesters, some weekday early evening, and Saturday hours are available.

Students may utilize the UHS to fulfill clinical requirements for TB screening and required immunizations and titers.

**ID Cards**

All students must obtain an NIU student Photo ID card. Most students obtain this ID name badge when enrolled in NURS 605 (618) Advanced Pharmacology. The ID name badge **identifies you as an NIU student and must be worn in all internships and for clinical components of other courses**. The Photo I.D. Badge will list your first name, RN, and NIU graduate student. If your badge has been lost or is no longer current (check expiration date on badge) you must secure a replacement badge. Call the main office in the Nursing Building and schedule an appointment to have your photo retaken. The office is open between the hours of 8:30 AM-12 NOON and 1:00 PM - 4 PM. Monday – Friday. You will need two (2) forms of identification; at least one must contain a photo of you (e.g., passport, military ID, driver’s license, state identification).

NIU Photo ID cards (also called One-Cards) are required to check books out of the library and to access a variety of NIU services. ID cards are to be obtained from the Holmes Student Center lower level across from the bookstore. **The Photo ID cards should** be obtained during your first semester as an admitted graduate student.

**Library**

Founders Memorial Library is the main NIU library. NIU Libraries are participants in the I-Share Online Catalog System, a network involving 71 academic institutions throughout Illinois. NIU Libraries provide self-help user's guides available at the information desk and online remote access to NIU Library searches can be made once students after set up their ID and password accounts.

**Lounge**

A student lounge is available for use by all nursing students in the Nursing Building. The lounge has comfortable chairs and sofas to relax between classes. There are vending machines, a microwave, and a refrigerator for student use.

Revised 7/10/15

**Parking at NIU**

Nursing students are required to have a University permit to park in the Nursing Building parking lots.
The University parking sticker may be purchased at the Parking Division of the University Security Department located at the corner of Normal Road and Lincoln Terrace. These permits are color-coded to correspond to the lots in which they may be used.

If you do not have a parking permit you must park on the street. The Nursing Building parking lot is not open to vehicles without a parking. If parking on the street, **do not block mailbox access for the residents living in the subdivisions adjacent to the Nursing Building. Residents’ mail will not be delivered if a car is parked in front of the mailbox.**

**Smoking Policy**

NIU is a smoke-free facility and smoking is not permitted near entrance doors.

**Writing Center**

Free tutoring is available through the Writing Center for all students. This center provides an opportunity for students to work one-on-one with an experienced writer, specially trained to improve writing skills. Students can walk in but appointments are encouraged. For further information call (815) 753-6636. **Additionally, these services are available online at [http://uwc.niu.edu/](http://uwc.niu.edu/).**

**Web Page**

Nursing graduate program information is available at the Nursing Program website (http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/). Each student should access this page regularly to obtain current information and forms required by the nursing program.

**Additional Services**

In addition to the above services, there are a number of other offices that may be of interest to you. You may find more information about these and other services through the graduate catalog or by contacting these departments individually.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>Campus Child Care Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student's Legal Assistance Office</td>
<td>Holmes Student Center, 6th floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Ombudsperson</td>
<td>Holmes Student Center, Rm 601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Resource Center</td>
<td>University Health Service, 4th floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of University Resources for Women</td>
<td>105 Normal Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Black Studies</td>
<td>Center for Black Studies Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Latino Studies</td>
<td>515 Garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Testing Services</td>
<td>Adams, Rm 128</td>
</tr>
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Section IV

Student’s Responsibilities and Professional Behaviors

Student Responsibilities

Each graduate student should read the General Regulations in the *Graduate Catalog* online at http://catalog.niu.edu/index.php?catoid=19. Any questions about that information can be directed to the Faculty Adviser, the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies, or to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Questions on regulations and their interpretation pertaining to studies at the graduate level should be addressed to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Student Responsibility for Obtaining Current University Information

The university reserves the right to make changes in admission requirements, fees, degree requirements, and other specifications set forth in the catalog. Such changes may take precedence over catalog statements. While reasonable effort is made to publicize such changes, students should remain in close touch with departmental advisers and appropriate offices, because responsibility for complying with all applicable requirements ultimately rests with the student.

Academic Standing

To remain in good academic standing, a graduate student must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.00 in all graduate courses. A graduate student who fails to maintain a 3.00 GPA may, upon recommendation of the department or program, be subject to termination of admission to that degree program. The Graduate School places students on academic probation when their cumulative grade point average drops below a 3.0.

A student must be in good academic standing overall and in the degree program in question to be eligible for graduation.

Refer to the General Regulations of the *Graduate Catalog* for more information on policies and procedures related to grades.

In the graduate nursing programs, students must earn a minimum grade of B in each required course in their program of study.

Nursing students must earn a minimum grade of B in each required course in their program of study. Any required course in which a grade of B- or lower is earned must be repeated and a grade of B or higher earned prior to progressing in program course work. Students who earn two
grades of B- or lower in the same course or any combination of courses will be dismissed from the graduate and certificate programs.

**Leave of Absence**

If a student needs to take a leave of absence for a semester or more, the student should notify the faculty adviser and the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies. If a graduate student does not take classes for more than 12 months, the student must complete a Re-entry Application through the Graduate School. The form is available on the Forms Page at the Graduate School website: [http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/audience/student-forms.shtml](http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/audience/student-forms.shtml).

**Academic Integrity**

Students attending Northern Illinois University are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Students who violate this policy must realize that disciplinary action may be taken up to and including expulsion. For more information on student and faculty rights and procedures relating to this matter see the general regulations of the *Graduate Catalog*.

Falsification of clinical hours required to meet course requirements is considered academic misconduct.

In addition, **as a condition of being a student in an NIU course, no student is authorized to share, disclose, or copy the content of any examinations.**

**Statement Regarding Confidentiality**

The concept of the right of individuals to privacy is taught throughout the nursing curriculum. The right to privacy is grounded in moral reasoning as well as federal legislation titled the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Privacy rights **must be** protected by maintaining confidentiality.

On a routine basis, the faculty addresses the legal, moral, and professional consequences of breaches of confidentiality. The profession of nursing respects the autonomy of every individual and demands the maintenance of confidentiality at all times. All students are held accountable for meeting HIPAA requirements.

The faculty and students of the Nursing Program support the right to confidentiality for all individuals.

**Policy for Electronic Devices and Social Networking**

1. Students must recognize that they have an ethical and moral responsibility to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times including online media.
   - The standards of professionalism are the same online as in any other circumstance.
2. Students may not take pictures or videos of patients on personal devices, including cell phones.
   - Students are forbidden to share any information or photos via any electronic media that is obtained through the nursing student-patient relationship.
   - Use of any electronic devices to store/enter any type of client information is a violation of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and may result in disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal from the program.

3. Students may not identify patients by name or post any information that may lead to the identification of a patient.

4. Students must maintain professional boundaries with patients when using social media. Online contact with patients is not acceptable.

5. Students may not make any comments about patients, other students, faculty, the clinical agencies and/or their employees, or clinical assignments/learning activities even if they are not identified.

6. Students must abide by any clinical agency policies regarding use of employer-owned computers, cameras, and other electronic devices and use of personal devices while in the clinical agency.

7. Students should not text, e-mail, or receive telephone calls in the classroom, while in the patient care areas of clinical agencies, or in the patient’s home.

8. Students should check with their instructor/faculty about permissible devices that can be used in the classroom or clinical agency.
   - Faculty members have the right to instruct students to turn off laptops and other devices, and to stow those devices in secure places, in any class or agency.

9. Students should promptly report any identified breach of confidentiality or privacy issue.

10. Students who fail to follow the directions of a faculty member or the clinical agency policy may incur disciplinary action, up to, and including suspension and dismissal.


NIU Graduate Nursing Students are expected to adhere to the American Nurses’ Association Code for Nurses in all academic activities related to the graduate nursing program. The Code follows:

1. The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
2. The nurse’s primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.
4. The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care.
7. The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.
8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.
9. The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.


Reviewed 7/2015

**Professionalism Statement**

All graduate nursing students are required to sign and abide by a Code of Conduct statement upon admission to the nursing program. In addition, an agreement to abide by Professional Standards is required for graduate students enrolling in graduate internships. This document can be found in the most current Internship Planning Packet for the student’s specialization.

Approved 12/2/13

**Enrollment Requirements**

A graduate student must register in the term for which he or she is admitted, or request deferral of admission. Refer to Matriculation: Deferral of Admission in the *Graduate Catalog*. Otherwise, admission will be canceled. Students who were admitted with stipulations are considered to be Conditional Admissions. Usually, the Condition or stipulation for admission must be met within the first 9 semester hours of coursework at NIU. If the condition is not met, admission will be terminated from the Graduate School. Refer to Conditional Admission policies in the Graduate Catalog.
A student who has been enrolled in a graduate degree program but did not graduate from that program, and whose enrollment has lapsed for 12 months or more, must reapply for admission to the Graduate School. Students must submit a reentry application which is available on the Forms Page at the Graduate School website.

Revised 6/12/14

Registration

All graduate students enroll for courses through MyNIU.

Clinical requirements must be met when enrolling in graduate nursing courses. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. If you delay enrollment after the registration period begins, you might not be able to enroll in the course(s) of your choice. Refer to the Student Help and tutorials on the MyNIU website (http://www.niu.edu/myniu/) for information about how to select courses you intend to take prior to start of each registration period.

Each student should take responsibility for enrolling the specified number of credits required by various types of financial aid.

Inability to Register for Desired Courses: Wait Lists

If a student is unable to register for a course during a specific semester because it is filled, that student should contact Diane Rich (drich@niu.edu) to be placed on a wait list for the course. After the peak registration period and prior to the start of the semester, the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies and Chair of the School of Nursing and Health Studies will decide how to remedy the wait lists. Sometimes an additional section of the course is opened. The wait list in MyNIU is not readily accessible to the nursing program. Therefore, it is important that students report their situations to the nursing program through Diane Rich.

If the desired course is on the student’s approved course sequence form/program of study, it is very likely that the student will be able to enroll in the course as planned. If the course is not on an approved course sequence/program of study, it is possible the student will need to enroll in a different course.

6/12/14

Permit Course Registration

NURS 606 (619), NURS 607 (620), NURS 608 and all internships are permit courses. You may obtain a permit number from the Nursing program Secretary, Diane Rich (815.753.0664; drich@niu.edu). However, you must demonstrate that all prerequisite courses have been met in order to register.
Internship permits for NURS 603, NURS 623 (643), NURS 633 (644), NURS 653 (677), NURS 663 (678) and NURS 673 (679) are provided by the Nursing Program Coordinator when notifying students of the faculty teaching each scheduled internship.

It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of any encumbrances on their ability to register, such as Bursar’s or University Health encumbrances. Be advised that your health requirements must be current for the University’s Student Health Services. The University Student Health Services and the Nursing clinical requirements are two different entities and do not automatically share immunization information.

**Overloads and Underloads**

There are no University minimum requirements for graduate students in general. Graduate assistants *may* be subject to minimum-enrollment requirements.

Overloads for graduate students in good academic standing are subject to departmental approval. A full course load for a graduate student is defined as 9 to 12 semester hours in a spring or fall semester and 6 to 9 hours in a summer session. **Graduate nursing students may not enroll in more than one internship per semester.** Also, Nursing Faculty recommendations are to limit graduate students to only one other required class in the student’s program of study during the semesters in which they are enrolled in internships. Exceptions to these recommendations are rarely made. Any requests must be made in writing and submitted to the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies.

Revised 7/10/15
Section V
Clinical Internship Policies

Internship Planning Packet

Students should begin planning their clinical and teaching internships and supporting course work with their faculty adviser early in the first semester of matriculation into the graduate nursing program. All internships are highly individualized, and adequate advance planning insures that students have met all prerequisites and are ready to obtain the fullest benefit from the experience. *Internship Planning Packet* documents are available on the nursing website, as well as in the NUHS Blackboard Community. These documents contain detailed guidelines for planning internships. Students are advised to read the document for their particular specialization early in their program of study.

The student is placed in a setting with a master's prepared (or higher level) nurse, or sometimes a physician who is willing to serve as a preceptor and facilitate attainment of the student’s internship objectives. If the preceptor is a nurse practitioner, she/he must also have proof of certification and advanced practice licensure in Illinois. Students are limited to a maximum of two preceptors per clinical internship. Exceptions to the maximum number of two (2) preceptors per semester will be made on a case-by-case basis; the student should request an exception in writing to the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies, who will consult with appropriate graduate faculty regarding the request. The internship setting must be located in Illinois and in NIU’s regional area. Students may not complete their internship in an agency in which they are currently employed or have been employed during the previous 24 months.

The NIU graduate nursing programs are fortunate to have a Graduate Internship Coordinator to guide students in finding well-qualified preceptors in appropriate settings. The student will work in conjunction with Ms. Susan Andersen, Graduate Internship Coordinator, in finding appropriate placement for their clinical internship. The placement process will require that the student adhere to any deadlines that are applicable and communicate with the coordinator as directed. All preceptors must be approved by the Graduate Preceptor Coordinator each semester in which the student is registered for an internship.

**Please note: Students who refuse to accept a qualified preceptor or site will not be guaranteed the ability to progress in the program. In addition, students will not be guaranteed an internship site in the event of unforeseen circumstances (such as illness or resignation of a preceptor).**

Procedures for Notification of Intent to Enroll in Internships

The current procedure is posted on the nursing website under “internships” for M. S. in Nursing and Post-Master’s Nursing Certificate students. The procedure is as follows:
1. One year prior to each internship contact the Graduate Internship Coordinator, Ms. Susan Andersen (sandersen@niu.edu). Deadlines for contacting Ms. Andersen to receive a preceptor referral one year prior to each internship are as follows: September 1 – November 1st for Fall Internships, January 1-March 1 for Spring Internships, June 1-Autgust 15th for Summer Internships. If you do not contact Ms. Andersen by email during the above periods of time, you will be required to retrack your internships on a space available basis.

2. If your plans for taking an internship change, notify the Graduate Internship Coordinator no later than the end of Week Two of the semester immediately preceding your planned internship. You must then meet with your adviser to revise and approve a new plan of study and sequence of courses.

3. For each internship, contact the faculty member assigned to teach the internship by March 30th (for summer or fall internships) or October 30th (for spring internships) to discuss and submit your internship planning packet information and objectives. Approval of the final internship materials is made by the assigned faculty member who will be teaching the internship, and is necessary prior to your enrollment in each internship.

**Preparation the Semester before Scheduled Internship**

The student must also meet with the faculty member responsible for teaching each internship; each student should contact the assigned faculty member by October 30 for spring internships and by March 30 for summer and fall internships. The Graduate Internship Coordinator will notify each student of the faculty member’s name and also will provide instructions for registering in the appropriate section. To help prepare for the internship planning conference with the faculty member, the student should review the Internship Planning Packet available on the nursing website under ”Internships” for M. S. in Nursing or Post-Master’s Nursing Certificate students as well as on the Nursing and Health Studies Blackboard community site under “Documents.” In addition, for NP and CNS students, orientation materials for using e-logs are also available and should be viewed prior to the first internship.

Published deadlines related to internships will be strictly observed. **Failure to adhere to these deadlines and guidelines could result in the cancellation of enrollment in your internship.**

Revised 7/10/15
Clinical Requirements Documentation

Overview of Clinical Requirements

An important component of your nursing education revolves around your experience in clinical settings. All nursing students are required to comply with the clinical requirement standards set forth by the Nursing Program. These clinical requirements are in alignment with requirements set forth in the contractual agreements with our clinical agencies. Students must be in compliance at all times from admission to through completion of the program.

Provisional Admittance

All students admitted into the NIU Nursing Programs are admitted provisionally until submission of proof of having met their clinical requirements and then they will be fully admitted. Full admission is required for ongoing enrollment in required courses. If requirements are not met, the student might not be able to complete required courses in their program of study, which includes clinical practice experiences.
New Procedures for Students Admitted in the Fall 2014 Semester and Thereafter

Clinical Requirements
Clinical requirements and supporting documents for (a) all newly admitted nursing students and (b) RN completion students enrolled in N463 after Fall 2014 will be submitted to the nursing program’s compliance vendor’s website, Castle Branch.com. Students will receive an E-vite from the compliance vendor website with instructions regarding registration, fees, and clinical requirements.

Clinical requirements include the following:
- Standard Precautions Training
- Updated immunizations/titers
- Background check
- Drug screen test
- CPR Certification
- Proof of health insurance
- Valid Illinois RN license (if applicable)
- Annual Influenza Vaccination
- TB Test
- Proof of diptheria/tetanus/pertussis vaccination
- Code of Conduct signature page
- Student Handbook signature page
- HIPPA

Clinical requirements are subject to change without notice due to policy changes occurring within our clinical agencies. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of his/her own records and submit necessary requirements by published deadlines. Failure to do so may prevent enrollment in required nursing courses or result in removal from a clinical site. The student may be unable to complete the nursing program or clinical experience.

Criminal Background Check
Once registered on the CertifiedBackground.com site, you will receive instructions to order the background check, which uses your name(s), social security number, and address(es) as search criteria. Background checks are done through Castle Branch and submitted online. The results will posted to your Castle Branch profile.

10-Panel Rapid Drug Screen
Students will also be required to have a 10-panel drug screen. There will be a paperless order provided to you and where to go to submit your sample, based on the zip code you enter. The results of the drug screen will be posted to your Castle Branch profile.

Annual Standard Precautions (Bloodborne Pathogens - BBP) Training
All students are required to participate in BBP training annually. Results (copy of the quiz) must be submitted by July 1st each year. You can locate the training module http://ehs.okstate.edu/modules/bbp/index.htm or you may also use the NIU Nursing version at http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/resources.shtml - look under General Resources category.

First semester undergraduate nursing students will complete the training and take the quiz for the first time during their Foundations of Nursing (NURS 205) theory course.
Health Insurance
Please provide a copy of your current health insurance card or proof of coverage. You must provide a copy, front and back sides, showing your name on the card. If your name is NOT on the card, you will be required to provide proof of coverage from the insurance company. At any time, should your coverage change, please copy and provide updated information.

CPR Certification
American Heart Association Healthcare Provider course is required. Online re-certifications are not accepted at this time. Please submit a copy signed front and back of your card.

RN License
Please submit a current copy of your State of Illinois RN license (RNs only, e.g., Graduate Students, Post-Master’s Certificate Students, and RN-BS Completion Students).

Annual Influenza Vaccination
An annual influenza vaccination is required for all nursing students. Documentation must be submitted by October 1st annually. Upon admittance, proof of an influenza vaccination from the previous season will be necessary.

Measles, Mumps & Rubella (MMR) Immunity
Proof of immunity may be submitted in either of the following 2 ways:

1. Laboratory confirmation of immunity (serum antibody titer) for each disease. The titer may be either qualitative or quantitative. If quantitative, a reference range must also be included in the documentation.

2. Documentation of immunization series per ACIP Standards: 2 doses of MMR vaccine

Hepatitis B (HBV) Immunity
Proof of immunity must be submitted as follows:

1. Dates of hepatitis B series, and
2. Quantitative antibody titer with reference range.

Varicella Immunity
Proof of immunity may be submitted in either of the following 2 ways:

1. Laboratory confirmation of immunity (serum antibody titer) for the disease. The titer may be either qualitative or quantitative. If quantitative, a reference range must also be included in the documentation.

2. Documentation of immunization series per ACIP Standards: 2 doses of varicella vaccine given at least 28 days apart.

Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Tdap) booster
Documentation of a current Tdap booster must be submitted.

Tuberculosis (TB) Testing
Students must provide the following:

1. Evidence of an initial 2-step non-reactive Mantoux test (two separate tests administered 1-3 weeks apart) or Quantiferon-Gold blood test, and

2. Evidence of an annual non-reactive Mantoux test or Quantiferon-Gold blood test submitted annually thereafter.

If you have positive results, provide a clear chest X-ray (lab report required). Annually, the TB questionnaire, available on the Certified Background website, must be completed and submitted.

Renewable Requirements
All renewable requirements (CPR, TB testing, Annual Standard Precautions) must be renewed by July 1st annually. They may not expire at any time during the upcoming academic year. If a requirement becomes
due during the semester, it must be renewed before July 1st annually. Therefore, please resubmit the renewable requirements between May 15 and June 30 annually (except for Flu Vaccine which is due October 1 annually).

**Medical Contraindications**
Students with a medical contraindication to any required vaccines must contact Mary Jane Shaw immediately. mshaw@niu.edu

**Failure to comply**
Failure to comply with NIU Nursing Program’s clinical requirements may result in an inability to place the student in a clinical setting, thus preventing the student from completing his/her course of study and resulting in the inability to graduate from the Nursing Program.

**Additional Questions** may be referred to:

Mary Jane Shaw  
Instructor  
NIU Nursing Program  
815-753-6593  
mshaw4@niu.edu

Michelle Boyle  
Chief Clerk, College of Health & Human Sciences  
Wirtz Hall 227F  
Northern Illinois University  
815-753-6041  
815-753-8153 (fax)  
lboyle5@niu.edu
Procedures for Students Admitted PRIOR TO the Fall 2014 Semester

Northern Illinois University
School of Nursing and Health Studies

NURSING GRADUATE STUDENT CLINICAL REQUIREMENT INFORMATION

This is a detailed list of clinical requirements that **ALL** nursing students are required to have on file at the College of Health and Human Sciences. **These requirements are not to be confused with the University's Student Health Service requirements.**

All graduate students will be required to submit proof of clinical requirements to the Chief Clerk in the College office on Admission to the Nursing Program and July 1st annually thereafter before they will be allowed to register for NURS 615, 605 (618), 603, 623 (643), 633 (644), 653 (677), 663 (678), and 673 (679). Seasonal influenza vaccination will be due by October 1st annually.

All clinical requirements must be kept current and remain current throughout the **academic year** (mid-August to mid-May); they may not expire during the academic year. Students who fail to comply will be dropped from the course(s).

You must submit COPIES (not originals) of the following:

1. **A Non-Reactive Two-Step Tuberculin Skin Test:**
   a. This test requires that you receive two separate Mantoux skin tests at least one week apart and no longer than 3 weeks apart.
   b. May submit proof of initial two-step with documented yearly follow ups.
   c. If previously positive, you must submit chest x-ray and/or TB symptom assessment, as well as proof of your positive test. An annual assessment must be performed every year. You can also obtain the blood test Quantiferon Gold or T-Spot ANNUALLY to be in compliance.
   d. May obtain from NIU Health Services if enrolled in on-campus courses or other healthcare provider.

2. **Titers for Rubeola, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella, and Hepatitis B**
   a. A titer is mandatory to document immunity. (Note: Vaccination or history of the disease is necessary to develop immunity.)
   b. All titers must contain the titer value as well as the reference norm.
      i. Rubeola IgG (*quantitative*).
      ii. Mumps IgG (*quantitative*).
      iii. Rubella IgG (*quantitative*).
      iv. Varicella IgG (*quantitative*).
      v. Hepatitis B surface antibody (*quantitative*).
   c. May be obtained at NIU Health Services (at reduced cost) if enrolled in on-campus courses, or other healthcare provider.
   d. If a titer does not demonstrate immunity, further vaccination is necessary. Follow-up titer required for Rubeola, Mumps, Rubella, and Hepatitis B. No follow-up titer is required for Varicella, just documentation of TWO vaccines.
   e. Students must sign waiver if no immunity with follow-up titer.

3. **Tetanus-Diphtheria Booster Tdap**
   a. Must be within the last 10 years.
4. **Annual Influenza Vaccination**
   a. Flu vaccinations are administered on a seasonal schedule. The **DEADLINE to submit proof of flu vaccination is OCTOBER 1 every year.**
   b. Any questions related to medical or religious exemption should be referred to Mary Jane Shaw, mshaw@niu.edu
   c. Students who have not been vaccinated due to medical or religious exemption should be advised that they may be unable to participate in a clinical setting depending upon the rules and policies of the clinical organization – thus resulting in the need to withdraw from the assigned clinical and potentially need to retrack.

5. **Standard Precautions/Universal Precautions Training.**
   a. Training and quiz are available online at the NIU website: [http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/clinicals.shtml](http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/clinicals.shtml). Please see the link for the “New Standards Precautions Quiz (Instructions)” at the bottom of that page.
   b. Follow the “instructions” for printing page 5 and submit it.
   c. Must be **renewed yearly.**

6. **Current CPR Certification**
   a. Exact month/day/year must be noted on card.
   b. American Heart Association Healthcare Provider (BLS) training is the **only** acceptable certification - **renew every 2 years.**

7. **Professional Liability Insurance**
   a. While many employers provide professional liability insurance for employees while they are at work, this coverage may not extend beyond your nursing role in that agency. Students are covered with Professional Liability Insurance to the extent mandated by the clinical sites. This coverage is paid for with student fees when registering for clinical courses.

8. **Evidence of Health Insurance**
   a. Coverage must be continuous. The health insurance photocopy of the membership card, or the paper it is written on, should show the dates of coverage or the date copy is turned in. If there are any changes to your health insurance coverage, you must submit the new information **immediately.**
   b. **If you are utilizing NIU Student Health Insurance, contact the Student Health Insurance office 815-753-0122 to obtain proof of insurance.**

9. **Criminal Background Check**
   a. All NIU Nursing students are required to submit to a criminal background check by the Illinois State Police and FBI prior to their initial clinical experience. A link to the most recent information can be found on the following webpage: [http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/clinicals.shtml](http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/clinicals.shtml).
   b. Criminal background checks must be completed by the dates specified by the School of Nursing and Health Studies and will remain in effect unless: a) clinical agencies determine it necessary to require criminal background checks more frequently, and/or b) a nursing student interrupts his/her program for one semester or longer. In the above cases, it is mandatory for the student to have another criminal background check performed.
   c. **The School of Nursing and Health Studies may not be able to place students in a clinical setting if there are detrimental findings on the criminal background check. As a result, a student will not be able to complete the requirements of the program.**

10. **Drug Screening**
    a. Nursing students are required to have a five-panel drug screen.
    b. May be obtained at the following DeKalb locations: **Kishwaukee Corporate Health**, 1740 Mediterranean Drive, Sycamore, IL 60178 – M thru Th 7:00am-4:30pm, F - 7:00-4:00
Physicians Immediate Care, 1985 DeKalb Avenue Suite 300, DeKalb, IL 60115 - (815) 754-1122; or from any health care agency, however, the drug test MUST follow a “chain of custody” procedure.

c. Please sign a release to have the results FAX-ed to the Chief Clerk in the College of Health and Human Science (815)753-8153 fax or mailed to the address below.

d. The School of Nursing and Health Studies may not be able to place a student in a clinical setting if there are positive findings on the drug screening. As a result, a student will not be able to complete the requirements of the nursing program.

11. Current R.N. License
   a. A copy of your current R.N. license must be on file in the Chief Clerk’s Office.

12. HIPPA Training

   NOTE: Your healthcare employer may have copies of some of these requirements.

   Send Requirements to: Michelle Boyle
   Chief Clerk, College of Health & Human Sciences
   Wirtz Hall 227F
   Northern Illinois University
   815-753-6041 (phone)
   815-753-8153 (fax)
   lboyle5@niu.edu (email)

   For your convenience there are is a locked drop box available outside the Dean’s office in Wirtz 227.
Guidelines for Students in Clinical Practice/Education Settings

In order to safeguard both students and clients in the clinical practice /education settings, it is imperative that students notify faculty or the preceptor of the following:

a. Any recent exposure to a communicable disease, (i.e. chicken pox);
b. Any elevated temperature in the 24 hours prior to going into the clinical practice setting;
c. Any physical condition that might put themselves or others at risk.* (See Policy on disclosure of HIV status)

The instructor will determine whether the student or client would be at risk if the student participates in internship experiences. If the student has a physical condition that will limit him or her in internship activities for an extended period of time, the student's ability to complete the clinical/educational requirements of the course with reasonable modifications will be assessed on an individual basis.

Approved 3/7/94
Reviewed 2/6/95; 2/12/96
Revised 2/12/96

Policy on the Disclosure of HIV Status

If a student chooses to disclose that they are HIV-positive to their instructor, the Illinois AIDS Confidentiality Act authorizes disclosure to "an agent of a health care facility or health care provider only on a need to know basis." "Need to know" is limited to care that involves handling of a needle or other sharp instrument in a body cavity or poorly visualized confined anatomical site.

HIV testing cannot be required of students without written consent (Ill. AIDS Confidentiality Act, Section 4). An exception to HIV testing and disclosure occur if a patient is involved in accidental direct skin or mucous membrane contact with the blood or bodily fluids of a health care worker which could transmit HIV. If the test is positive the patient must be notified. (Sec. 7(b)), Ill. AIDS Confidentiality Act). Both ANA and AMA policy require testing of a healthcare provider in the above situation.

Approved by Standards Committee 2/12/96
Approved by General Faculty 3/18/96

Policy on Refusal to Care for a Patient

Nursing care is to be delivered without prejudice. Refusal to participate in the care of a patient is only appropriate on the grounds of either patient advocacy, moral objection to a specific type of intervention, or significant risk to the health of the student.

Students refusing to care for a patient, will state their objections in writing to their clinical faculty member. If the faculty member deems it necessary, a student may be referred to the Standards Committee.

Approved by Standards Committee 2/12/96
Approved by General Faculty 3/18/96
Uniform Policy

Professional Appearance
Students are required to maintain professional appearance standards during clinical experiences.

Standards:

- Visible tattoos must be concealed, if possible.
- Jewelry and Piercing
  - Jewelry must be limited to one ring and one pair of stud earrings worn in the earlobes.
  - Jewelry must be professional in taste.
  - Jewelry should be non-dangling with earrings no more than ¼ in. diameter and/or length.
  - Body Jewelry (as it relates to body piercing of the nose, tongue, lips and eyebrows) are not appropriate.
- Hair and beards
  - Hair must be clean and well kept. Long hair should be tied back or protected in direct patient care areas.
  - Extreme, unnatural hair colors (green, fluorescent, orange, red, etc) are prohibited.
  - Beards and mustaches must be clean and trimmed. Beard coverings may be required in patient care areas.
  - Face may not be obscured by hair or clothing.
- Fingernails
  - Fingernails should be kept neat with nails no more than ¼” in length, no artificial nails. This includes acrylic and gel artificial nails.
  - Nail polish, if worn, must be consistent with a professional, conservative appearance and not be chipped, cracked or peeled.
- Odors
  - Students should present an appearance of cleanliness and should be especially free of odors that may be offensive to patients and others who may have allergies. Colognes and perfumes should not be used.
  - Odors related to poor personal hygiene must be addressed.

Students are required to wear a clean, well-pressed lab coat and professional attire as specified by the clinical experience. Shoes and shoelaces must be clean.

On any day that students appear for a clinical course in unkempt, unclean or inappropriate attire (e.g. miniskirts, denim clothes, jeans, cords, or sneakers, etc.), they will be dismissed from clinical for the day.

- NIU photo I.D. badge:
  - The photo I.D. badge is provided to you by the School of Nursing and Health Studies.
  - The photo I.D. badge will list your first name and NIU undergraduate students.
  - Photo I.D. are available in the Nursing Main Office, Room 190.
  - Call 815-753-6557 to schedule an appointment to have your picture taken for your photo I.D. badge.
- The Nursing main office is open between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. The office is closed from 12:00 p.m.–1:00 p.m.
- Students who lose their photo I.D. badge will be assessed a replacement fee.
- Your NIU photo ID or clinic issued photo ID must be worn at all times during your internship or clinic time.

- Stethoscope, watch with second hand or a digital watch displaying time with seconds, and a black ball point pen may be required.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, rather a standard for acceptable attire. Students are expected to present a professional image at all times.
Section VI

Standard Precautions

Policy Statements Regarding Protection from Blood-Borne Pathogens

All students enrolled in clinical courses are required to complete an educational program on blood borne pathogens and standard precautions yearly.

Blood-borne pathogens and standard precautions training may be completed in the following ways:

1. Completion of the instruction program at http://www.ehs.okstate.edu/modules/bbp/index.htm or you may also use the NIU Nursing version at http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/resources.shtml - look under General Resources category.

2. Submission of written documentation of training from a clinical agency that includes the following information on agency letterhead: the date of the training, the type of training completed (blood-borne pathogens and standard precautions required), and the signature of the instructor/educational coordinator; or

3. Written documentation that the RN student has taught blood-borne pathogens/standard precautions content. This documentation must be on agency letterhead, signed by the educational coordinator or another appropriate individual, and indicate the date of the last course taught by the RN. The date of the last course/program presented will serve as the expiration date for documentation.

Approved 11/7/94
Reviewed 2/6/95, 4/04
Section VII

Other Nursing Program Academic-Related Policies

Core Performance Standards for the Nursing Programs

All students interested in enrolling and remaining in the nursing programs at NIU must possess the performance component skills necessary to assess a patient’s biopsychosocial needs and to analyze collected data in order to identify patient problems, plan and implement independent and collaborative interventions, and evaluate the care provided and the patient’s responses to care. Specific observation, communication, motor cognitive, psychosocial, and behavioral requirements provide candidates with the ability to carry out the responsibilities of a student nurse providing direct or indirect patient care. A student must, with or without reasonable accommodation, possess these performance component skills upon admission to the School of Nursing and maintain these essential components throughout the program.

MANUAL DEXTERITY – (Activities/Attributes) Use sterile techniques; insert catheters (Foley, NG, IV); perform venipunctures; prepare medications and administer (PO, IM, IV); manipulate small objects (lancet, stopcock); open and close medication containers.

MOBILITY – (Activities/Attributes) Remain at patient’s side for a prolonged period of time for purposes of monitoring and frequent assessments; perform CPR; assist in lifting and moving patients and patient care materials (bed, chair); move independently to and from patient care areas.

PROCESSING PATIENT INFORMATION – (Activities/Attributes) Respond to communication by patients with or without direct view of patient’s face; respond to monitor alarms, emergency signals, call bells from patients, and orders in a rapid and effective manner; accurately assess blood pressures, heart, lung, vascular, and abdominal sounds; accurately read a thermometer; identify cyanosis, absence of respirations, and movements of patients rapidly and accurately; accurately process information on medication containers, physicians’ orders, and monitor and equipment calibrations, printed documents, flow sheets, graphic sheets, medication administration records, and other medical records.

MATH COMPETENCY – (Activities/Attributes) Tell time; use measuring tools (tape measure, scale); add, subtract, multiply, and divide; record numbers; calculate medication dosages (PO, IM, IV) and intravenous solution rates.

EMOTIONAL STABILITY – (Activities/Attributes) Provide emotional support to patients; adapt rapidly to environmental changes and multiple task demands (new admission, patient going to therapy or surgery); maintain adequate concentration and attention in patient care settings; maintain behavioral decorum in stressful situations (avoid inappropriate laughter, jokes, comments).

COGNITIVE PROCESSING – (Activities/Attributes) Transfer knowledge from one situation to another (classroom to patient care); assess patient needs based on understanding and synthesis
of patient information (know co morbidities, complex problems); develop effective care plans based on assessments; prioritize tasks to ensure patient safety and standards of care (administer meds & treatments on time); organize and retain information in basic knowledge and skills areas (frequently administers meds & treatments).

**CRITICAL THINKING** – (Activities/Attributes) Identify cause and effect relationships (religious, ethnic, cultural); sequence information in a manner that is logical and understood by others; make sound clinical judgments and decisions based on standards of nursing care; seek assistance when clinical situation requires a higher level of expertise/experience.

**INTERPERSONAL/COMMUNICATION SKILLS** – (Activities/Attributes) Respect differences in patients; establish and maintain effective working relations with patients and co-workers; teach and provide information in an accurate and effective manner; report critical patient information to other caregivers; convey information to others through graphic, print, and/or electronic media in an accurate, timely, and comprehensible manner.

Revised and approved 2/12/01
Effective Fall 2002; editorial revision 6/16/11

**Policy Regarding Students with Disabilities or Chronic Health Problems**

Resources and services to assist students with disabilities or chronic health problems are available at NIU. Students who would benefit from such services are encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as they arrive on the campus or when a need for such services arises.

They can be contacted at:
Disability Resource Center
Health Services Building, Fourth Floor
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115
Phone: 815-753-1303
Fax: 815-753-9570
Email: drc@niu.edu

The faculty of the graduate nursing programs are willing to make reasonable accommodations in nursing courses for students with documented disabilities or chronic health problems when the faculty are informed of the student's needs.

Approved by Standards Committee 4/8/96
Approved by General Faculty 4/15/96; editorial revision 6/16/11
Policy on Fluency in English Language

Students whose native language is not English must adhere to the policies and procedures for admission to the Graduate School as outlined in the NIU Graduate Catalog under “Examinations Required for Admission/Language Test Requirements (IELTS and TOEFL).”

Approved 5/93; reapproved 9/2011
Reviewed 2/6/95, 11/2006; editorial revision 7/21/12
Nursing 630: Independent Study in Nursing

The purpose of an independent study is to provide students with opportunity to explore an area of interest in nursing in further depth than the normal curriculum would provide. Nursing students who have been admitted into the graduate program and have consent of the graduate nursing program are eligible to enroll.

Students take the initiative in structuring an independent study. It is up to the student to develop an idea and to seek out a faculty member with whom to work. The faculty member helps the student to develop his or her idea into a proposal and supervises the implementation of the proposal.

It takes some time to develop a proposal for an independent study so students should plan accordingly. The following action guidelines may help a student who is interested:

1. Pick up a "Proposal for Independent Study" packet in Room 190.
2. Make arrangements with a graduate nursing faculty member to supervise the independent study.
3. In collaboration with the identified faculty member, complete the packet.
4. Submit the original and two copies of your proposal for signatures of approval to faculty member, the Area Coordinator - Nursing, and the faculty adviser.

After all the signatures are obtained, the reference number is released to the student for registration purposes. This process must be completed by the end of the fourth week of the fall or spring semester, or second week of the summer semester.

Revised 7/15/11

Standardized Grading Policy for the Nursing Programs

A  =  97 – 100%
A-  =  93 – 96%
B+  =  89 – 92%
B   =  85 – 88%
B-  =  81 – 84%
C+  =  77 – 80%
C   =  73 – 76%
C-  =  69 – 72%
D   =  65 – 68%
F   =  0 – 64%

Approved by NURS GFC 4/2012
Policy Regarding Failure in a Clinical or Didactic Course and Program Dismissal for Unprofessional Conduct

Failure in a graduate course and/or program dismissal for unprofessional conduct may result if any of the following occur:

1. Clinical performance that does not meet professional standards* or constitutes unsafe practice.**

2. Classroom, clinical or any other academically-related behavior that does not meet professional standards.****

3. Failure to meet course objectives.

4. Absence in clinical course.

5. Violation of University policies on academic integrity as stated in the graduate catalog.

6. Inaccurate reporting of clinical hours.

* Unprofessional conduct is defined as any nursing action inconsistent with the ANA Code of Ethics or the policies of the Nursing Program.

** Unsafe practice is defined as any nursing action inconsistent with the Illinois Nurse Practice Act or the ANA Standards of Clinical Practice or the policies of the Nursing Program.

*** Sanctions may result from academic dishonesty. This may include, but is not limited to, the following: Plagiarism; cheating; falsification of clinical hours; knowingly supplying false or misleading information to university officials or on official university records; forgery; and alteration or misuse of university documents, records, or identification cards.

**** See General Regulations in the Graduate Catalog as well as “unprofessional conduct” as defined above.
Policy for Dismissal from Graduate Programs in Nursing

Admission into a Graduate Nursing program does not guarantee continuation in the program.

Academic Standing and Cause for Dismissal from the Nursing Programs

Cause for Dismissal:

1. To remain in good academic standing, a graduate student must maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 in all graduate courses required on the student’s program of courses (excluding deficiency courses taken for graduate credit) as well as in all graduate courses taken. Following any academic term at the end of which the cumulative graduate GPA falls below 3.00, the student will be considered on academic probation. Refer to the current Graduate Catalog for more information on academic probation and academic dismissal from the Graduate School (see “Academic Standing”).

2. Nursing students must earn a minimum grade of B in each required course in their program of study.

Any required course in which a grade of lower than a B is earned must be repeated and a grade of B or higher earned prior to progressing in program course work. Students who earn two grades lower than a B in the same course or in any combination of courses will be dismissed from the graduate and certificate programs (see current Graduate Catalog).

3. Furthermore, a recommendation for a graduate nursing student’s dismissal may be made to the Graduate School based on unprofessional conduct or unsafe practice. (i.e., professional integrity issues; See Nursing Graduate Student Handbook “Policy Regarding Failure in a Clinical or Didactic Course” for definitions of unprofessional conduct and unsafe practice)

Standards Committee 4/12/10, Approved APN Committee 4/19/10, Nursing GFC 10-11-10

Procedures for Appealing Allegedly Capricious Course Grades of Graduate-Level Students

Procedures for appealing allegedly capricious course grades found at:
http://www.niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/iii8.shtml

General Guidelines for Addressing Concerns about Nursing Graduate Program Policies and Procedures

Any concerns and recommendations for changes in the academic programs, policies and procedures should be sent to the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies in writing or discussed by telephone/face-to-face appointment with the Director.
Exit Surveys with Graduating Students

Students preparing to graduate will usually be invited to participate in an exit survey with a graduate faculty member within a few weeks prior to the end of the final semester in the program. The primary purpose of the survey is to provide immediate feedback to faculty for use in program evaluation. While these surveys are voluntary, each program graduate is encouraged to provide this feedback.
Section VIII
Fees and Financial Support

Policy Statement for Student Fees

There are additional fees charged to students taking courses in the Nursing program. A portion of the graduate student fees is used for the Graduate Colloquium Program.

1. Materials Fee - Every student who is enrolled in one or more credits of nursing courses is charged a materials fee each semester. These funds support computer resources available for nursing students.

2. Course-related Fees are charged to help cover extra costs involved in producing certain courses (i.e. lab materials, supplies, models). Students will find course-related fees listed by class in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Off-campus course delivery fees are charged for online courses.

Upon receipt of a written request, the Chair of the School of Nursing and Health Studies will write a letter to employers who provide tuition reimbursement to assist the graduate student in getting fees paid, as employers often do not view fees as part of tuition.

Request for Reduction of Fees

Students who are enrolled for courses which require their absence from the NIU DeKalb campus for the entire semester may be eligible to receive a reduction of general student fees charged for on-campus courses. To qualify, students must meet several requirements and submit the request form early in each semester. Details and the form can be found at the Bursar’s office website under “refunds:” http://www.niu.edu/bursar/refunds/reduction.shtml.

Tuition Waivers

Graduate students who are admitted to a graduate program might qualify for tuition waivers. Information is available on the Graduate School website under “Financing your education.”

The graduate internship waiver program will be phased out between Fall 2014 and Summer 2017. The phase-out plan allows students who began or will begin their programs prior to Summer 2013 to be eligible for the waiver for all hours in which they are enrolled through Summer 2017. Students admitted to a program in Summer 2013 or later will be eligible to receive the waiver for up to 9 hours of internship hours through Summer 2017. After Summer 2017, the internship waiver program will cease to exist.

Those who are qualified to receive internship waivers, should complete the form posted on this part of the website and submit it to the nursing program office for validation well in advance of
the start of each semester. After the program signs off on the form, it will be forwarded to the Recruitment Office as noted on the form. You can also find the form here: http://www.chhs.niu.edu/about/scholarships/documents/GraduateWaiver.pdf

**Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate research assistantships and graduate teaching assistantships are available to admitted students. Assistantships are normally awarded to begin in the fall semester but depending on openings may begin spring semester. A graduate teaching assistant assists a faculty member with supervision of undergraduate students either in the simulation lab, or in their initial clinical. A graduate research assistant works with a faculty member in research activities (literature searches, data gathering, data input, etc.).

Graduate assistants receive full tuition waiver and a monthly stipend. Student fees are the responsibility of the individual student. A Teaching Assistant has the opportunity to enroll in NURS 631 (Practicum in Nursing Education). A Research Assistant may enroll in NURS 632 (Practicum in Nursing Research). This enables the student to receive credit for the experience which then appears on the official transcript. These courses, however, do not apply toward the Master’s Degree program of study. A graduate assistantship provides valuable experiences that augment the graduate education.

Sometimes Graduate Assistantship and Tuition Waivers are taxable. Refer to the Human Resource Services FAQ, or contact that office for specific information: http://www.hr.niu.edu/ServiceAreas/Grads/faq.cfm or 815-753-6000.

Revised 6/14/12

**Scholarships**

The Nursing program is generously supported by alumni and other donors through scholarships as well as other types of support. Please refer to the Nursing webpage at http://www.chhs.niu.edu/nursing/scholarships/index.shtml for additional scholarship information.
Section IX

Organizations

Organizations and Committees

The Nursing program offers students the opportunity to take part in a variety of organizations and committees. Graduate students are usually very busy with employment, school and family responsibilities. However, serving on an academic committee may be a valuable experience and is highly encouraged. There are several committees that have graduate students appointed to them as a representative and a spokesperson for student concerns. Such involvement offers students an additional learning experience in leadership and professionalism.

School of Nursing and Health Studies Committees

Student Advisory Committee

This committee works with the Area Coordinators of Nursing and Public Health/Health Education in an advisory capacity to accomplish its functions. The bylaws are as follows:

Functions of the committee:

1. Advise NUHS administration and faculty on matters of direct concern to students.

2. Advise NUHS student representatives to the College of Health and Human Sciences Student Advisory Committee.

3. Appoint student members to the appropriate committees of the School of Nursing and Health Studies (e.g., Nursing Standards, Nursing Curriculum, NUHS General Faculty, NUHS Research).

4. Conduct an election in the Spring Semester for NUHS representative(s) to the College of Health and Human Sciences Student Advisory Committee.

5. Appoint four members for Grade Review Panel.

6. Conduct elections and prepare forms for the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award and the Excellence in Undergraduate Instruction award.

Membership:

The committee will be composed of seven student members selected by secret ballot by the total NUHS student body: 5 undergraduate students: 2 from nursing, 2 from public health, 1 from health education and 2 graduate students: 1 MS in nursing and 1 MPH.
a. The 2 Area Coordinators are ex-officio members.

b. Chair and Secretary of the committee will be elected from among the student members of the committee.

Faculty Committees with Student Representation

**General Faculty:** This group includes all individuals holding academic appointments and Supportive Professional Staff in the School of Nursing and Health Studies and student representatives. This is the group, which makes the final decisions on policy for the School. There is also a general faculty group which makes decisions just for the nursing programs. Both meet on Monday mornings two or three times each semester.

**Advanced Practice Nursing Committee:** This committee includes one graduate student representative who is in an APN specialization (NP or CNS). The committee oversees admission, progression and retention policies for APN specialization programs and addresses curricular and program evaluation issues for these specializations. This group typically meets about one time per month, often on Mondays.

**Curriculum and Evaluation Committee:** This committee includes two student members - one undergraduate and one graduate student. The committee coordinates the implementation of the Nursing program curriculum and all evaluations of the programs. The group reviews courses and changes in the curriculum, etc. They ensure that planned evaluations of the program are conducted, review the results, and make recommendations to the faculty. This group typically meets on Mondays once or twice each month.

**Standards Committee:** This committee includes one undergraduate and one graduate student member. The committee develops and evaluates policies and criteria for admission and for retention in the nursing programs. They also work with awarding of scholarships and develop the student handbooks. Meetings are scheduled as needed but typically occur on Mondays approximately once each month.

**Research Committee:** This committee includes 1 to 3 student representatives. The purpose of this committee is to promote Nursing and Public Health and Health Education (PHHE) research activities of faculty and students and serve as a liaison with state, national and global research organizations. They meet at least one time each semester and as needed to accomplish their tasks.

**SIGMA THETA TAU INTERNATIONAL, BETA OMEGA CHAPTER**

Sigma Theta Tau is the International Honor Society of Nursing. Membership in the organization is an honor conferred on students in undergraduate and graduate programs who have demonstrated excellence in their nursing programs.

Membership is available by invitation through active chapters and assumes acceptance of the purposes of the society and the responsibility to participate in achieving its goals. Graduate
students are required to have completed 1/4 of the program of study and to have achieved a 3.5 GPA on a four-point scale or its equivalent.

The mission of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International is to support the learning, knowledge and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide. The vision of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International is to create a global community of nurses who lead in using knowledge, scholarship, service and learning to improve the health of the world’s people.
Section X

Deadlines

GENERAL INFORMATION

See the current course Schedule online for the following fall and spring semester deadlines:

A. Deadlines

- Schedule of Classes - the schedule of classes is posted on MyNIU in October for the spring semester and in March for the fall semester and summer session. In addition, a Master Course Schedule can be found on the nursing program website; it lists courses to be taught and their format for the next several years. While it is tentative and is sometimes altered, it provides an excellent guideline for students planning their programs of study and sequence of courses.

- Applications for Graduation and Payment of Graduation Fees: Dates are posted on MyNIU and on the Graduate School website. Deadlines are approximately six months prior to anticipated date of graduation. The applications become available approximately 9 months prior to the anticipated date of graduation.

- Drop/Add and Withdrawal from classes deadlines are also found on the Graduate School website for current students as well as in MyNIU.

- Nursing Program Scholarship Application Deadlines - Look for announcements on the nursing program website and announcements made via the School of Nursing and Health Studies community course on Blackboard.

- Additional opportunities: Scholarships, positions, etc. are often announced in classes, distributed by e-mail or on the School of Nursing and Health Studies community site on Blackboard.
Section XI

**Thesis**

A commitment to scientific inquiry on the part of nurses is essential if nursing is to fulfill its professional responsibility for improving the level of health and the quality of life within society. To fulfill this commitment, greater numbers of nurses must be prepared with research skills. Writing a thesis is an important step toward becoming more knowledgeable about the research process and more competent as a clinician.

A thesis is a scholarly contribution to knowledge. The thesis presents research that has been conducted under the supervision of a graduate faculty member approved as the thesis director. The document may not have been published previously, and the research must be successfully defended in an oral examination.

The decision to write a thesis should be made as early as possible after acceptance into the graduate nursing program.

**Selecting a Thesis Adviser and Committee**

A student intending to write a thesis should identify a prospective faculty director for the thesis, who must be willing to serve as thesis director, meet Graduate School qualifications, and be approved by the department. The thesis director and thesis committee will judge the acceptability of the work. A faculty member may decline to serve as director of any particular thesis project, in which case the department will assist the student in seeking a thesis director. If a student, with department approval, changes thesis director, the student may need to undertake additional work, to change research projects, in accordance with the expectations and expertise of the new thesis director.

The committee should include individuals with skills in problem conceptualization, research design, data analysis, and clinical competence to provide a balanced support base for students completing the thesis process. The persons selected as thesis adviser and the committee members must be contacted concerning their willingness to serve in this capacity and their signatures obtained on the theses permit form. Formal approval of the committee must be obtained from the Chair of the School of Nursing and Health Studies.

The thesis committee shall consist of at least three members. The majority of the committee must be regular faculty members at Northern Illinois University and a majority of the committee must be members of the graduate faculty. The chair of the committee must be a graduate faculty member.

**Guidelines for the Thesis Process**

Guidelines for preparing theses are available upon request of interested students.
Section XII

Registration for a National Certification Examination

How to Become Registered for a National Certification Examination for FNP, A-GNP, and A-GCNS Graduates

Detailed instructions for submitting the application to sit for the certification examinations is located on the nursing program website. Look for “Certification Information” located under “M. S. in Nursing” or “Post-Master’s Nursing Certificates.”

You must be enrolled in the appropriate nursing specialization according to the Graduate School in order to obtain a transcript with accurate specialization information on it. Check in MyNIU to ensure that your specialization is listed correctly. If it is not listed correctly, submit a request to change your specialization via the Graduate School website. Refer to the procedure for “Change of Specialization” in this Handbook.

Licensure
Once you have successfully passed the certification examination, you may apply to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation for licensure as an Advanced Practice Nurse. This process may take up to ten weeks.

How to Become Nationally Certified as a Nurse Educator
Students in the Nursing Education Specialization may be eligible to take the Certified Nurse Educator examination offered by the National League for Nursing (NLN) after completion of the program of specialization and after full-time employment as a nurse educator. Additional information is available at the NLN website, http://www.nln.org.