

MEPN Graduate Student Handbook (AY 2024-2025)

PREFACE

Welcome to USC College of Nursing (CON). We are here to help you be successful in your graduate nursing education endeavors. The College of Nursing Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), Master's Entry to Practice Nursing (MEPN) Graduate Student Handbook provides students with current information about curricula, policies, and other vital information concerning the graduate programs in the College. Wherever in this CON MEPN Student Handbook the pronoun "they" is used, the same shall be interpreted to include members of both sexes.

Students must become familiar with the current MEPN Graduate Student Handbook. All graduate students must read and understand the content and are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures stipulated in the Handbook. Students must sign a statement annually attesting to the fact that they have read the current Handbook.

Disclaimer

The policies and procedures described in this handbook are continually revised and updated on the College of Nursing website. The College of Nursing and the University of South Carolina must reserve the right to change policies, fees, curriculum, or any other matters announced in this handbook. Notifications of changes or additions to the MEPN Graduate Student Handbook made throughout the year are posted promptly on the CON website and Virtual Communities in Blackboard (Bb). Students are responsible for checking Bb regularly for all program-related for all program-related updates and handbook updates. If you have questions regarding the contents of this handbook, please get in contact with the [Office of Academic Affairs](#).

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Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Protocol	75
<p>This protocol applies to all USC Columbia campus employees, student employees and all other USC students who have an exposure to a potentially infectious biological material. A potentially infectious material or biological hazard may include an incident involving a microorganism (e.g., bacterial agent, viral agent, and fungal agent), human-derived material, biological toxin, or an incident involving recombinant DNA research. Exposures through sexual contact are not included in this protocol.</p>	
	75

Process 75

The student must report the incident immediately to the supervisor and clinical faculty to authorize medical evaluation. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring students are offered immediate medical care, appropriate diagnostics, and treatment. 75

Percutaneous Exposure (e.g. needle stick, cut, animal bite) – Immediately wash or flush the exposed area with soap and water for 10 minutes. 76

Mucous Membrane Exposure (e.g. eyes, nose, or mouth) – Flush the exposed area with water. If exposure is to the eyes, flush the eyes (holding open) using the eyewash station for 10 minutes. 76

The student or supervisor should immediately notify the appropriate entity within the health care institution where the exposure occurred to initiate testing of the “source patient” for HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C infection. It is important for rapid HIV testing to be completed with results available within a few hours. Each institution has its own procedures for obtaining “source patient” testing, and supervising faculty should know these procedures. If there is uncertainty about whom to contact within the host institution, instructions should be obtained from one or more of the following: 76

Employee health office 76

Charge nurse for the floor or unit where the exposure occurred 76

Infection control nurse 76

Administrative officer of the day 76

Clinic director (for outpatient sites) 76

Once the necessary “source patient” testing has been ordered, the student should seek medical treatment as soon as possible by immediately reporting the injury to the faculty supervisor. 76

Non-life-threatening injuries or illnesses for which medical treatment may be necessary – The faculty supervisor and injured student together will immediately call CompEndium Services (available 24/7) at 877-709-2667. 76

Life-threatening injuries or illnesses – Dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room and contact your supervisor and CompEndium Services as soon as possible. CompEndium will assist in processing and scheduling the student’s work-related injury for treatment and claims handling with USC’s insurance provider. 76

CompEndium will: 76

Direct the student to a medical provider for treatment.	76
Issue a treatment authorization number to the medical provider, which will authorize treatment of the injured student.	76
Provide a CompEndium email address where the student will submit Employee Injury Report Form (81-B) and where the faculty supervisor will submit Supervisor Report of Injury Form (81-C).	77
The student must notify the CON Office of Student Affairs of the incident at 803-777-4889. Leave a message with a return phone number if there is no answer.	77
The student submits Employee Injury Report Form (81-B), and the faculty supervisor submits Supervisor Report of Injury Form (81-C) to the Office of Student Affairs at NURSINQ@mailbox.sc.edu.	77
The Office of Student Affairs Administrative Coordinator forwards both forms to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.	77
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All exposure incidents in clinical agencies and the client-simulated laboratory (CSL) must be reported, investigated, and documented. If an exposure occurs and there is no faculty present, the student must notify the course faculty and the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible.	77
Workers' Compensation covers the following populations who experience a bloodborne pathogen exposure while working or at a clinical setting if appropriate reports are filed:	77
All USC employees and apprenticeship students in the College of Education, Department of Exercise Science, School of Medicine, CON, College of Pharmacy, and College of Social Work.	77
Work study students and graduate assistants who are exposed while on the job.	77
Students who suffer a non-job related or non-clinical related Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure during an enrolled academic session should report to University Health Services for initial evaluation and referral. If closed, students may seek care at the nearest hospital emergency department.	77
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The Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation is responsible for annually reviewing this policy and procedures and its effectiveness and for updating the program as needed. (Reviewed August 2024).	77
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University of South Carolina, College of Nursing Overview

Dean's Welcome

https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/about/messagedean.php

Accreditation

The University of South Carolina (Columbia, Aiken, Beaufort, Upstate, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, Union) is accredited by the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACSCOC\)](#) as a degree-granting institution at the associate, baccalaureate, masters, professional and doctoral levels.

MSN Accreditation

The Master of Science in Nursing Degree programs at the University of South Carolina are accredited by the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education \(https://www.aacnnursing.org/ccne-accreditation\)](#) through 2031. Our programs also meet the standards for American Nurses Association Credentialing Center, National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty, and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's Essentials.

National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) Requirements

Graduates of this program are eligible to apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) to obtain a registered nurse license.

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and State Board of Nursing Regulation Information

Please review SARA and State Board of Nursing Information at https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/academic_programs/accreditation.php. In addition, if a current student is considering relocating to another state after being admitted into the program, the student must contact the program director to discuss how the move may impact their ability to participate in academic courses (distributed learning) and clinical practica (experiential learning) opportunities in a different state. Also, if a current student is working as a travel nurse in another state, the student must contact the program director to discuss how working in another state will impact their ability to participate in academic courses and clinical experiences.

Offices

Dean's Office

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College of Nursing Leadership Team

https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/about/leadership_team.php

University Bulletins and Policies and Procedures

There are several resources available to aid you in meeting your academic and personal goals. Registration at the University of South Carolina assumes the students' acceptance of all published regulations. The academic bulletins are the official documents of record concerning undergraduate and graduate academic programs and regulations. These bulletins are for information purposes only and do not constitute any contractual agreement between a student and the University of South Carolina. The University reserves the right to make changes in curricula, degree requirements, course offerings, or academic regulations at any time when, in the judgment of the faculty, the president, or the Board of Trustees, such changes are in the best interest of the students and the University.

All graduate students are also responsible for the regulations listed below:

2024-2025 Graduate Studies Bulletin

<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/graduate/>

2024-2025 Policies and Regulations

<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/policies-regulations/>

USC Policies and Procedures Manual

<http://www.sc.edu/policies/policiesbydivision.php>

Academic Calendar

- The College of Nursing follows the University Academic Calendar (https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/academic_calendars/index.php) in the Fall and Spring terms.
- The College of Nursing Summer Calendar differs from the traditional University calendar. There are typically three sessions offered each summer. Accelerated courses are typically scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through July. Non-clinical courses are scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through the first of August. Clinical courses are typically scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through mid-August. Registration for summer and fall courses occurs simultaneously during the Advance Registration period in the spring semester.
- Consult the appropriate academic calendar for information regarding the academic year (e.g., semester beginning and ending dates, registration windows, holiday, etc).

USC College of Nursing Strategic Plan

Mission

The University of South Carolina College of Nursing prepare graduates who care, inspire, and lead to advance science, practice, and policy to optimize health for all.

Vision

To be a preeminent College of Nursing that pioneers innovation, leadership, and inclusive excellence, and service with local, national, and global impact.

Values

Diversity, Inclusivity, Commitment, Caring, Integrity, Respect, Professionalism

At USC College of Nursing, we value each student, staff, and faculty. We want everyone to feel welcome, included, and have a sense of belonging. We aim to cultivate and support the values of the College of Nursing: inclusivity, commitment, caring, integrity, respect, diversity, and professionalism. We believe that upholding our values is necessary to achieve academic and institutional excellence. All members of the CON community not only matter, but their unique perspectives are the core of our strength and success.

University of South Carolina Harassment and Discrimination Policies

The University of South Carolina follows the lead of the state and federal government when maintaining the laws and regulations concerning discrimination and harassment. Questions or concerns regarding the University's equal opportunity programs should be directed to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX, 901 Sumter Street, James F. Byrnes Building, Suite 401, Columbia, SC 29201, or 803-777-3854 (Voice), fax 803-777-2296, e-mail: civilrights@mailbox.sc.edu, https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/civil_rights_title_ix/index.php.

Statement of Academic Responsibility

It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina Columbia to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any academic program. Any student who violates this rule or who knowingly assists another to violate this rule shall be subject to discipline.

Academic Integrity

All students at the University of South Carolina College of Nursing must adhere to the following school-wide policies:

Carolinian Creed

We oppose intolerance by promoting integrity within our campus community. Our common values are formed upon the foundation of our creed, which emphasizes openness and civility. https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/our_initiatives/involvement_and_leadership/carolinian_creed/index.php

Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf626.pdf>) outlines students' responsibilities to themselves and the Carolina community.

USC Honor Code

All USC students are responsible for adhering to the Carolinian Creed (https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/our_initiatives/involvement_and_leadership/carolinian_creed/index.php)

Honor Code violations include:

- Plagiarism: "Use of work or ideas without proper acknowledgement of source."
- Cheating: "Improper collaboration or unauthorized assistance on connection with any academic work."

- Cheating: "Using, possessing or distributing the contents of any examination (e.g., unauthorized access to test/quiz information, unauthorized duplication of test/quiz materials) without authorization."
- Falsification: "Misrepresenting or misleading others with respect to academic work."
- Complicity: "Assisting or attempting to assist another in any violation of the Honor Code."

For more detailed information, please review the [USC Policy on Academic Responsibility – The Honor Code \(http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf625.pdf\)](http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf625.pdf).

The [Office of Academic Integrity \(https://www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity/\)](https://www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity/) provides resources to faculty and students for combating and preventing cheating, plagiarism, falsification, and complicity. Be aware that USC faculty are bound to report any violations of the Honor Code to the Office of Academic Integrity.

When a violation of academic integrity occurs:

- Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity decides non-academic (University) sanctions.
- In addition to university sanctions, the academic unit makes decisions about academic (course) sanctions.
- At the College of Nursing, academic penalties range from a 0 (zero) for an assignment to dismissal from the program, depending on the severity of the violation.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

It is important to the CON that any assignment submission is a pure reflection of the student's work and understanding. Unauthorized use of artificial intelligence options to complete academic work jeopardizes the faculty's ability to evaluate the student's understanding of the course content and robs the student of the ability to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter.

Suspensions of unauthorized use of artificial intelligence aids will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity as alleged violations of Cheating, defined as "unauthorized assistance in connection with any academic work" and/or Falsification, which includes "Misrepresenting or misleading others with respect to academic work or misrepresenting facts for an academic advantage."

Student Code of Conduct on Disruptive Activity

The University of South Carolina strives to maintain an educational community that fosters the development of students who are ethical, civil, and responsible persons. Policies that address student conduct can be found at the [Student Conduct and Academic Integrity page](http://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_conduct_and_academic_integrity/index.php) (http://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_conduct_and_academic_integrity/index.php).

As students' progress through the curriculum, they are preparing for transition into professional life. Some behaviors expected in the classroom/clinical setting parallel many behaviors expected in the workplace.

Classroom Expectations

- a. Notify professor when unable to send assignment on time prior to the deadline.
- b. Complete reading all assignments.
- c. Engage in class discussion.
- d. Maintain appropriate and professional demeanor during online class activity.
- e. Refrain from the use of online discussion forums for posting of non-academic material (e.g., advertisements for jobs, products, or services).

Ethics for Nursing

Nursing is a profession, and as such, nursing students are expected to behave ethically. Ethical behavior applies to colleagues, peers, supervisors, subordinates, and clients.

Click <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/ethics/code-of-ethics-for-nurses/> for the complete Code of Ethics for Nurses developed by the American Nurses Association (ANA). The Code of Ethics serves as a guide for ethical behavior in the nursing profession. As such, students should adhere to the Code of Ethics, the Carolinian Creed, USC Code of Conduct, and Honor Code.

Copyright Policy

The Nursing Programs seek to aid enrolled students by offering electronic presentations and recordings of lectures to improve student engagement and to better meet individual learning needs. With the growing use of technology, students and faculty have the responsibility to understand and observe copyright laws including educational fair use guidelines, obtaining written permission, and to follow the corresponding campus University policy.

As supplemental tools, all material found in lectures is owned by the University of South Carolina College of Nursing or its faculty and is protected by United States Copyright laws.

Lecture material is only available to students enrolled in the course where the content is available, and use is not permitted outside the scope of the course. Recorded lectures will only be posted to Blackboard. Material found in the lectures may not be photocopied, screenshot, duplicated or distributed by any student without the express, written permission from the faculty member who created the material. Video, audio, or photographic recordings of course material are prohibited. Recordings, course material, quizzes, tests, and lecture notes may not be reproduced verbatim nor uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. Recordings and course material may not be exchanged nor distributed to a third party for compensation. Recordings and course material may not be used for any purpose other than personal study and may not violate any policies herein. An individual may individually print copies of lecture material solely for personal use under the scope of the course.

Duplication or dissemination of lecture materials without authorized use may violate federal or state law and USC University policies.

Failure to adhere to these policies violates the College of Nursing Professionalism Policy and may result in disciplinary action under university guidelines.

Dispute Resolution

Recognizing that disputes or concerns will arise, USC CON's basic guideline is that any dispute should be resolved at the lowest level possible. Your course instructor(s), advisor, program director, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation, Interim Associate Dean for Access, Belonging, and Community Engagement, and Dean are resources available to you. See [Student Grievance Policy](#) or [Student Petition Policy](#).

Academic Programs

Graduate Nursing Program Requirements

Individual program policies may supersede this policy due to national accreditation regulations. Check with your Program Director to determine any additional requirements:

Program of Study

The Graduate School Master's Program of Study (MPOS) is a binding agreement between The Graduate School and the student that must be on file and approved before graduation. A program of study is a list of courses that satisfy degree requirements and is one of the degree audit documents. Students must follow courses in order and as outlined in the program of study. Modification to the MPOS may be made only in consultation with the appropriate Program Director(s). Before beginning any change(s), the change(s) must be submitted to The Graduate School on the Program of Study

Adjustment Form (GS-43 (POSA)), which is submitted by the graduate student advisor. Forms are found at **Graduate School Forms Library**.

(https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/forms_library/index.php)

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Requirements

MSN Overview

Seven tracks are offered Seven tracks are offered at the master's degree level: Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP), Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP), Healthcare Leadership (HL), Nursing Education (NE), Nursing Informatics (NI), and Master's Entry to Practice Nursing (MEPN). Each program of graduate degree study is a distinct and sequential course plan leading to theoretical and clinical expertise within the specialty. Foundational courses include nursing theory, research methodology, and statistics. A detailed description of the courses required in each major and emphasis area is found in the **USC Graduate Studies Bulletin**.

(https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/academic_bulletin/index.php).

The MEPN program is an entry into practice master's degree that provides students with a previously earned bachelor's degree the opportunity to gain education and experience as a direct care provider of nursing in a variety of settings. The degree also provides an advantage to adult learners choosing nursing as a second career allowing them to become a nurse in a shorter amount of time and to earn a higher degree as opposed to a second baccalaureate degree.

MSN Learning Outcomes

1. Apply theoretical knowledge to the practice of advanced nursing roles.
2. Utilize evidence to address population health problems.
3. Demonstrate professionalism at the advanced nursing level in the clinical setting.
4. Pursue quality, effectiveness, and innovation in shared leadership of interprofessional health teams.

MSN Program of Study

In developing the program of study, the following criteria will apply for the Master of Science in Nursing:

- The course listing will depend on the emphasis.

- All clinical hours within the program of study must be completed in the role area and with the population specific to the degree sought.
- Work hours may not be substituted for or counted towards completing required clinical hours.
- The number of clinical hours taken at the University of South Carolina College of Nursing will be consistent with the certification requirements in the specialty area specific to the degree sought.
- Once the program of study has been developed in consultation with the graduate advisor and program director, it will be reviewed with the applicant and guide the completion of the selected program.

MSN Degree Requirements

Requirements for earning the MSN degree include:

1. Completion of an approved program of study.
2. Completion of an applied research course, **NURS 791**.
3. Completion of required clinical hours specific to the degree.
4. A GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) on all courses attempted for graduate credit and all courses numbered 700 and above.
5. A GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) on all courses on the approved program of study.
6. Passing a comprehensive assessment during the last semester of the program.

MSN Time Limitations

MSN students are expected to complete their program of study in 4 years or less, beginning with the initial graduate course following matriculation. Additionally, when courses taken at the University are beyond The Graduate School's six-year limit, the course must be revalidated to be applied toward the degree. For more information, please refer to the Graduate School Bulletin Academic Regulations section on [Revalidation of Out of Date Courses](#). Course work taken at other institutions cannot be revalidated.

MSN Research Requirements

Candidates for an MSN degree must complete research activities consistent with program requirements. MEPN students enroll in NURS 791 Seminar in Clinical Nursing Research (3 credits).

MSN Comprehensive Examination Policy

MSN Graduate Nursing students must complete a comprehensive exam as required by the Graduate School and College of Nursing before graduating. Students will be allowed three attempts to pass the MSN Comprehensive Exam. If a student is unsuccessful after the first or second attempt, they may be required to schedule a meeting with the program director to discuss their results and preparation plan. A student will not be allowed to graduate if they are unsuccessful on the MSN Comprehensive exam after three attempts.

The student will be required to enroll in an independent study course for remediation and successful completion of the MSN Comprehensive exam. (Approved by MSN Council 11.22.2020)

National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) Requirements

Graduates of this program are eligible to apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) to obtain a registered nurse license.

Academic Policies and Procedures

The policies and procedures listed should not be viewed as a replacement for the [2024-2025 Graduate Studies Bulletin](#). As appropriate, the graduate programs within the CON may develop their own policies and procedures to augment the Graduate Studies Bulletin.

Organization of this Section

Information relevant to all programs is included in all handbooks, supplemented by program specific information. Wherever possible, students are also referred to electronic references via hyperlinks.

Confidentiality and Release of Student Records

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as amended, sets forth requirements regarding the privacy of student records and affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. A full explanation is available on the [Office of the University Registrar website](#).

Core Performance Standards

The USC College of Nursing sets forth its essential eligibility requirements for its nursing program by citing the core performance standards. The standards describe requirements in six dimensions of ability/performance (see below). An example would be if a student's condition requires that they use a crutch, walker, cane, or arm cast, they will not be allowed to participate in clinical activity until the student submits a statement from their provider of care stating they may resume all activities without any assistive devices.

Core Performance Standards

Standard 1. Critical Thinking and Related Mental Abilities: Must have critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment. Examples of necessary functional

abilities associated with this standard include (not an all-inclusive list): Has the ability to interpret, investigate, communicate, and comprehend complex situations; identify cause and effect relative to clinical situations under varying degrees of stress; must be able to read and comprehend detailed charts, reports, journal articles, books, etc.; and capable of performing all arithmetic functions (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, ratios, and simple algebraic equations).

Standard 2. Communication and Interpersonal Abilities: Must be able to read, write, speak, and comprehend English with sufficient skill to communicate effectively verbally and non-verbally. Must have interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Has the ability to establish rapport with clients and their families, peers, agency personnel, and faculty; explain treatment procedures, initiate health teaching; and document and interpret nursing actions and client responses.

Standard 3. Physical Activities: Must have physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces with gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Able to move around a client's room, work spaces, treatment areas and administer CPR; calibrate and use equipment; position and transfer clients; capable of pushing up to 200 pounds independently; capable of reaching 18 inches above head without the use of mechanical devices to elevate themselves; capable of sitting, standing, walking for extended periods of time; experience no limitations when bending, stooping, sitting, standing, walking (i.e. uses no mechanical devices to assist themselves which would impede the safety of a client), ability to move to and respond to an emergency situation in a timely manner, and able to document in a clear, legible manner.

Standard 4. Hearing: Auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Able to hear auscultatory sounds, monitor alarms and emergency signals; able to tolerate loud noises for extended periods of time. Assistive devices must correct hearing to this degree and must always be worn during practicums.

Standard 5. Visual: Must have the visual ability sufficient for observation, assessment, and intervention necessary for nursing care. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Observe client response, accurately read equipment, gauges, and monitors, vision correctable to 20/40, normal depth perception, and ability to distinguish colors and ability to tolerate offensive visual situations.

Standard 6. Smell: Smelling ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Having ability to differentiate between various types of smells, and ability to tolerate offensive odors.

*Standards may be changed at any time.

**For any injury or illness that occurs while enrolled in the CON, please refer to [Medical Clearance for Absences from Class Due to Injury or Illness](#) or [Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Protocol](#)

Student Grievance Policy

Overview

For nonacademic issues, see [STAF 6.27, Student Grievance Policy, Non-Academic](#). For academic issues refer to both [STAF 6.30, Academic Grievance Policy](#) and the College of Nursing policy below.

The graduate student academic grievance policy describes the channel of resolution used in the College of Nursing to resolve students' academic issues or complaints. The channel requires that the student seek resolution with the faculty member alleged to have caused the problem, and if not resolved, the student should initiate resolution through a defined set of procedures.

Students are encouraged to meet with their course faculty if they have academic problems. Further procedures for the resolution of differences are outlined in the Academic Grievance Policy of the current USC Policies and Procedures Manual and this College of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook. Contact the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in the College of Nursing for assistance.

Graduate Student Grievance Policy - Academic

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGE OF NURSING

GRADUATE STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY – ACADEMIC

The purpose of this policy is to inform students of their rights and responsibilities regarding the academic issues cited below.

1. Protection of freedom of expression. Students should be free to take reasoned exceptions to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment

about matters of opinion. They are responsible, however, for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

2. Protection against improper academic evaluation. Students should have protection, through orderly procedures, against prejudice or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

3. Protection against improper disclosure. Information about student views, beliefs, and political associations which professors acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisors, and counselors should be considered as confidential. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. Judgments about a student's ability and character may be disclosed under appropriate circumstances, normally with the knowledge and consent of the student.

Student Grievance Process

If a student perceives that any of the protections described above have been violated, the student should initiate resolution through the following channels and in the sequence indicated.

1. Discuss the issue with the faculty member involved in the alleged violation. The discussion must take place within 30 calendar days after the end of the semester during which the alleged incident occurred. If the complaint is not resolved with the faculty involved, then go to the next step.

2. Notify the Coordinator of Access, Belonging and Community Engagement, who will explain the grievance policy and the student's rights and responsibilities. The Coordinator of Access, Belonging and Community Engagement will assist the student in completing a written narrative describing the alleged violation of the protections described above. The narrative must contain the nature of the problem or complaint, reasonable evidence to support the case, background material, and a description of what has been done to resolve the problem.

3. Meet with the Interim Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and Community Engagement and submit the written narrative describing the alleged violation. The written narrative must be submitted no later than one semester after the alleged violation has occurred. The Interim Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and Community Engagement will send to the student a written response within 10 regular working days following the meeting. If, after receiving the Interim Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and Community Engagement response, the complaint is not resolved to the aggrieved student's satisfaction, the student must notify the Interim Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and Community Engagement within 10 working days of receiving the letter and request a grievance hearing. The Interim Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and

Community Engagement will appoint an Ad Hoc Grievance Committee of four faculty members, one of whom will serve as chair, and three students to conduct the grievance hearing. The grievance hearing will be held within 10 regular working days of the student's request. The Interim Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and Community Engagement will distribute the written narrative of the student's grievance to the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee and the faculty alleged to have caused the violation at the time of appointment to the Ad Hoc Committee. The Coordinator of Student Services will also receive a copy of the grievance.

4. Attend the grievance hearing and present the alleged violation(s) to the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee and answer questions. The faculty member(s) who is alleged to have caused the grievance has the right to be present during all presentations of evidence to the Committee. The student and the faculty member may call witnesses. However, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee and the Faculty Chair must be notified in writing at least 24 hours before the hearing of the names of all witnesses and the reason each witness has been called.

5. It is the responsibility of the student and the faculty member, respectively, to arrange for the appearance of witnesses. The Interim Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and Community Engagement may not attend the grievance hearing.

6. The Ad Hoc Grievance Committee must schedule a hearing; inform the faculty involved in writing and schedule their appearances at the hearing; maintain accurate, confidential records of the case; conduct the hearing in a fair and impartial manner; and inform the student and the faculty member(s) of the decision within two regular working days of the hearing.

Appeal

Graduate students may file an appeal of the decision of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee to the Dean of the College of Nursing within ten days of receipt of the finding of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee. The appeal must be filed on grounds that cite procedural error that results in a bias decision; new evidence; or penalty imposed that is not appropriate to the violation. If the Dean finds merit in any of the above claims, the Dean will appoint a new Ad Hoc Grievance Committee who will conduct a new grievance hearing. If the Dean does not find merit to student claims, the finding of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee will be upheld.

Graduate students may appeal decisions to the Graduate School. Appeals accepted by the Graduate School for consideration of reversal or modification of the Departmental decision are those with one or more of the following cited as grounds: inequitable application of regulations, bias, conflict with regulations, or extenuating circumstance. See current Graduate Bulletin for additional information.

A faculty member who feels aggrieved because of student grievance proceedings has the right to appear before the University Faculty Grievance Committee and present their case to the Committee. The process is described in the Faculty Manual.

*Policy may be changed at anytime

Student Petition Policy

Overview

Students who feel they are entitled to relief from or deviation in the academic regulations of the University or the College of Nursing should apply through the petition process of the Student Petitions Committee of the College.

The purview of the Student Petitions Committee is to address student petitions, in accordance with College and University guidelines. Students will receive an e-mail notification within 24 hours followed by a letter informing them of the Committee's decision and outlining the required course of action. A copy will be sent to the student's advisor and Program Director. All matters of academic discipline are acted upon through the Student Petitions Committee of the College of Nursing.

Meetings

The Student Petitions Committee meets at least three times a year at the close of the fall, spring, and summer semesters, and as needed, to rule on specific academic problems.

Petition Process

A student must petition the committee in writing, describing the situation, and may be asked to present their case at the committee meeting. The petition form is obtained from and submitted to the Coordinator of Access, Belonging and Community Engagement. A student may submit a petition for the following reasons. This list is not all inclusive.

- Continuance of Probation Status (Institutional GPA below 3.000 as required by the terms of your probationary semester)
- Waiver of undergraduate rule - inability to continue in College of Nursing if 2 or more below "C" grades in required science and/or nursing courses.
- Waiver of undergraduate rule – a student may attempt each NURS course twice in the undergraduate program and a grade of W (withdrawal) in any undergraduate course will constitute an attempt.

A student should explain any extenuating circumstances - whatever they might be - i.e., finances, anxiety, family, illness, etc. that caused you to not be successful, and present a plan for success if allowed to continue in the program. Please attach supporting documentation if available.

Course or Clinical Failure

If a required course is failed, it must be repeated at the next available offering and a satisfactory grade must be achieved. The repeated course may not be taken with the Pass/Fail Option. Any courses for which the failed course is a prerequisite may not be taken until a satisfactory grade in the prerequisite course has been achieved. However, the failing grade remains on the transcript even though the student has repeated the course and obtained a passing grade or above. The failing grade is still calculated into the cumulative GPA.

Failure to earn a satisfactory evaluation in the clinical component inclusive of the faculty evaluation will result in a course failure regardless of other grades earned in the course. Clinical failure may occur at any time during the semester. Students will receive a **D+**, **D** or **F** in a clinical course if they fail to meet objectives or if they are removed from the clinical setting for unsafe practice or unprofessional activities at any point during the course. Violation(s) of the Nurse Practice Act will be reported to the Board of Nursing.

Failure to achieve a **C** or greater will result in repeating the entire course including clinical hours. A student who is failing a clinical course for unsafe practice may not withdraw from the course. In the event of a failure for unsafe clinical practice, the BSN Program Director will define the conditions under which the student may repeat the course.

CON Graduate Course Progression Policy

- Any required, NURS or ITEC course on the student's program of study must receive a grade of **B** or better. If a grade lower than **B** is earned, this course must be repeated.
- All students must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA.
- Any student receiving two (2) grades of **C+** or lower in the same NURS or ITEC course or in any two NURS or ITEC courses will be dismissed from the College of Nursing.
- Any non-NURS or non-ITEC elective or contributing course must receive a grade of **C** or better.

CON Graduate Course Attempt Policy

- A student may attempt any NURS course twice in the graduate program.
- A grade of **W** (withdrawal) in any graduate course will constitute an attempt.
- If an attempt results in a course failure, the second failure will lead to dismissal from the College of Nursing See the CON Graduate Course Progression Policy above.

ATI Exams Policy

The ATI exam will be administered during the course semester or during the final exam week. Exam policies apply to the ATI exam. The ATI is worth 10% of the course grade based on the ATI addendum found in the student handbook and will be calculated into the final course average.

The recorded grade for the ATI will be attained in the following manner:

- A student scoring in Proficiency Level 3 will earn 6 points out of 10 points available
- A student scoring in Proficiency Level 2 will earn 5 points out of 10 points available
- A student scoring in Proficiency Level 1 will earn 4 points out of 10 points available.
- A student scoring in below Proficiency Level 1 will earn 3 points out of 10 points available

Students should refer to the ATI addendum found in the student handbook for full details about how to attain points to reach the total 10 points possible, which includes completion of practice tests, focused reviews, learning templates, and remediation.

ATI may test material not presented in class. Therefore, students are responsible for any and all information presented in the ATI Review Module Manual.

Clinical Courses (713, 723, 716, 729, 726, 730)

ATI Scoring Policy

ATI Points Table		
Item	Possible Points	Earned Points
Completed Practice A Test	0.5 points	
Completed Practice A Test Remediation	0.5 points	

Completed Practice B Test	0.5 points	
Completed Practice B Test Remediation	0.5 points	
Level 3 Scored	6 points	
Level 2 Scored	5 points	
Level 1 Scored	4 points	
Below Level 1 Scored	3 points	
Completed Post-ATI Proctored Exam Remediation	2 points	
Total Points Earned	Points out of 10	___/10

ATI Practice Test Policy:

- Open practice tests 2 weeks prior to the scheduled ATI exam
- Practice tests will have 48 hours between attempts
- After completing the first attempt of Practice Test A
 - Students should complete a 1-hour focused review and complete 2 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest major content areas of student’s choosing. A remediation quiz will be generated when Major Content Area’s that include 5 or more items and a score of less than 75% is earned
- After completing the first attempt of Practice Test B
 - Students should complete a 1-hour focused review and complete 2 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest major content areas of student’s choosing. A remediation quiz will be generated when Major Content Area’s that include 5 or more items and a score of less than 75% is earned
- Students should submit the following to each course LMS site:
 - Practice Test A transcript
 - Practice Test A focused review (1-hour)

- 2 handwritten Active Learning Templates based on lowest major content areas of student's choosing from Practice Test A
- Practice Test B transcript
- Practice Test B focused review (1-hour)
- 2 handwritten Active Learning Templates based on lowest major content areas of student's choosing from Practice Test A
- ****For NURS 723: A pre-test will at the beginning of semester for baseline assessment****

Proctored ATI Exam Scheduling Policy:

- No retakes
- Students should complete the Proctored ATI Exam during one of the following:
 1. Last week of the semester
 2. During finals week, but the ATI exam must be scheduled prior to the final exam in the course

Proctored ATI Remediation Policy:

- Remediation will be due within 72 hours of completing the Proctored ATI exam
 1. Student scoring a **Level 3 will be required to complete** a 1-hour focused review, complete 2 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest Major Content Areas of student's choosing
 2. Student scoring a **Level 2 will be required to complete** a 2-hour focused review, complete 3 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest Major Content Areas of student's choosing
 3. Student scoring a **Level 1 will be required to complete** a 3-hour focused review, complete 4 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest Major Content Areas of student's choosing
 4. Student scoring a **Below Level 1 will be required to complete** a 4-hour focused review, complete 5 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest Major Content Areas of student's choosing

ATI Policy for NURS 751 only

ATI Predictor Grading: (This policy is specific to 751) The grade in the course will be a combination of earned points for Level on Pre- and Post-Predictor and earned points for timely completion of Focused Review. Out of 10 points available, students will earn 6 to 8 points for their highest level on the Comprehensive ATI- whichever a student earns a higher level on, the Pre-Predictor or Post-Predictor Level, will be the recorded 6 to 8 points. These max 8 points can increase with a higher Post-Predictor than Pre-Predictor but will not decrease if the student earns a lower Post-Predictor level. Levels for this exam are based on ATI's levels for the "percent chance of passing NCLEX" score.

Regardless of Level earned, all students will complete focused review to strengthen areas for continued growth after both the Pre-Predictor (1 point of the 10 potential max) and Post- Predictor (1 point of the 10 potential max). Focused Review (time spent in review-based on level earned-plus 2 templates) must be completed as part of successful completion for this mandatory course component. Proof of each Focused Review must be turned in fully complete (hours on review based on level earned for that predictor attempt and 2 templates) and on time to earn 1 point of the 10 max points (1 point for Pre-Predictor review; 1 point for Post- Predictor review). Focused Review that is turned in late without extenuating circumstances will incur a deduction (see Late Assignment Policy). Focused review that is incomplete or not fully addressing requirement will incur a deduction.

ATI SCORING TABLE & EXAMPLES

ATI PRELIMINARY PREDICTOR EXAM				ATI POST PREDICTOR EXAM				Highest Number of Total Points Possible
Level Achieved	Points Earned	Required Focused Review After the Preliminary Predictor Exam	Points Earned for Focused Review Completion	Level Achieved	Points Earned (*Student keeps their best score from Column A or B)	Required Focused Review After the Post Predictor Exam	Points Earned for Focused Review Completion	
	*A				*B			
Level 3 (95% or higher chance of passing NCLEX)	8	1 hour & 2 templates	1	Level 3 (95% or higher chance of passing NCLEX)	8	1 hour & 2 templates	1	10
Level 2 (90-94% chance of passing NCLEX)	7	2 hours & 2 templates	1	Level 2 (90-94% chance of passing NCLEX)	7	2 hours & 2 templates	1	9
Level 1 (85-89% chance of passing NCLEX)	6.5	3 hours & 2 templates	1	Level 1 (85-89% chance of passing NCLEX)	6.5	3 hours & 2 templates	1	8.5
Below Level 1 (84% or lower chance of passing NCLEX)	6	4 hours & 2 templates	1	Below Level 1 (84% or lower chance of passing NCLEX)	6	4 hours & 2 templates	1	8

Course or Clinical Failure

If a required course is failed, it must be repeated at the next available offering and a satisfactory grade must be achieved. The repeated course may not be taken with the Pass/Fail Option. Any courses for which the failed course is a prerequisite may not be taken until a satisfactory grade in the prerequisite course has been achieved. However, the failing grade remains on the transcript even though the student has repeated the course and obtained a passing grade. The failing grade is still calculated into the cumulative GPA.

Failure to earn a satisfactory evaluation in the clinical component inclusive of the faculty evaluation will result in a course failure regardless of other grades earned in the course. Clinical failure may occur at any time during the semester. Students will receive a **D+, D or F** in a clinical course if they fail to meet objectives or if they are removed from the clinical setting for unsafe practice or unprofessional activities at any point during the course. Violation(s) of the Nurse Practice Act will be reported to the Board of Nursing.

Failure to achieve a **B** or greater will result in repeating the entire course including clinical hours. A student who is failing a clinical course for unsafe practice may not withdraw from the course. In the event of a failure for unsafe clinical practice, the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation will define the conditions under which the student may repeat the course.

STAR Counseling Form

The STAR Counseling form will be used when students do not meet mandatory requirements set forth by the College of Nursing. The faculty will provide formal documentation to students who exhibit unprofessional behavior or unsafe practices. This formal documentation will be in the form of a “STAR Counselling Form” that references the student handbook and the exact standard the student failed to display in their course or clinical practice. The faculty will use the STAR Counselling Form during the meeting (in-person or virtual) between the faculty and student. Both student and faculty will sign the document and the student will receive a copy. This “STAR Counselling Form” will be maintained in the student’s permanent file in the CON from semester to semester regardless of the student’s status. The STAR Counseling does not prevent the faculty from reporting students to the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Office.

Graduate Learning Contract

Graduate students may also require guidance on professional behavior or clinical remediation. A graduate learning contract may be developed by the course faculty in conjunction with the program director or graduate director. The learning contract will outline the behavior or clinical skills in need of improvement, an action plan and timeline for improvement as well as consequences if improvements are not achieved.

Special Enrollment Status (Z Status)

The dean of The Graduate School, under certain circumstances, may certify that a student’s full-time enrollment is less than the normal requirement of 9 hours for graduate students or 6 hours for students serving as graduate assistants. This is known as Z-Status. Students seeking an exception to minimum enrollment requirements (Z-Status) should submit a written request to the dean of The Graduate School with acceptable justification from the student’s academic advisor or the graduate director of the academic program. International students must also submit the approved Exemption from Full-time Enrollment form from International Programs for Students.

For a student, whose need for under-enrollment results from an internship, practicum, or field experience required by the graduate program, a justification indicating the term requested and the nature of the experience should be submitted in a written memo to the dean of The Graduate School by the student's academic advisor or the program's graduate director.

Students nearing completion of a doctoral degree requiring a dissertation may be granted special enrollment status and certified as half-time or full-time if the student has completed course work required for the degree except dissertation preparation (899). Eligibility requires verification of three conditions by the student's academic advisor or program graduate director. The memo requesting Z-status must indicate that:

1. All course work on the program of study has been completed except for dissertation preparation (899).
2. The student is working on the dissertation full-time, or if applicable, at least half-time; and
3. The student is not employed outside their graduate assistantship or, if applicable, employed no more than half-time if not on a graduate assistantship.

A Z-status request for under-enrollment privilege must be term-specific and is limited to two terms. Z-status for under-enrollment privilege may be extended beyond two terms with the approval of and justification from the academic unit and with the approval of the dean of The Graduate School.

Students who request exemption from full-time enrollment for financial aid purposes must submit the Special Academic Enrollment Release form (F 6.2) from the Office of Financial Aid.

Family Leave (Z Status)

A graduate student who is the primary child-care provider is eligible to take a one major term of family leave from graduate study the major term during or following the event for the birth of a child or adoption of a child less than six (6) years old. The graduate student taking family leave will receive a one-year extension of all academic responsibilities, including time to degree, removal of incomplete grades, and course in-date time. During family leave, the graduate student will be on special enrollment (Z-status) status and must have health coverage. The student may waive out of university-sponsored health insurance if covered by other insurance or may elect to continue enrollment in the University-sponsored student health insurance plan. The student is responsible for submitting required waivers and/or for contacting the student health insurance contractor directly to enroll in the health insurance program and for paying premiums by the deadline. Students should be aware that a graduate assistantship position or other financial support may not be available upon return from family leave.

Note: While this policy does not mandate that programs continue financial support during family leave and/or guarantee student support or resumption of an assistantship after returning from family leave, programs are strongly encouraged to do so whenever possible. For process information view Graduate Studies Bulletin, [Family Leave \(Z-status\)](#) .

Leave of Absence or Inactive Status

A student taking one or more semesters off from course work will need to reactivate degree-seeking enrollment privileges. Any student wanting to return after a semester off should check with their graduate student advisor for the appropriate application deadlines. The Program Director and/or Admission Committee will review the application and determine the semester of return based on the student's revised program of study. A new background check, drug screen, and proof of current unencumbered RN license will be required upon re-enrollment. Additional documents may be required depending on the length of leave, e.g., updated goal statement. Visit [Update Application or Admission Status](#) for more information.

MEPN. students must contact their program director and/or graduate advisor if taking one or more semesters off from course work.

Withdrawal from Course and/or University

A student may attempt a specific graduate course twice in the graduate program. An attempt is any grade or **W** or **WF** received in a course. Each MSN course may only be attempted twice.

Students can drop a course or withdraw with a grade of **W** or **WF** via SSC. Deadlines for dropping a course without receiving a **W** and **WF**, as well as refund dates, are determined by the part of term to which a course is attached. Every part of term during a semester has a drop/add deadline.

Withdrawals are defined by the time in the semester you wish to withdraw. There are both academic and financial implications associated with the date you drop your course(s). Should you wish to withdraw from a course with a grade of **W** or **WF**, a grade of **W** or **WF** will be recorded on your transcript. A grade of **W** will not be calculated in your GPA but will be recorded on your permanent record. Courses dropped after the **WF** deadline will be recorded as a **WF** on your permanent record. The grade of **WF** is treated as an **F** in the calculation of your GPA. The **WF** deadline will vary based on the part of term for your class found in SSC. Prior to withdrawing, you are encouraged to view your Concise Student Schedule located on the Registration tab of the Student section found in SSC to identify your part of term, speak with a counselor at the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships for questions regarding how dropping some or all your courses will impact your aid (e.g., federal, and private loans, grants, scholarships, special status, etc.).

A student who wishes to drop a course for medical reasons or other acceptable cause after the session penalty date specified on the Academic Calendar for that term (last day to receive a **W**), may petition for assignment of **W** by submitting a Request for Assignment of **W** for Extenuating Circumstances form (AS-122A) available from the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs with the appropriate documentation of circumstances, (e.g., a letter from a physician or health care provider). This form is available from the AD for Student Affairs or the Director of Graduate Student Services. The petition requires the approval of the student's graduate director, the instructor of each course, and the dean of The Graduate School. A request for partial reduction (rather than complete) withdrawal for extenuating circumstances must include evidence (e.g., a written statement from a physician, counselor, or other qualified professional; or other documentation of extenuating circumstances) that a reduction in, rather than complete withdrawal from, student course work is appropriate. Students must be aware that liability for repayment of student loans and other financial obligations may apply. Note: **W** or **WF** does count as an attempt of the course. Only two attempts per course are permitted.

For information about tuition refunds, please contact the [Bursar's Office](#).

Revalidation of Outdated Courses

Students enrolled in a master's or certificate program at USC may, with permission of the academic program, request revalidation of USC graduate courses over six years old for inclusion on the master's program of study. Each academic unit will determine whether a course is appropriate for revalidation. All instructions for revalidation must be followed and the Permit for Revalidation Examination ([PRE](#)) form must be completed and submitted to the dean of The Graduate School for approval prior to revalidation. Proof of payment of revalidation fees must be submitted with the Permit for Revalidation Examination form.

- Revalidation of a course requires that the student demonstrate current knowledge of the course content by a faculty member who currently is teaching or has taught the course.
- Core, foundation, and clinical courses leading to nurse practitioner preparation cannot be re-validated. These courses must be repeated.

The College of Nursing Program Director recommends approval to the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation, who then sends the request to The Graduate School for approval. A per credit hour fee must be paid to the Bursar's Office before revalidation can occur, and a receipt must accompany the Permit for Revalidation Examination form for approvals. It is the student's responsibility to track the Permit for Revalidation Examination form through the approval process, and to obtain the faculty member's signature upon completion of revalidation requirements. The completed form must then be submitted to the appropriate College of Nursing graduate advisor for filing and forwarding to The Graduate School.

Note: Course work taken at other institutions may not be revalidated.

Independent Study Courses

The purpose of an independent study is to allow the student to pursue an area of academic interest not covered by the regular course structure. Students seeking to enroll in an independent study course should work with a faculty member willing to serve as Instructor of Record. Prior to enrolling in the course, the student and faculty member will meet to develop the learning objectives and course outcomes. A syllabus is required to be completed and approved.

Prior to enrolling in a graduate independent study course, a student must complete a graduate Independent Study Contract form (**G-ISC**). The approval of the instructor, advisor, and the graduate director of the program is required. Students send an approved copy of the **G-ISC** to the Office of the University Registrar before registering for the course. Students enrolled in the MSN, CGS, or DNP programs may not enroll for nursing independent study courses on a pass/fail basis.

Note: Not more than 6 hours of independent study may be used on a master's program of study.

Registration for Independent Study

The Graduate School Independent Study Contract form (**G-ISC**) is required for any graded, for-credit course in which the student is doing independent academic work. This contract is to contain the following information:

- Course description should give insight into the content to be covered within one semester or part of the semester.
- List of Tasks should include 1) a brief description of each task and how it will be assessed, 2) an estimate of when it will be due or accomplished, and 3) the weighted contribution toward a final grade, preferably expressed as a percentage. The total of all the tasks should be 100 percent.
- Grading Scale should indicate the percentage ranges for each grade and must include an **A** and an **F**. Indicating the full range of grade possibilities is most desirable. For example: **A** = 90–100%; **B+** = 87-89.99%; **B** = 80–86.99%; **C+** = 77-79.99%; **C** = 70–76.99%; **D+** = 67-69.99%; **D** = 60-66.99%; **F** = 0-59.99%.

The course faculty and graduate director must approve this form. The G-ISC form and syllabus should be first submitted to the graduate advisor prior to registration.

Attendance Policies

University and College Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all regular class meetings. Unsatisfactory class attendance may be considered adequate reason by the instructor for requesting the student to withdraw from a course. Any special circumstances must be discussed with the course faculty prior to the start of the semester.

University and College Attendance Policy for Online Graduate Courses

Students are expected to log into the course at least two (2) times weekly to read announcements, access course content in Course Weekly Guides, participate in interactive online learning activities. Unsatisfactory class attendance may be considered adequate reason by the instructor for requesting the student to withdraw from the course.

Simulation Attendance Policy

On-Site Simulation Experience is mandatory. Failure to attend the On-Site Simulation Experience will receive a grade of **F** for the course, regardless of grades earned, and will be dismissed from the program.

Skills Immersion Attendance Policy

Skills Immersion Experience is mandatory. Failure to attend the Skills Immersion Experience or any portion of, will receive a grade of **F** for the course, regardless of grades earned, and will be dismissed from the program.

Field Study (Clinical Practice) Attendance Policy for Field Study (Clinical) Courses

Students are expected to complete all scheduled clinical practice hours as required for successful completion of the course. Schedules are planned with the preceptor with input from the course faculty and clinical faculty. Faculty may require withdrawal or failure of any student who has missed sufficient practice hours or has not completed clinical objectives for the course.

Religious Observance and Holidays

USC is required by law to excuse absences from class for observance of a religious practice, holiday or holy day, if the instructor of the class is provided written notification by the student of their intent to observe such religious practice, holiday or holy day no later than the end of the second week of regularly scheduled classes in a full fall or spring semester term, and within twice the length of the drop/add period for any other term. Change/Drop dates can be found at <https://mysc.edu/codes/partofterms/index>.

Grading Policies

The following policies are in place to promote quality learning outcomes and fairness to all students.

Grading Scale

The College of Nursing uses a 10-point grading scale with no grade rounding.

A	= 90-100
B+	= 87-89.99
B	= 80-86.99
C+	= 77-79.99
C	= 70-76.99
D+	= 67-69.99
D	= 60-66.99
F	= 59.99 or lower

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is tabulated at the end of each semester. The University of South Carolina grades on a standard 4.00 grading system.

Student grade report is viewable within SSC in the Grades section. Final grades are due 72 hours after the exams. If your grade is not posted, contact your instructor. For letter grade definitions, see 2024-2025 Graduate Bulletin, [Grading Policies](#)

Rounding Policy

The College of Nursing does not allow grade rounding.

Late Assignment Policy

Late assignments will not be accepted. Failure to complete any assignment by the due date/time will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment. Extensions may be granted in case of emergencies and/or extenuating circumstances. Please contact the course faculty in advance.

Grade Disagreement

The role of the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation in matters of grade disagreement is to investigate the processes used by faculty in determining the grade and advise the faculty member in handling any perceived problems with applying grading processes outlined in the syllabus or any other apparent violations of fairness. The faculty member determines the grade that is awarded.

Incomplete Policies

The grade of **I** (incomplete) is assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, in the instructor's judgment, a student is prevented from completing a portion of the assigned work in a course because of an illness, accident, verified disability, family emergency, or some other unforeseen extenuating circumstance.

Re-enrolling in a course will not make up for an incomplete grade. A grade of **I** is not computed in the calculation of a student's cumulative grade point average until the make-up grade is posted.

After 12 months, an **I** (incomplete) grade that has not been replaced with a letter grade is changed permanently to a grade of **F** or to the backup grade indicated by the faculty member on the Assignment of Incomplete Grade form. In the rare instance the instructor believes there is justification for an extension beyond the 12- month limit, a request for extension of incomplete time should be submitted to the dean of The Graduate School before the expiration of the 12- month period on the Extension of Incomplete Time Period Authorization (**GS-47**) form for approval. The Graduate School does not approve the make-up of **I** grades in courses which are already out-of-date for use on a student's program of study or extensions of time without sufficient justification and/or supporting documentation.

Incomplete in Non-Clinical Courses

A grade of incomplete based on of an illness, accident, verified disability, family emergency, or some other unforeseen extenuating circumstance in a non-clinical course is assigned by the instructor only under the following conditions:

- The student has academic good standing in the course with a passing grade average.
- The student has no more than two outstanding course requirements unmet in the course.
- The student and instructor have an agreed date of submission for all outstanding course requirements. The student has up to 12 months to complete the work unless the instructor has given an earlier deadline.

Any grade of incomplete which remains after one calendar year from date of assignment automatically converts to either an **F** or the backup grade assigned by the instructor.

Incomplete in Clinical (Theory and Practice Courses)

A grade of incomplete based on of an illness, accident, verified disability, family emergency, or some other unforeseen extenuating circumstance in a clinical (theory and practice) course is assigned by the instructor only under the following conditions:

- The student has academic good standing in the course with a passing grade average.
- The student has clinical good standing in the course with no record of clinical practice errors risking patient safety in the course.
- The student has no more than two outstanding course requirements unmet in the course.

- The student has completed the majority of required clinical hours (e.g., more than 50% of clinical hours are completed) in the course.
- The student and instructor have an agreed date of submission for all outstanding course requirements. The student has up to 12 months to complete the work unless the instructor has given an earlier deadline.

Carrying this grade may hold severe implications of failure to progress to next term with delay in the student's academic and clinical progression of an academic term or full academic year. Any grade of incomplete which remains after one calendar year from date of assignment automatically converts to either an **F** or the backup grade assigned by the instructor.

Examination Policies

1. No examination materials (including scratch paper) are to leave under any circumstances during the actual examination period or during an examination review.
2. All exams must be completed by the due date/time. Failure to complete any exam by the due date/time will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment. In case of emergencies and/or extenuating circumstances, please notify the faculty in advance.
3. Discussion or reproduction of any online assessment (e.g., exams or quizzes) in any form is a violation of academic integrity and, if it happens, it will be reported. Book bags are to be placed at the front or side of the classroom away from all students for the duration of the exam.
4. Cell phones, PDA, IPODS, Computer iPad, watches or any time keeping devices, or similar electronic devices with or without internet connections are to be turned off and stored in book bag during exam or exam review and until exiting the room.
5. Calculators (when authorized) must not be capable of storing equations, graphs, charts, etc. Only non-programmable calculators are allowed. No cell phones, PDA, or similar devices are to be used as calculators during exams.

Testing Material Requirements

- Dry erase board (9 X 14 or smaller)
- Dry erase marker
- Dry erase board eraser for all exams

Travel to Clinical Sites

Students are responsible for transportation to sites for their research each semester and for covering the cost of travel. It is the obligation of students to provide their own vehicle collision and/or bodily injury liability insurance for their personal vehicles. Neither the College of Nursing nor the University of South Carolina is responsible

for the cost of any vehicle transportation or occurrences. Students must provide personal transportation to and from clinical locations, which may be assigned anywhere within an 80-mile radius of the College of Nursing.

CON Policies and Procedures Specific to Graduate Nursing Programs

Organization of this Section

Information relevant to all programs is included in all handbooks, supplemented by program specific information. Wherever possible, students are also referred to electronic references via hyperlinks.

Communication between the College of Nursing and Graduate Students

The official mode of communication between the College of Nursing and graduate students is through university e-mail. All students matriculated in the CON are assigned a USC e-mail account upon acceptance of an admission offer. Students must monitor their university e-mail account regularly and are responsible for responding promptly to requests made by e-mail. No other e-mail account may be used for official communication with the school.

Guidelines for Electronic Communication

Electronic communication with faculty, staff and class members is considered professional communication. When sending email messages to faculty, staff, or fellow classmates, please follow these guidelines:

- Use your USC email address for all USC and CON related communication.
- Always include a concise and descriptive subject line.
- Always start your message with an appropriate salutation or greeting.
- Be mindful of the tone of your message. Do not post or send messages when you are angry or upset.
- Do not type messages in ALL CAPS as it can be perceived as shouting.
- Use complete sentences and correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Carefully review your messages before sending them by email.
- Always sign your messages using your first and last name to avoid any uncertainty about the author. An email address is not always sufficient to identify the sender.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

USC is committed to ensuring that every student has equal access to all aspects of the USC experience. Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) coordinates efforts to ensure that students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations and serves as consultants to faculty, staff, and campus partners. SDRC information can

be viewed [here](#). Please contact SDRC with any questions at (803) 777-6142, e-mail: sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu

Medical Clearance for Absences from Class Due to Injury or Illness

Students must notify all courses and clinical faculty if injury or illness results in absence from class and/or clinical experiences (including simulation, immersions, lab, and extrinsic). Students do not have to disclose diagnoses or disabilities to the College of Nursing.

- Step One: If missing class, simulation, lab, immersion, and or clinical - Notify course faculty via email.
- Step Two: If missing simulation, lab, immersion, and/or clinical - **Also** notify Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (NURSEVTS@mailbox.sc.edu) and clinical instructor via their preferred contact method if needing to be absent from clinical, simulation, lab, or immersion experience.
 - Students should expect a response within 24 hours from the faculty with instructions/plans for the course/clinical.
- Step Three: If missing more than one day of simulation, lab, immersion, or clinical, download from your course the Medical Clearance for Core Performance Standards (MCCPS) form. This form should be completed at the time of being assessed formally by a healthcare provider. A medical clearance form or “return to school” note generated from a provider, which is not documented on the MCCPS form will not be accepted. The only exception is the medical clearance form generated by USC University Health Services. Please obtain a business card for the provider as well if not documented on the University Health Services clearance form. Please be sure that the clearance addresses **both** clinical and class.
- Step Four: **DO NOT attend clinical, lab, simulation, or immersion**, even if you have completed the above steps.
 - Any student reporting injury/illness is **NOT** cleared for face-to-face class until receiving final clearance from the course faculty.
 - Any student reporting injury/illness is **NOT** cleared for simulation, lab, immersion, and/or clinical until receiving final clearance from the CON administration, regardless of being seen by a healthcare provider and/or completion/submission of the medical clearance form. The **medical clearance form should be submitted to** NURSEVTS@mailbox.sc.edu.

Clearance for simulation, lab, immersion, and/or clinical will be submitted to the appropriate students daily no later than 8:00 pm. If you are a student waiting for clearance and do not receive clearance by 8:00 pm on that day,

then you are not cleared to resume simulation, lab, immersion and/or clinical on the next day.

Student Substance Use Disorders (SUD) Policy

Purpose

The College of Nursing recognizes the importance of educating its students about the problems of substance use disorders (SUD). Unfortunately, this significant health risk is prevalent among healthcare providers. Aside from impacting the personal and psychological integrity of the individuals with SUD, Substance use disorders might significantly alter the ability of healthcare providers to administer safe, competent patient care. In extreme cases, SUD by a healthcare provider can lead to malpractice lawsuits and even criminal prosecution. Recognizing that SUD is both a brain disease and a professional hazard, the University of South Carolina has resources available for students experiencing SUD issues.

The College of Nursing has established this policy to clarify procedures for students who are found to have misused controlled or illegal substances and/or alcohol. This policy addresses the student's ability to maintain personal and professional integrity and facilitates the student's success both clinically and didactically. In the clinical setting, this policy enhances patient safety. It also fosters the development of professional nurses who are well educated about the prevalence of SUD and its potential to lead to adverse patient outcomes.

Policy

This policy applies to all students who have matriculated into College of Nursing academic program(s).

Any unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, diversion, or improper use of any substances by any student in the College of Nursing may constitute removal from clinical and/or cause for termination from the program(s). In addition, no student may consume or be under the influence of or be in the possession of alcohol at any time the student is in the classroom and/or performing clinical duties. Improper use of alcohol may also constitute removal from clinical and/or cause for termination from the program. Students must comply with all local, state, or federal laws and regulations controlling the possession, manufacture, use, or distribution of controlled or illegal substances and alcohol. Students are accountable for their ingestion of substances, regardless of whether they are aware or unaware of the contents of which they ingested (including orally, inhaled, vaped, or other means). The College of Nursing will deal with student claims of unintentional intoxication on a case-by-case basis considering all facts and circumstances. Students must also adhere to all University of South Carolina policies regarding alcohol and/or drug use. Specific policies of note include: STAF 3.02, Alcohol Policy and Guidelines for the University Community; STAF 3.18, Drug Policy for University Students; STAF 3.19, Overdose Medical Treatment; STAF 6.26, and Student Code of Conduct. These policies can be found at **Policies and Procedures Manual.**

In addition, there are circumstances in which students might need to take over the counter or prescribed medications that have the potential to impair their professional performance in the clinical setting or personal behavior. Documentation from treating provider should indicate diagnosis and anticipated length of medication administration. As such, all students are responsible for being aware of the effect these medications may have on performance and must notify their Program Director, Course Coordinator, or Instructor within 72 hours prior to clinical attendance or required drug screening about the use of any medication that could impair performance or has the potential to influence a drug screen result.

Failure or refusal to comply with the SUD policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any drug screen or to alter the results of a drug screen will be considered a refusal to comply with this policy. In addition, failure, or refusal to comply with any aspect of the SUD policy may be reported to the University's Office of Student Conduct for possible disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Student Conduct Policy.

Procedures

I. Drug Screens

Many clinical training sites, or institutions in which human research is being conducted, require that students undergo drug screens, like what is required of their employees, prior to placement at the sites. Therefore, all students involved in clinical practice settings, whether for education purposes or for the recruitment of research subjects and/or the collection of research data, will be required to undergo drug screening prior to entering clinical sites.

In addition, during enrollment in a College of Nursing program(s), a student may be required to undergo drug or alcohol testing for cause when the university faculty and/or administrator(s) determine there is reasonable suspicion that the student is impaired due to illegal drug or alcohol use, or the use or misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medications. Drug screening based on reasonable suspicion may be requested in the following scenarios, but will not be limited to these examples: when unusual or aberrant behavior or patterns of abnormal or erratic behavior; physical symptoms of impairment; arrest or conviction for a drug or alcohol related offense; evidence of drug tampering, drug diversion, or misappropriation; direct observation of drug use or discrepant drug counts; alterations in student clinical and/or didactic performance that may not be attributed to other causes; following a work-related injury or illness when there is any evidence (direct or circumstantial) that it may have been related to use of a controlled substance; observation of poor judgment or careless acts which caused or had the potential to cause patient injury, jeopardize the safety of self or others, or resulted in damage to equipment. Drug screening may also be required following a work-related injury or illness if requested by the facility or third-party payor such as an insurance company.

II. Reporting

A faculty or staff member who suspects substance misuse by a student must report the suspicions along with relevant supporting information to the Program Director or Course Coordinator who will then immediately contact the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, and the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation. In the absence of the Program Director or Course Coordinator, the faculty member observing the behavior should contact the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, and the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation. Any faculty member with evidence that an enrolled student has engaged in clinical care of patients and families or participated in classroom activities while impaired must report their observations to the appropriate Program Director.

A student who suspects substance misuse or a violation of this policy by another student has the responsibility to report this information. A report needs to be made to the student's academic advisor or Instructor, Course Coordinator, or Program Director. The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation should be notified by the advisor, course instructor, course coordinator and/or program director. The identity of the individual making the report will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible consistent with the need to investigate the report and subject to legal requirements.

Any student arrested or convicted of violating any federal, state, or local law pertaining to the manufacture, possession, sale, use, or distribution of a drug or alcohol or misuse of prescribed medications must report this event to the appropriate Program Director, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation within three days of the event and prior to any clinical contact with patients and families. If the student holds a nursing license, the student should also contact their governing Board of Nursing for guidance in reporting an arrest and/or conviction.

III. Drug Screening Procedure

Drug and alcohol screening required by the College of Nursing will be conducted utilizing the following measures:

- a. Students are responsible for all expenses incurred for drug screens.
- b. The student must be screened at a facility approved by the College.
- c. The student must fully comply with the approved facility's drug screening standards, methods, and procedures for collecting samples.
- d. The drug screen shall screen for the use of the controlled substances (examples listed in Appendix 1).
- e. The student must disclose any prescribed or over-the-counter medications, as well as any dietary habits that could modify screening results.
- f. If the accuracy of a positive drug screen is disputed by the student, the student may request a retesting of the initial samples by the facility; however, the student will cover the cost of the additional drug screens. Drug screens done outside the appropriate window of time will not be considered valid.

- g. Substance use disorder is verified if either: (i) the positive test result is not disputed, or (ii) if the student-requested retest of the initial sample is positive.
- h. If the drug screen is inconclusive, the screening will be treated as positive until definitive analysis by alternate testing is accomplished. Alternate testing will be conducted at the same facility as the inconclusive drug screen results and will be at the student's expense. During this time, the student will not be permitted to have any contact with their clinical sites, but may be allowed to attend classes, pending the approval of the appropriate Program Director.
- i. The approved drug screening facility will publish a final report of the test results (positive, negative, or inconclusive) to the College of Nursing.
- j. A student who is required to submit to drug and/or alcohol screening will be expected to authorize the release of the results to the College and other relevant University offices.
- k. If a student refuses to release the drug screen results to the College and other relevant University offices, the test will be presumed positive and treated as a positive screening result for the purpose of this policy.

Admission to the program will be withdrawn for a student screening positive. All interim actions up to or including: (1) a student undergoing a drug or alcohol screening, (2) a student refraining from contact with clinical sites, and/or (3) a student refraining from class attendance will be determined by the appropriate Program Director in consultation with the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation, relevant Course Coordinator or Instructor and relevant University experts. In the case of drug or alcohol screening based on reasonable suspicion, the cost of any required drug or alcohol testing will be the responsibility of the student at a facility approved by the College of Nursing. A student who refuses to submit to a drug screen or who refuses to release the results of drug or alcohol screen will be regarded as having voluntarily relinquished their clinical responsibilities and can be suspended from the program(s) until further investigation is completed. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any drug screen or to alter the results of a drug screen will be considered a refusal to submit to testing and may result in an inference of impairment and/or a violation of this policy.

IV. Confidentiality

The requirement that a student be screened, as well as the drug screen results, will remain confidential and disclosed only to those individuals within the University of South Carolina or an affiliated clinical site with a need to know or as required by law. Upon written request, students will be provided with a copy of the drug screen results. All students who hold a nursing license and who are suspected of SUD will be asked to self-report to their respective State Board of Nursing. If the student refuses to self-report, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation will consult with the appropriate Program Director, Course Coordinator or Instructor, and other relevant University officials with a need to know. If a health or safety emergency exists which puts the student or others at imminent risk of harm, then the College of Nursing may choose to report the student to the appropriate State Board of Nursing.

V. Self-Disclosure

Students who self-disclose a substance or alcohol use problem to a faculty member, staff member, Program Director, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, or the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation **prior to** or following a positive drug/alcohol screen result, and who are willing to enter and complete an appropriate program of treatment may be granted a medical leave of absence while they undergo treatment. In consultation with their health care provider and University providers (Counseling and Psychiatry-Student Health Services and/or Substance Abuse Prevention and Education (SAPE)), a treatment program will be identified, and the student will be assisted with entrance. The student must sign appropriate HIPAA Authorization forms permitting designated University providers (Counseling and Psychiatry-Student Health Services and/or SAPE) to communicate with the student's private health care providers about their recovery status with the College of Nursing.

VI. Treatment and Counseling Resources

Students concerned that they may have a substance or alcohol use problem are encouraged to seek appropriate assessment, treatment, and counseling from qualified healthcare professionals. The following websites reflect some treatment resources, counseling services, and mutual support programs that are available to students:

- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- [American Society of Addictive Medicine](#)
- [Mental Health at USC](#)
- [Narcotic Anonymous](#)
- [National Directory of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Treatment Programs](#)
- [USC Substance Abuse Prevention and Education](#)
- [USC University Health Services](#)

VII. Reentry into the Academic and Clinical Environment

Return from a medical leave of absence due to disclosure of a substance use problem will be considered by the appropriate Program Director and approval of the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation following successful treatment and sustained progress in recovery efforts in addition to other conditions that may be stipulated in the leave of absence agreement. The leave of absence will be a minimum of one calendar year from the time of the positive drug screen with a longer period if determined as needed by your healthcare professionals. Time of re-entry would also be contingent on space available in the program of study. The conditions will be appropriately individualized considering the situation and needs of the student. All required University and College documents must be completed, including a plan for successful return to course and clinical work that is approved by the student's health care provider, relevant University experts (Counseling and Psychiatry and Student Health Services) and the College of Nursing. Factors that have been identified as helpful for reentry into the academic and clinical environment include 12-step program participation, random drug screenings, and sponsorship in a support group. The

student must also provide medical clearance from the appropriate individual coordinating therapeutic intervention and evidence of an unencumbered nursing license (if a RN-BSN or graduate student). Re-entry to the College of Nursing will be determined in consultation with the Counseling and Psychiatry and Student Health Services offices. A student in recovery from SUD who is permitted to reenter the College of Nursing must comply with all the conditions of return delineated as part of the program reentry agreement.

Depending upon the length of absence from the program, the student may be required to restart the clinical and/or didactic components of their program of study. Alternatively, the student may only be required to repeat specific semesters of clinical and didactic study, based on the decision of the appropriate Program Director in consultation with the relevant Course Coordinator. A student recovering from SUD will be monitored closely, particularly in clinical practice. Frequent monitoring to ensure the student remains substance free will be required.

Reentry can be difficult for students, especially for those who have just started their educational program and have limited time invested in the program. Reentry after relapse into SUD is not advised for any student. Reentry into a nursing program's curriculum after a period of absence, no matter what the reason, can be a stressful time of readjustment. A student who has been in rehabilitation for SUD requires the same period of adjustment as a person who has been away from clinical and didactic arena for any other reason. A student in recovery who is reentering the program will be encouraged not to resume their course of study too hastily, but instead allow themselves time to develop appropriate support systems to facilitate the reentry.

Appendix 1

- Amphetamine (methamphetamine) Barbiturates
- Benzodiazepine
- Cocaine
- Marijuana
- Methadone
- Opiates (codeine & morphine) Phencyclidine
- Propoxyphene
- MDMA
- Oxy (2 categories)

Revised June 2023

Student Use of Social Media Guidelines

As professional nurses, students are responsible for protecting the privacy and confidentiality of patients and research participants. The following guidelines are intended to minimize the risks of using social media:

- a. First, nurses must recognize that they have an ethical and legal obligation to always maintain patient privacy and confidentiality.
- b. Nurses are prohibited from transmitting by way of any electronic media any patient-related image. In addition, students/nurses are restricted from

- transmitting any information that may be reasonably anticipated to violate patient rights to confidentiality or privacy, or otherwise degrade or embarrass the patient.
- c. Do not share post or otherwise disseminate any information, including images, about a patient or information gained in the nurse-patient relationship with anyone unless there is a patient care related need to disclose the information or other legal obligation to do so.
 - d. Do not identify patients by name or post or publish information that may lead to the identification of a patient. Limiting access to postings through privacy settings is not sufficient to ensure privacy.
 - e. Do not refer to patients in a disparaging manner, even if the patient is not identified.
 - f. Do not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including cell phones. Follow employer policies for taking photographs or videos of patients for treatment or other legitimate purposes using employer-provided devices.
 - g. Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Like in-person relationships, the nurse has the obligation to establish, communicate and enforce professional boundaries with patients in the online environment. Use caution when having online social contact with patients or former patients. Online contact with patients or former patients blurs the distinction between a professional and personal relationship. The fact that a patient may initiate contact with the nurse does not permit the nurse to engage in a personal relationship with the patient.
 - h. Consult employer policies or an appropriate leader within the organization for guidance regarding work related postings.
 - i. Promptly report any identified breach of confidentiality or privacy.
 - j. Be aware of and comply with employer policies regarding the use of employer-owned computers, cameras and other electronic devices and use of personal devices in the workplace.
 - k. Do not make disparaging remarks about employers or co-workers. Do not make threatening, harassing, profane, obscene, sexually explicit, racially derogatory, homophobic, or other offensive comments.
 - l. Do not post content or otherwise speak on behalf of the employer unless authorized to do so and follow all applicable policies of the employer.

*All guidelines apply to students. Students should also not make disparaging remarks related to their clinical site, faculty, staff, or school. The College of Nursing has adopted the NCSBN position statement:

NCSBN (2011) White Paper: A Nurse's Guide to the Use of Social Media
https://www.ncsbn.org/NCSBN_SocialMedia.pdf

Student Social Media Takeover Guidelines

Please refer to the guidelines below when participating in any form of social media takeover- Instagram, TikTok, etc.

Takeover at the Clinical Setting

- You may record/take pictures before entering and after exiting the clinical building or facility. No recording or taking of pictures of any identifying signs or names of the clinical site.
 - No pictures or videos while inside the clinical building or facility. The CON phone policy will be enforced while in clinical.
 - You may talk about your experiences such as the highlights of your day, what you learned, your feelings, what skills you performed, etc.
 - Do not state which hospital you were at or your exact location within the hospital- you may say what unit you were on.
 - Example: my clinical was on a med surgical unit today...

Takeover at the College

- You may record/take photos before and after class.
- If you record/take photos of classmates, please inform them that their photo will be on the CON social media so those who do not want to be featured can decline.
- Do not speak about specific test questions, simulation experiences, or other academically confidential experiences. It is best to obtain permission from the faculty, if during a class.
- Simulation lab.
 - No photos or video during a simulation.
 - You may take staged photos with manikins during a break, before/after class.
 - Patient confidentiality rules apply in simulation. If you choose to photograph with a manikin, please do not take photos with a manikin that is being used that day as a patient.
 - See the Clinical Simulation Lab Operations Manager to assist with any pictures of manikins.

Takeover General Reminders

- While in uniform remember to respect the Core Values of Nursing.
- Follow all HIPAA best practices.
- Have FUN! Make us PROUD!

What makes a good Takeover? At the USC CON, takeovers usually focus on a unique event or experience in a student's life. Content should build community among current nursing students and provide prospective students an authentic experience of Gamecock life such as diverse, interactive narratives based on their passion for and participation in university organizations, events, and academics. Examples include:

- Day in the life of a Gamecock nursing student.
- Highlights of a class, clinical, or experiential learning experience.
- Special events such as organizations, internships, scholarship, convocation, or commencement.
- Other events as identified by the student or CON.

These guidelines will help you create a successful Takeover story:

Takeover Do's:

- **Start the takeover with a video or picture of yourself. Introduce who you are and that you are taking over the CON social media Instagram.**
- **Introduce yourself** at events and announce that you are snapping, so those who do not want to be featured can say, “no” or decline.
- **Be friendly and gracious.** Respect people’s boundaries and thank participants.
- **Be positive.** Represent the University and CON, and its students, faculty, staff, and larger community in a positive light.
- **Do over.** If a subject stumbles or says something offensive. Ask nicely to reshoot the picture/video without profanity, etc. If they resist, thank them for their time and move on.
- **Take us through your typical day.** Are you involved in any organizations, clubs, committees, etc.? Where is your favorite place to eat on campus? Where do you hang out/study between classes? Do you ever attend events on campus? Do you venture into the city?
- **Shoot vertically.**
- **Adhere to** the University [Student Code of Conduct](#), and University laws and policies.
- **No alcohol, drugs, profanity, nudity, harassment, political campaigning, or degradation in posts. You must follow all copyright and hosting/posting laws/regulations.**
- **Ask permission.** When featuring specific individuals, get their verbal consent before recording them. If the situation demands recording them first, then ask for consent after. When in a public place or not focusing on a specific person or group of people, you do not need to get consent. When in doubt, ask permission.

Takeover Don'ts:

- **When in doubt, do not.** If you feel a picture/video is questionable in content, talk with one of the administrators about your concerns.
- **Do not use social media while driving.** This is illegal and extremely dangerous.
- **Do not be disappointed or upset if an administrator does not use your story.** They are the curators. You might not be aware of other issues happening behind the scenes.
- **Do not be afraid to ask questions** of the administrators. We are here to help.

Technology

Information regarding the Computer Standards, Computer Purchasing through USC, and Software used in the Nursing Curriculum can be found at https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/internal/current_students/technology/index.php.

Student Progression with Course of Study

Academic Advising

For most graduate students, the academic advisor is the program director or graduate advisor. Advisors are the principal source of assistance to students in planning an academic program, seeking advice, and dealing with problems as they arise. However, it is the responsibility of the student to maintain contact with the advisor. Faculty and staff will make every effort to help students but cannot be expected to be responsible for problems not brought to their attention in a timely manner.

A mandatory online and on campus orientation is required for all new MEPN students. Each student receives advisement and is provided with a Program of Study developed by the program director prior to initial registration. Thereafter, all MEPN students are required to participate in advisement as needed as communicated via Blackboard announcements. Deviation from the program of study will result in a mandatory advisement with the program director prior to subsequent registration. Enrollment in clinical and other special courses is contingent upon a student fulfilling additional requirements by stated deadlines (i.e., prerequisites, immunization and other health requirements, health agency requirements, and contractual agreements in effect).

Academic Standard for Progression

Good Standing

A student in good standing is defined as a student who:

- Graduate courses may be passed for degree credit with a grade as low as C, but a degree-seeking student must maintain at least a B (3.000 on a 4.000 scale) cumulative grade point average. The CON stipulates that no grade below B can be applied to a core course.
- Maintains the proper course load (without incompletes).
- Is not on academic probation.
- Does not have two consecutive semesters of non-enrollment.
- Is on an approved leave of absence.
- Is not on financial hold nor carrying past-due balances.
- Has completed the immunizations, background check, and drug screening processes with no identified problems.

Academic Probation

A student will be placed on probation if they

- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.00 (**B**) at the end of any semester. A student is allowed one calendar year to raise the cumulative GPA to at least 3.00.
- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.00 due to conversion of grades of incomplete at end of semester in which the grade is posted. Students are allowed one major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the

University Registrar receives the Incomplete conversion grade to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.00 or above.

- Has earned less than a minimum grade of 80% (**B**) in any graduate course work. If a grade lower than **B** is earned, this course must be repeated to enroll in subsequent nursing courses. However, the initial below **B** grade remains on the student record and counts toward the “Two **C** Rule” (see Academic Dismissal).
- See [CON Graduate Pass/Fail Spring 2020 policy](#) (CON Graduate **S+/S/U** for Spring 2020 Full-Term and B Term Courses Only).

Academic Dismissal

A student will be dismissed from the College of Nursing if they:

- Receive two grades of 79.99% (C+) or lower in the same NURS or ITEC course or in any two NURS or ITEC courses. *
- Fail a required graduate course twice or withdraw from the graduate course twice (or any combination thereof). A student may only attempt a specific graduate course twice in the graduate program. An attempt is any grade or W received in a course. *
- Have a grade of **U** in two courses. *
- Have a cumulative GPA of less than 3.00 at end of one calendar year of academic probation.
- Have a cumulative GPA of less than 3.00 at end of major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the University Registrar receives the Incomplete conversion grade.
- Are banned from a clinical agency because of unprofessional, unethical, or illegal behavior.
- Have a positive [drug screening](#).

*See [CON Graduate Pass/Fail Spring 2020 policy](#) (CON Graduate **S+/S/U** for Spring 2020 Full-Term and B Term Courses Only)

Appeals for Reinstatement

Appeals for reinstatement from students should be reviewed first by the Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and Community Engagement (ABC). If the appeal is approved, then the Student Petitions Committee must forward it to the Dean of the Graduate School for action (see [Student Petitions](#)). Reflect the ABC office.

Academic Suspension

Students are expected to maintain professionalism, adhere to ANA's Code of Ethics, USC Honor Code, and the College of Nursing's Core Values always while in the clinical setting or when representing the University of South Carolina College of Nursing. A student banned from a clinical agency because of unprofessional, unethical, or illegal behavior may receive an academic penalty, including but not limited to clinical failure, course failure, suspension, expulsion from the College, or other penalties. The violation may be reported to the Board of Nursing or the governing board of the student's license.

Reinstatement after Suspension

After suspension, reinstatement to the College of Nursing will not be granted for one calendar year following the term of suspension. To appeal for reinstatement the student must submit a completed petition packet to Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and Community Engagement (ABC).

If the appeal is approved, then the Student Petitions Committee must forward it to the Dean of the Graduate School for action (see [Student Petitions](#)).

Appeals may be initiated at any point following suspension, but petition packets submitted by students must be received by the Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and Community Engagement (ABC) at least 45 days before the start of the term for which the student wishes to be readmitted. Reflect the ABC office.

Graduate School Academic Forgiveness

The Graduate School [Academic Forgiveness Policy](#) is outlined in the Graduate Studies Bulletin in the Graduate Academic Regulations section.

Academic Standard for Graduation

At the time of graduation, the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00 (**B**) on a 4.000 scale. Additionally, the student's average on all grades recorded on the program of study for courses numbered 700 or above must be at least 3.000 and all courses listed on the program of study must be at least 3.000.

Course Enrollment Status and Load

Students enrolled in full-time or part-time study are entitled to use the full services of the University. Full-time status requires enrollment in at least nine credit hours during a regular semester and six credit hours during the summer. For the purposes of financial aid, a student must be enrolled in at least six (6) hours per semester to be eligible for financial aid. Students may elect not to enroll for a summer session; however, they are not entitled to use faculty, computing, or library resources during that time.

Graduate School requires any student who misses one or more semesters to renew their enrollment privileges. If three years or more lapse between enrollments, students must reapply for admission.

Course Format Definition

Courses in the MEPN Programs are delivered in both face-to-face and online format. Courses delivered online are administered through Blackboard Learning Management System which allows USC faculty to create a secure course website for class communications, posting assignments, posting readings, linking to complementary websites, administering exams, and much more. In courses that use Blackboard, the course syllabus will provide basic information about accessing [Blackboard](#). Additional information about Blackboard is available at [Getting Assistance](#).

Students access online courses at [Blackboard Access](#). Courses offered in this format are constructed and conducted differently than traditional classroom courses. Below are some suggestions on how to be successful in online courses:

- Become familiar with Blackboard (Bb), the course software.
- Learn how to access Bb using multifactor authentication.
- Read the “How to…” guides that are found in each course. They are well worth your time.
- Participate actively in the course.

Clinical courses have didactic component online but require direct clinical practice and other activities such as clinical conferencing or simulation.

Course Attempts

A student may attempt a specific graduate course twice in the graduate program. An attempt is any grade, **W**, or **WF** received in a course. Each MSN course may only be attempted twice.

Course Load

The Graduate School definition for normal full-time enrollment status for graduate students is 9 hours for graduate students or 6 hours for students serving as graduate assistants.

Common Verification Requests

- Current students can access their Myhub account through their [Self Service Carolina](#) account. Click on ‘**Official Record Request**’ and then ‘**Enrollment Verification.**’ If you have additional questions, please visit [Degree and Enrollment Verification \(Current Student, Former Students and Alumni\)](#) (https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/transcripts_and_records/degree_and_enrollment_verification/index.php) or you may contact the Office of the University Registrar by **email** or phone at 803-777-5555.
- USC will also provide a student with an official transcript for a fee. An official transcript is a complete record of a student’s enrollment history, including all University of South Carolina campuses and can be used to verify credit hours completed by a student. A transcript can be used to verify a student’s degree awarded, enrollment history, GPA, good standing, or eligibility to return to USC. Current students can order an official transcript via [Self Service Carolina](#).
- University of South Carolina has authorized the National Student Clearinghouse to provide enrollment and degree verifications to third parties. They can be contacted through their [web portal](#) (<https://nscverifications.org/welcome-to-verification-services/>) or by phone at 703-742-4200.
- **Insurance Forms** are available to students online through Self Service Carolina or through Myhub.
- **Loan Deferrals** are available to students online through Self Service Carolina or through Myhub.

Course Registration

Registering for courses is an important task that all students must complete throughout their time at USC. New and transfer graduate Nursing students may only register for nursing courses once they have been admitted to the program, agreed to the program of study, and completed orientation. Access our registration system at [Self Service Carolina \(SSC\)](#).

The University Registrar establishes the official calendars followed by the University of South Carolina system. Access the full current and upcoming semester academic calendars to find key dates and information including holidays, registration dates, payment deadlines, drop or add dates, as well as exams and commencement for each term. Each part of term has specific drop, add, and refund dates. Review your schedule in SSC to determine the [part of term](#) for your classes.

Registration Tips

- Step 1: Review your Program of study and make note of the courses you are projected to take in the next term. If you have questions about your program of study or the courses you are scheduled to take, contact your program director.
- Step 2: Check your Registration Time Ticket in [SSC](#) - see "Registration" then "Registration Notices and Holds". Make a note of the date/time and set a reminder in your calendar.
 - What is a Registration Time Ticket? It is time the University Registrar appointed a student to begin registration for the next term.
- Step 3: Check your student account for holds. See "Registration" then "Registration Notices and Holds." What should you do if you have a hold on your account in SSC? [Contact the office that placed the hold on your account](#) and determine what needs to be done to have the hold removed. Ensure your hold is removed before the time on your Registration Time Ticket.
 - What is an Advisement Hold? Advisement holds are placed on student records by the College of Nursing to ensure students complete all prerequisite requirements. Advisement holds prevent registration. Advisement holds will be removed by staff as Viewpoint or Exxat Screening compliance is confirmed.
- Step 4: Continuing students: Confirm your **Viewpoint or Exxat Screening** account is up to date - Sign into your Viewpoint or Exxat Screening account and view your "To Do List" - take care of any overdue items before the time on your Registration Time Ticket. Exxat for students starting Spring 2024 and beyond.
- Step 5: Register for the classes listed on your program of study at your designated registration time (See Step 2 above to determine your designated time). Students must register only for those courses listed on their program of study. Students who deviate from their program of study may be removed from courses by the College of Nursing.
 - Need help with the Registration Processes in SSC? See new 'how-to' videos for the classes.sc.edu class search website. They are linked on the

[Advising Help Videos](#), [Registration Holds & Course Restrictions](#), and [Registration Help](#) webpages.

- How to Identify Registration Restrictions (classes.sc.edu) - <https://youtu.be/FHWbXhCFNWM>

Course Restrictions

Registration for a clinical nursing course is limited to students admitted to a College of Nursing graduate degree or Certificate of Graduate Study program.

Registration Advisement holds are placed on student records for the following reasons:

1. Prior to clinical course: Each graduate nursing student is placed on registration hold before the start of the upcoming registration term in which a clinical experience will occur. Each student must have a fully compliant Viewpoint or Exxat Screening account by the end of first semester of enrollment and request registration “signoff” from the graduate student advisor for the registration hold to be lifted and to register for classes. Graduate student advisor(s) lifts the registration holds. This is an opportunity for students and the program director/advisor to ensure that the Program of Study and planned course registration is correct. Exxat for students starting Spring 2024 and beyond.
2. NURS 769/769A (independent study courses) requires completion of an independent study contract (G-ISC) by the student and faculty member that must be filed with the graduate student advisor for the student file and with the University Registrar.

Course Selection and Drop Period

The University Registrar’s web page [SSC](#) enables students to register via the internet and access their personal information such as grades, financial aid, fees, and class schedule. The most up to date information is posted online.

Students can use SSC to add, drop, or change a course or section. Any change in enrollment must be recorded with the University Registrar. Students may check the [Academic Calendar](#) online for the last day to drop a course without a grade of **W** being recorded and for the last day to drop a course or withdraw without a grade of **WF** being recorded. Please note that a **W** does constitute an attempt at a course. Failure to complete the official course withdrawal process has serious implications for calculation of the final course grade and calculation of grade point averages. Students should discuss any potential changes with their program director and assigned graduate student advisor prior to making the changes.

For a refund schedule, please see the [Tuition Refund](#) section for more information. Please note that should a student fail to attend classes in a course for which they are registered, they may not be automatically dropped from the course. Students who fail to drop a course they are not taking, but are still registered for, within the drop/add period may receive a grade of **FN** (no revision required) in that course.

Applicants to the MSN programs may only register for nursing courses once they are admitted to the program, have agreed to the program of study, and completed orientation.

Registration for a clinical nursing course is limited to students admitted to a College of Nursing graduate degree or certificate of graduate study program.

All health requirements including background check and drug screening must be compliant by the end of the first semester of enrollment or a registration hold for subsequent semester enrollment will be issued.

Registration for independent study courses requires an independent study contract (see Course Restrictions).

Course/Faculty Evaluations

At the end of each course, students evaluate the course and its instructor(s). The results of these evaluations are maintained by the Office of Academic Affairs.

Textbooks

Most assigned textbooks are available in the University Bookstore. The **University Bookstore** is located on the first floor of the Russell House. Several other bookstores such as the South Carolina Bookstore and Addams University Bookstore, located near campus, also sell required textbooks and academic supplies.

Degree Completion and Graduation

Application for Degree

The graduation application is the first step you will need to take to graduate from your academic program. To be eligible for graduation a student must meet all University and College of Nursing standards to receive a degree. Candidates for degrees must file a formal application during the last semester before graduation prior to the deadline set by the University Registrar. Deadlines are posted for each term on the official academic calendar of the University Registrar. Applications filed after the deadline result will not be accepted and will delay receipt of diploma. At the time of graduation, the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00. Additionally, the student's average on all grades recorded on the program of study for courses numbered 700 or above must be at least 3.00 and all courses listed on the program of study must be at least 3.00.

Review the application and award processes on the University **Registrar's website** to understand better what happens once you submit your application.

Graduation Requirements

While the Graduate School allows MSN students to complete their programs within six years, the College of Nursing expects MSN students to complete on a different timeline to ensure accreditation compliance. MSN students are expected to complete their program of study in 4 years or fewer.

Candidates unable to meet this requirement must petition for an extension to the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation. Any additional requirements in effect at the time of re-evaluation must be completed.

All failing (**F**), and Incomplete grades must be cleared or completed by graduation day or the student's name will be removed from the graduation list. A cumulative GPA of 3.00 is required. All University balances must be paid in full. At the time of graduation, the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00. Additionally, the student's average on all grades recorded on the program of study for courses numbered 700 or above must be at least 3.00 and all courses listed on the program of study must be at least 3.00.

Ceremonies

The College of Nursing hosts a Graduate White Coat ceremony in both Summer and Fall each year. This ceremony recognizes our graduate students as they prepare to begin their clinical or leadership education.

Commencement exercises are held for degree candidates in both Fall and Spring each year. The President of the University of South Carolina presides over commencement. To honor their commitment, each degree candidate is recognized by name and congratulated by the dean of the graduate's college or school. Visit the [Registrar's website](#) for additional information regarding commencement.

Doctoral students who have already graduated may request to participate in commencement exercises for a term other than their actual graduation term. In order to be considered to walk **late**, students must submit the [Request to Participate in Commencement Early/Late Form](#). Visit the University Registrar's website for additional information regarding commencement.

In addition, the College of Nursing celebrates the accomplishments of the graduating class with a special Convocation ceremony in Fall, Spring and Summer each year.

Diplomas

Students with outstanding University balances, incompletes, **NR** (no revision required), or uncleared **F** grades at the time of graduation will not be able to obtain their diplomas nor will they be able to obtain any official transcripts or other University information until the balances are paid in full.

Have a question about your degree or diploma? Review [frequently asked questions](#) to find answers.

Graduation Awards

Students are encouraged to nominate themselves or others for the College of Nursing Student Awards. More information about the nomination process will be disseminated to students during the academic year.

Alumni

Upon graduation, students at the College become alumni of the University of South Carolina. The College's alum family is a major support system for the College and alum donors help to support several scholarships annually. Alums are electronically sent copies of *USC College of Nursing Gamecock CONnection* and invited to attend annual alum events and celebrations. All graduates are encouraged to notify the alum office or the My Carolina Alumni Association of address changes. Contact us at https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/alumni/.

Clinical Education Policies

A big part of your nursing education will be your clinical experiences, and our agreements with the facilities where you will be doing your direct and/or indirect clinical hours require records of your immunizations and clearances to enter the clinical setting. These requirements include positive titers for MMR, Hep B, and Varicella, immunizations, as well as CPR certification, drug screen and background checks, and any other site-specific requirements.

Clinical Compliance Requirements

All students at University of South Carolina College of Nursing in either direct or indirect clinical course work must meet the requirements of all clinical compliance policies to continue clinical course work. Students who are non-compliant by drop/add date in the semester will be administratively removed from coursework. Students who fall non-compliant after drop/add date in a semester while enrolled in a clinical course must immediately cease attending clinical until brought back into compliance. Any clinical hours completed while non-compliant will not count towards the required clinical hours in the course. Students who fall non-compliant while enrolled in a non-clinical course will be restricted from registering for the next semester's course(s) until brought back into compliance.

Criminal Background Check and Drug Screen

During the first semester of enrollment, students must undergo a background check and drug screen through the approved College of Nursing vendor. Students may be subject to random checks throughout the program. Additional screening may be required by clinical agencies or following a student's break in enrollment. Negative dilute results for drug screen will require a new drug screen to be completed.

Students are responsible for all expenses incurred for criminal background checks and drug screenings. Students who are not enrolled in one or more semesters, following start of clinical coursework (anytime after taking NURS 713), must have a re-check of their background check and drug screen completed prior to re-enrollment.

The College of Nursing may withdraw an offer of admission to anyone determined to have a criminal history that poses a threat to the institution's community. Depending on the information appearing on the criminal history record, it is possible that the student may not be able to participate in a clinical site practicum, which will prevent progression in the program.

If at any time after the initial background and drug screen have been completed, and there is a change in the student's status, it is the student's responsibility to immediately report the circumstances to the appropriate Program Director, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, or Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation. Failure to report can result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Health Requirements

As a part of the compliance process all students must submit proof of the immunizations charted below. Influenza, Tuberculosis test, HIPAA and OSHA must be completed and submitted every year. Certain programs or clinical sites may have additional requirements that students may need to complete and submit.

Records are to be submitted to and held by our compliance vendor. All new students must complete clinical requirements by the designated deadline below within the first semester of enrollment*. Please complete requirements by the designed deadline to ensure continued enrollment.

Admit Term	Purchase Account on or After	Due Date
Spring	November 15 th	April 1 st
Spring (MEPN Students)	November 15 th	January 5 th
Summer	April 15 th	August 1 st
Fall	August 15 th	November 1 st

***Any students who will complete a clinical course the first semester of enrollment must complete the clinical requirements by the first day of classes.**

For detailed instructions, visit Viewpoint or Exxat or Exxat Screening – How to Get Started in the appropriate Blackboard virtual community, Viewpoint or Exxat Screening. During order placement, you will be asked for personal identifying information needed for security or compliance purposes. Supplying accurate and comprehensive information is important to the completion of your order. Use your **USC email address and USC ID** when placing your order.

It may seem redundant, but due to HIPPA regulations, we must use different systems and University Health Services and the College of Nursing cannot share your information with each other. **Due to the demands of our clinical partners, requirements are subject to change.**

Graduate Student Requirements	How Often?	Description & Additional Information
Clear background check	<p>Upon matriculation; after return to program following a leave of absence; or if requested by College of Nursing or a clinical agency.</p>	<p>A 7-year background check is conducted unless the background check indicates further background investigation is needed to confirm a clean check, which means the background check may go back in years. This will incur additional expense to the student as well as any check of any other registry or records required by law, accrediting agency, or specific agency.</p> <p>The following will be searched: 7-year County Criminal Search, National Sex Offender Registry, Nationwide Healthcare Fraud and Abuse Scan (FACIS level 3), U.S. Patriot Act Search, Residence History, and Social Security Alert.</p>
Clear drug screen	<p>Upon matriculation; negative dilute results, after return to program following a leave of absence; or if requested by College of Nursing or a clinical agency</p>	<p>12-panel urinalysis drug screen to be administered.</p> <p>9 panel + MDMA + Oxy Test includes: amphetamines, cocaine, marijuana, barbiturates, benzodiazepine, methamphetamine, methadone, opiates,</p>

Graduate Student Requirements	How Often? <i>Each item required must be renewed prior to expiration while enrolled in a clinical course</i>	Description & Additional Information
		oxycodone, phencyclidine, propoxyphene, MDMA.
Positive Rubeola Titer (Measles)	Once See Description & Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A positive IgG (not IgM) antibody titer (lab report required) indicates immunity. If a titer is negative or equivocal, the negative or equivocal titer result must be accompanied by a booster injection. An additional titer is not required after a booster injection. <p>MMR vaccine and its component vaccines should not be administered to women known to be pregnant. Because a risk to the fetus from administration of these live virus vaccines can occur, women should avoid becoming pregnant for 28 days after vaccination with MMR or other measles, mumps, or rubella-containing vaccines.</p>
Positive Mumps Titer	Once See Description & Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A positive IgG (not IgM) antibody titer (lab report required) indicates immunity. If a titer is negative or equivocal, the negative or equivocal titer result must be accompanied by a booster injection. An additional titer is not required after a booster injection. MMR vaccine and its component vaccines should not be administered to women known to be pregnant. Because a risk to the fetus from administration of these live virus vaccines can occur, women should avoid becoming pregnant for 28 days after vaccination with MMR or other measles, mumps, or rubella-containing vaccines.
Positive Rubella Titer (German Measles)	Once See Description & Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A positive IgG (not IgM) antibody titer (lab report required) indicates immunity. If a titer is negative or equivocal, the negative or equivocal titer result must be accompanied by a booster injection. An additional titer is not required after a booster injection. MMR vaccine and its component vaccines should not be administered to

Graduate Student Requirements	How Often? <i>Each item required must be renewed prior to expiration while enrolled in a clinical course</i>	Description & Additional Information
		women known to be pregnant. Because a risk to the fetus from administration of these live virus vaccines can occur, women should avoid becoming pregnant for 28 days after vaccination with MMR or other measles, mumps, or rubella-containing vaccines.
Positive Varicella Titer (Chicken Pox)	Once See Description & Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive IgG (not IgM) antibody titer (lab report required) indicates immunity. If a titer is negative or equivocal, the negative or equivocal titer result must be accompanied by a booster injection.
Positive Hepatitis B Surface Antibody Titer (Anti HBs)	Once See Description & Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive surface antibody titer (lab report required) is required. A positive titer indicates immunity. • If a titer is negative or equivocal, Hepatitis B vaccines and a 2nd titer are required. Full immunization consists of a two or three Hepatitis B vaccination series followed by a 2nd titer given 1-2 months after the final vaccination. • Students must begin the vaccination series prior to clinical course registration. Evidence of a positive titer must be provided prior to next semester's course registration. • If the post-vaccination titer is negative or equivocal, then one will be considered as a non-responder, not expected to convert, and documented as not immune to the Hepatitis B virus.
Negative Tuberculosis (TB) Screening	Annually	<p>One of the following is required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative two-step PPD skin test (Mantoux) administered 1-3 weeks apart within the past 12 months OR • Negative two-step skin test administered 1-3 weeks apart and all subsequent 1 step skin tests with the most recent 1 step test being administered within the past 12 months OR

Graduate Student Requirements	How Often? <i>Each item required must be renewed prior to expiration while enrolled in a clinical course</i>	Description & Additional Information
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative QuantiFERON Gold Blood Test administered within the past 12 months OR Negative T-Spot Blood Test administered within the past 12 months. <p>If the result is positive, a clear chest x-ray report must be submitted following the last positive test result, administered within the past 12 months along with a physician clearance documented on letterhead.</p> <p>The renewal date will be set for 1 year, requiring one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative one-step test OR Negative QuantiFERON Gold Blood Test OR Negative T-Spot Blood Test
Influenza	Each Fall (Administered September 1 – November 1)	One of the following is required: Documentation of a flu shot administered during the current flu season OR a declination waiver, which must be completed on a school form.
Tetanus/Diphtheria/ Pertussis	Every 10 years	Submit Tdap administered within the past 10 years.
COVID-19 Vaccination	As mandated by clinical facilities	Submit administered vaccine(s).
Current BLS CPR Certification	Every 2 years, Depending on expiration date – See Description & Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be the American Heart Association Basic Life Support (BLS) course OR American Red Cross BLS/CPR for Healthcare course OR Military Training Network Healthcare Provider. Submit copy of front & back of signed card. The renewal date will be set based on the expiration of the card.

Graduate Student Requirements	How Often? <i>Each item required must be renewed prior to expiration while enrolled in a clinical course</i>	Description & Additional Information
		A letter from the provider will be accepted and temporarily approved for 30 days by which time the permanent CPR card must be submitted.
eLearning Modules for HIPAA & OSHA training	Annually	All students must document their knowledge of protection against bloodborne disease annually. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit completed, printed certificate form with name & date visible on certificate.
Handbook Acknowledgment	Annually (September 1)	All students are required to read the Graduate Student Handbook annually. Students will sign and upload into Viewpoint or Exxat Screening a Handbook Acknowledgement Form.
Academic Bulletin(s) and Code of Conduct Acknowledgement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit signed Academic Bulletin(s) and Code of Conduct Acknowledgement.
Authorization for Release of Records and Information / Participant Clinical Education Experience Agreement	Once	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit signed Authorization for Release of Records and Information and Participant Clinical Education Experience Agreement.
Student Name Badge	Once	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students completing a clinical or enrolled in a clinical/immersion course experience must purchase a name badge. The student lab coat and name badges are to be worn for clinical experiences and as authorized by the College of Nursing. Photo ID and name badges are required for all clinical activities and are to be ordered upon admission to the major. The first and last legal name is required on the name badge along with the identification "USC Graduate Student." Other unique identifying tags may be required per

Graduate Student Requirements	How Often?	Description & Additional Information
	<i>Each item required must be renewed prior to expiration while enrolled in a clinical course</i>	<p>clinical site. A photocopy of the student's name badge must be uploaded into Viewpoint or Exxat Screening. To place an order, go to the University of South Carolina Bookstore</p> <p>https://sc.bncollege.com/School-Supplies-ArtTech/Science-Supplies/Medical-Nursing-Supplies/Watches-Lanyards-ID-Badges-Nurse-Clips/Nursing-Student-Name-Tag-Magnetic/p/957551.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload photocopy of student name badge into Viewpoint or Exxat Screening

Professional Liability Insurance

Nursing students do not have to obtain professional liability insurance before entering their first clinical. Students are assessed a malpractice fee associated with specific clinical courses. The University insurance policy covers them during all course-related clinical experiences. However, students contemplating clinical employment must obtain their own professional liability coverage, as the University's policy does not cover students in employment related- situations. Go to **department fees** for additional information.

CON Guidelines for COVID-19 Vaccine Policies established by Clinical Organizations

Clinical organizations may have COVID-19 vaccination requirements that differ from and are beyond the control of the University's and College's vaccination policies. For any College of Nursing student whose academic progress depends on clinical placements, failure to meet COVID-19 vaccination requirements established by external organizations could mean the student will be unable to finish the degree as previously advised. Updated guidelines are posted in courses each semester.

FIT Testing

Students will be required to attend a mandatory FIT testing clinic.

Guidance for all Clinical Experiences

The clinical experience must be in an agency/facility/office where the University of South Carolina has a current contract. The clinical contract is with the agency/facility/office and not necessarily the preceptor. The only time the agreement

may be with a preceptor is if the preceptor is the sole proprietor of the agency/facility/office.

The Office of Academic Affairs must have all clinical requirements on file. Clinical agencies may have additional requirements other than those required by the College of Nursing that must be met before beginning clinical practice.

- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all clinical requirements are met.
- The selected preceptor at the agency will be contacted periodically to assess your skills and progress or unannounced site visits will be conducted if deemed necessary.
- Contact faculty member(s) by phone or email if assistance is needed.
- Contact faculty member(s) by phone or email if there are any problems or concerns in the clinical area.
- Notify clinical faculty member(s) immediately by phone or email if left alone at the clinical site. Call 911 if an emergency arises at the clinical site and the preceptor or designated licensed health care provider is not on site.

Clinical Safety and Performance

Dress Code for Clinical Courses

(Approved by College of Nursing Faculty): By choosing to be a graduate student in the College of Nursing at the University of South Carolina, each student accepts the responsibility to present and maintain a professional image by complying with the dress code policy. The dress code is designed to protect the personal safety of patients, as well as students, while in the clinical area; project the professional image of nursing; and portray the proud heritage of USC nurses.

Although this dress code is congruent with most health care agencies, some agencies have dress codes that are more restrictive and should then be followed. College of Nursing faculty reserve the right to ask students to leave the clinical area if their attire is deemed inappropriate or student's lack of appropriate equipment to perform the clinical duties. The following are specific stipulations of the code:

Hair

- Shoulder length or longer hair must be pulled back and secured.
- Ornate hair decorations are inappropriate.
- Hair must conform to natural hair colors and non-extreme styles.
- Moustaches and beards must be neatly groomed and close to the face to avoid contaminating the work environment.

Body Piercing and Other Jewelry

- Body piercing jewelry may not be worn in clinical. No more than one small, stud- style earring per ear may be worn.
- Religious jewelry may be worn inside the uniform. Ring bands may be worn

but rings with large stones may not.

Tattoos

- Tattoos must be covered during clinical experiences.
- If the tattoo is in an area that cannot be covered by clothing, it must be covered by a bandage.

Personal Hygiene

- Students are required to maintain high standards of personal cleanliness.
- Non-scented makeup and hair products may be worn. No perfumes or colognes may be worn.
- Makeup must conform to general body tones avoiding extreme colors.
- Nails must be clean, well kept, without nail polish or designs, and no longer than the tip of the finger. Artificial nails may not be worn.

Uniforms

During clinical practice, graduate students are required to wear a clean, pressed, and approved uniform. Details of specific style numbers, brands, and locations of uniform vendors are shared during orientation. All articles must be ordered prior to entry into clinical nursing courses. Uniforms may only be worn to clinical, lab and/or social events sanctioned by the College of Nursing. Failure to comply will result in a meeting with the Program Director.

Professional Uniform Attire

Any time students are in a healthcare setting during scheduled clinical time, the following must apply:

- Approved uniforms are required.
- All uniforms must be neat, clean, opaque, wrinkle free, and properly fit with appropriate undergarments.
- If desired, students may wear black, grey, or white unadorned t-shirts under their scrub tops. Hoodies are not acceptable.
- A white lab coat with College of Nursing identification may be worn over the uniform.
- Opaque black stockings or socks must always be worn, when in uniform.
- Clinical Shoe Requirements:
 - Black uniform or athletic: Entire shoe is black (black body, black soles, and black insignia). No color on shoes other than black.
 - Enclosed, flat-heeled: Raised heel section with extended front, enclosing the entire foot. No ventilation/air holes or openings on any section of the shoe.
 - Non-canvas, non-mesh: A solid enclosed material including but not limited to leather, pleather, faux leather, imitation leather, vegan leather, artificial leather, and polyurethane.
 - Kept clean: Shoes are kept clean and professional.
- A watch with secondhand capability is required. The second hand can

be manual or digital. Smartwatches, a mobile computer device with a touchscreen display, including but not limited to, Apple Watches, Fitbits, Samsung Galaxy Watches, etc. are prohibited.

- Students are required to wear their USC ID Badge in all settings unless otherwise directed by their course faculty.
- Face shield or eye goggles for eye protection.

Professional Casual Attire

Any time students are in a healthcare setting during scheduled clinical time, the following must apply:

- All clothing must be neat, clean, opaque, wrinkle free, and properly fit with appropriate undergarments.
- Many community agencies require the student to wear professional casual attire covered by a lab coat. Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, shorts, denim jeans, see through blouses, halter dresses, athletic attire (sweatshirts/hoodies, sweatpants, and jogging suits), tight knit clothing, leggings, imprinted t-shirts, and any type of attire which is low-cut or where the midriff is exposed may not be worn. Extreme styles should be avoided.
- Students are required to always wear stockings or socks.
- If desired, students may wear black, grey, or white unadorned t-shirts under
- Clinical Shoe Requirements:
 - Black uniform or athletic: Entire shoe is black (black body, black soles, and black insignia). No color on shoes other than black.
 - Enclosed, flat-heeled: Raised heel section with extended front, enclosing the entire foot. No ventilation/air holes or openings on any section of the shoe.
 - Non-canvas, non-mesh: A solid enclosed material including but not limited to leather, pleather, faux leather, imitation leather, vegan leather, artificial leather, and polyurethane.
 - Kept clean: Shoes are kept clean and professional.
- Students are required to wear their USC ID Badge in all settings unless otherwise directed by their course faculty.
- Face shield or eye goggles for eye protection.

Equipment Kit

Approved equipment must be purchased prior to NURS 712 class. Students receive information regarding the required purchases upon admission.

Clinical Experiences Attendance

Students are expected to attend ALL clinical nursing activities with absences permitted up to 10 percent only if certified as unavoidable because of sickness or other causes determined acceptable by the course coordinator. Make-up time for missed clinical nursing experiences will be determined at the discretion of the faculty and availability of clinical facilities. Faculty may require withdrawal of a student who

has missed enough practice to prevent completion of clinical objectives. Students must provide a note from their healthcare provider documenting the need to miss clinical or simulation lab experiences. See Class attendance for additional information.

Clinical Late Attendance Policy

A student will notify their Clinical Instructor verbally at least 1 hour prior to the absence and notify the Course Coordinators within 24 hours. Faculty may require withdrawal of any student who has missed sufficient clinical/practice to prevent completion of clinical objectives. Late arrival at clinical is not acceptable.

- First offense within a course: Student will receive a warning.
- Second offense within a course: Student will be sent home and receive a Clinical Day Failure to be made up as indicated by the Course Coordinators (only if student has no other absences).
- Third offense within a course: Student will be sent home and receive a second Clinical Day Failure.

A single Clinical Day Failure must be made up and will require an individual counseling form. A second Clinical Day Failure (for any reason) may constitute a course failure.

Promptness Expectation Policy

Students will be provided individual start times based on the culture of the unit. Students are expected to be on the unit and ready to work at this assigned start time.

Arrival at the clinical site no later than the appointed time is mandatory.

1. Student arriving late, but prior to the beginning of pre-clinical conference may complete clinical but will need to receive verbal and written counseling from their clinical instructor for the first offense, dismissal for the second.
2. Students arriving after the beginning of pre-clinical activities will not be permitted to complete the clinical day and must leave the clinical setting. This will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the day.
 - a. If eligible, the student must attend the clinical make-up day scheduled by the clinical coordinator.
 - b. If not eligible for a make-up date, the absence will result in course failure.
3. No call/no show for a clinical day without notifying the clinical instructor or course coordinator is considered unprofessional behavior.
 - a. Any instance will result in a STAR counseling form, clinical day failure, and meeting with the MEPN Program Director unless unforeseen health issues prevented communication.

Subsequent instances will result in program dismissal.

Student Medication Error Policy

Performance Outcome: Medications are accurately dispensed in a safe and timely manner. Students will receive the appropriate didactic and clinical instructions according to course objectives:

1. The nursing student will report all medication errors immediately to the clinical instructor or preceptor.
2. The patient's condition will be assessed, and the error will be reported to the charge nurse and nurse manager.
3. The student making the error or the one discovering an error will complete required documentation, with faculty assistance, according to hospital protocol.
4. Errors in documentation of medications will be considered unsatisfactory student performance and will be reflected on the clinical evaluation. Examples include (but are not limited to):
 - a. Failure to complete documentation of medication administration.
 - b. Failure to have a co-signature on narcotic waste.
 - c. Failure to document a reason for omitting a medication.
 - d. Failure to acquire and communicate appropriate assessment data as indicated by the healthcare institution policy.
5. Students will be counseled after each medication error. Two or more medication errors will result in clinical failure for the course. Examples of medication errors include (but are not limited to):
 - a. Not following all rights of medication administration.
 - b. Inability to calculate correct dosage.
 - c. Omission of an ordered medication.
 - d. Duplication of medication that has already been given.
 - e. Administration of discontinued medication.
 - f. Leaving medication at bedside without an order (unless per hospital policy).
 - g. Failure to check healthcare provider orders, take an apical pulse, B/P, check lab values or other appropriate assessment data prior to giving medication.
6. A medication error that endangers the patient's life or causes patient harm can be grounds for immediate termination from the course.

Note: Students will still be held accountable for medication errors even if an instructor or staff nurse prevents the error from occurring.

Clinical Behaviors

- Prepares for nursing responsibilities.
- Attends clinical/lab on time.
- Stays awake during clinical hours.
- A student will verbally notify their clinical instructor at least 1 hour prior to the absence and notify the course coordinator within 24 hours. Faculty may require withdrawal of any student who has missed enough practice to prevent completion of clinical.

- Wears correct professional attire always including name badge.
- Maintains appropriate demeanor during clinical.
- Shows respect for patients and staff.
- Keeps a positive attitude toward learning.
- Upholds confidentiality.
- Stays in clinical setting until clinical group is dismissed.
- Informs faculty and/or nurse when leaving the unit for any reason.
- Returns from breaks on time.
- Identifies own learning goals.
- Uses clinical time to maximize learning.
- Participates verbally in clinical conferences.
- Seeks instructor's help and supervision appropriately.
- Seeks help appropriately to manage stress that may affect performance.
- Identifies own strengths and limitations.
- Completes all clinical work by specified date.
- Electronic devices of any kind are not to be brought into the clinical area unless under the direction of your faculty member. This includes but is not limited to I-watches, phones, iPod, iPad, tablets, etc.

Misuse of Telephone and/or other Communication Technology

No student shall misuse or abuse or assist in the misuse or abuse of communication equipment at the University. Such activity includes, but is not limited to, using any form of communication equipment to harass or threaten any person or persons, or using any form of communication equipment to disrupt the normal operations or activities of any person, organization, or the University. Communication equipment includes, but is not limited to, electronic mail, pagers, voice mail, computers, printer, etc. Cell phones and pagers must be turned off or to silent operation during class/clinical and may not be used during class/clinical except in extreme circumstances.

Travel to Clinical Sites

Students are responsible for transportation to sites for their practicum experiences each semester and for covering the cost of travel. It is the obligation of students to provide their own vehicle collision and/or bodily injury liability insurance for their personal vehicles. Neither the College of Nursing nor the University of South Carolina is responsible for any vehicle occurrences or transportation.

Clinical Inclement Weather Policy

The College of Nursing Clinical Inclement Weather Policy is based on the safety and welfare of all students. Since students are spread all over the state and work all shifts, the policy is more individualized than for other clinical courses and is based on the location of the clinical site and the travel distance for the student. If the student feels it is unsafe to travel back and forth to the clinical site for their scheduled shift due to weather conditions, then it is their responsibility to notify their preceptor or the

clinical unit and their clinical faculty to let them know they are unable to work the shift as scheduled. Please understand this policy is not dependent on decisions made by the University to delay the start or cancel classes due to weather conditions. This means if USC Columbia or any of our campuses delay starting or cancel classes and the student's clinical is in Greenville where there are no weather alerts, the student should go to clinical. If conditions start changing while the student is at clinical, please have the student use their judgment to leave early to ensure their safe travel home. Please consult the local forecast for road conditions. The College of Nursing suggests you follow the local school system guidelines, meaning if elementary, middle, and high schools are canceled then so is clinical. The same would apply for early release.

If the student is unable to go in for a planned shift, they are still responsible for calling their preceptor so they will know not to expect you. If the student cannot reach your preceptor, then the student is to leave a message on their assigned unit. The student should also let their clinical faculty know.

If the student needs to reschedule due to weather, please know that the student is still responsible for completing required clinical hours and so they may need to regroup and adjust their planned schedule to accommodate any missed shifts. Your priority is to be safe!

Center for Simulation and Experiential Learning (SAEL)

The Center for Simulation and Experiential Learning of the College of Nursing in the Williams-Brice building. This state-of-the-art facility is designed to replicate realistic practice environments where healthcare students develop clinical decision-making skills and enhance technical skill acquisition. Students function within their full scope of practice while receiving real-time feedback and guidance from expert clinical educators. All simulation-based learning experiences adhere to the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning's (INACSL) Standards of Best Practice: SimulationSM. For more information, please visit [SAEL](#).

Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Protocol

This protocol applies to all USC Columbia campus employees, student employees and all other USC students who have an exposure to a potentially infectious biological material. A potentially infectious material or biological hazard may include an incident involving a microorganism (e.g., bacterial agent, viral agent, and fungal agent), human-derived material, biological toxin, or an incident involving recombinant DNA research. Exposures through sexual contact are not included in this protocol.

Process

The student must report the incident immediately to the supervisor and clinical faculty to authorize medical evaluation. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring

students are offered immediate medical care, appropriate diagnostics, and treatment.

Percutaneous Exposure (e.g. needle stick, cut, animal bite) – Immediately wash or flush the exposed area with soap and water for 10 minutes.

Mucous Membrane Exposure (e.g. eyes, nose, or mouth) – Flush the exposed area with water. If exposure is to the eyes, flush the eyes (holding open) using the eyewash station for 10 minutes.

The student or supervisor should immediately notify the appropriate entity within the health care institution where the exposure occurred to initiate testing of the “source patient” for HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C infection. It is important for rapid HIV testing to be completed with results available within a few hours. Each institution has its own procedures for obtaining “source patient” testing, and supervising faculty should know these procedures. If there is uncertainty about whom to contact within the host institution, instructions should be obtained from one or more of the following:

Employee health office

Charge nurse for the floor or unit where the exposure occurred

Infection control nurse

Administrative officer of the day

Clinic director (for outpatient sites)

Once the necessary “source patient” testing has been ordered, the student should seek medical treatment as soon as possible by immediately reporting the injury to the faculty supervisor.

Non-life-threatening injuries or illnesses for which medical treatment may be necessary – The faculty supervisor and injured student together will immediately call CompEndium Services (available 24/7) at 877-709-2667.

Life-threatening injuries or illnesses – Dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room and contact your supervisor and CompEndium Services as soon as possible. CompEndium will assist in processing and scheduling the student’s work-related injury for treatment and claims handling with USC’s insurance provider.

CompEndium will:

Direct the student to a medical provider for treatment.

Issue a treatment authorization number to the medical provider, which will authorize treatment of the injured student.

Provide a CompEndium email address where the student will submit Employee Injury Report Form (81-B) and where the faculty supervisor will submit Supervisor Report of Injury Form (81-C).

The student must notify the CON Office of Student Affairs of the incident at 803-777-4889. Leave a message with a return phone number if there is no answer.

The student submits Employee Injury Report Form (81-B), and the faculty supervisor submits Supervisor Report of Injury Form (81-C) to the Office of Student Affairs at NURSINQ@mailbox.sc.edu.

The Office of Student Affairs Administrative Coordinator forwards both forms to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

Important Notes

All exposure incidents in clinical agencies and the client-simulated laboratory (CSL) must be reported, investigated, and documented. If an exposure occurs and there is no faculty present, the student must notify the course faculty and the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible.

Workers' Compensation covers the following populations who experience a bloodborne pathogen exposure while working or at a clinical setting if appropriate reports are filed:

All USC employees and apprenticeship students in the College of Education, Department of Exercise Science, School of Medicine, CON, College of Pharmacy, and College of Social Work.

Work study students and graduate assistants who are exposed while on the job.

Students who suffer a non-job related or non-clinical related Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure during an enrolled academic session should report to University Health Services for initial evaluation and referral. If closed, students may seek care at the nearest hospital emergency department.

Evaluation and Review

The Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation is responsible for annually reviewing this policy and procedures and its effectiveness and for updating the program as needed. (Reviewed August 2024).

Preceptor Guidelines

The University of South Carolina, College of Nursing, does not directly pay nor facilitate student payment for student clinical placements in healthcare systems, provider practices or payment to individual preceptors. This includes application fees for such placements.

Preceptors for clinical courses are integral to the student's clinical learning. The preceptor must have the expertise to support (facilitate) a student's achievement of course/clinical objectives as listed on the course syllabus and clinical agreement forms. The course faculty approves the preceptors. The preceptor for the course receives the evaluation tool to assess student's performance, located in the course syllabus. Taking into consideration preceptor evaluation, the course faculty determines the student's final grade. Preceptor guidelines are found at [Nursing Preceptor Handbook](#).

Unsafe Clinical Practice and Clinical Evaluation

Nursing Department faculty members are academically committed to preparing students who are competent in the skills of nursing practice: technical, diagnostic, and interpersonal. Faculty members have an ethical and legal responsibility and accountability for the protection of others within the health care and larger community from unsafe, unethical, or illegal nursing practice on the part of University of South Carolina students and graduates. All students are expected to be familiar with the principles of safe, ethical, and legal practice and are expected to perform accordingly. Therefore, students may be disciplined or dismissed from the nursing major for practice or behavior, which threatens, or has the potential to threaten, the safety of a client, family member, authorized representative, student peer, faculty member, healthcare provider, and/or self, or is unethical or illegal. Unacceptable practice may be a one-time event or a series of events. Clinical practice may be considered unsafe when a student fails to use the nursing process effectively by engaging in one or more of the following activities.

Unsafe Clinical Practice List

You understand that should it be determined that if you are considered unsafe and fail to use a nursing process effectively, you will receive an academic penalty (including but not limited to clinical failure, course failure, suspension, expulsion from the College, or other penalties) and be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity for additional disciplinary action. (Please note that this list is not all-inclusive.)

Unsafe clinical practice is at the discretion of each individual professor:

1. Unacceptable practice is defined as: An act(s) or behavior(s) of the type that violates the Nurse Practice Act. An act(s) or behavior(s) that violates the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code [of Ethics] for Nurses, the ANA Standards of Clinical Practice, or the College of Nursing Core Values.
2. An act(s) or behavior(s) that threatens, or has the potential to threaten, the physical, emotional, mental, or environmental safety of a client, family member or designate, student peer, a faculty member, health care provider, or self.
3. Attending clinical with active infectious disease process or when lab results are in critical range.
4. An act(s) or behavior(s) that is unethical, dishonest, or illegal, e.g., lying or deliberately giving inaccurate information.

5. An act(s) or behavior(s) that constitutes nursing practice for which the student is not authorized to perform, or has not been taught, at the time of the incident.
6. Unauthorized entry(s) into the computer or misuse of clinical records or misuse of computer technology to violate patient, faculty, or staff rights.”
7. A trend of behavior often characterized by being unprepared or inadequately prepared for clinicals, the classroom or in simulation.
8. Continued inability to perform safely, ethically, or legally without immediate/close instructor supervision (in this case, there may not be a single isolated incident of unacceptable practice, failure to progress).
9. The use of prescribed/non-prescribed or other substances that alter the ability to clinically reason in the classroom, simulation area or clinical environment.
10. Failure to recognize the need for assistance when unfamiliar with advanced practice nursing action.
11. Failure to take advanced practice nursing action when such action is essential to the health and safety of the client.
12. Failure to recognize the influence of own attitudes and behaviors on care of client.
13. Failure to assume responsibility for completing nursing action.
14. Violation of laws or rules relating to patient record confidentiality.
15. Classroom (online) or College behavior that is threatening or potentially harmful towards peers, instructors, advisors, or others.
16. Unsatisfactory attendance/tardiness in clinical, simulation, advisement, or classroom.

Clinical Evaluation

All clinical grade determinations are completed by the course faculty in conjunction with the clinical faculty and student preceptors. An evaluation within any area of the clinical evaluation considered unsatisfactory, the course faculty will contact the preceptor and remediation may be required by the student or if warranted a clinical failure may be assigned. Clinical practice that is considered unsafe must be evaluated as such by more than one faculty member involved in the course, usually the faculty member serving as the student’s clinical instructor and the Course Director or Program Director. If students are found to have unsafe or unsatisfactory clinical practices faculty will then consult the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation who may choose to meet with the student and will consult with the faculty about potential processes to improve student performance. If it is determined that the student’s clinical practice is so unsafe that they must be removed from clinical, the faculty will determine if the student has failed the course. The Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation will be consulted and will review documentation leading to the determination of unsafe practice and course failure. In collaboration with the faculty, the Interim Associate Dean for Academics and Accreditation will determine if the student will be permitted to re-take the course or if the student is to be dismissed from the College.

Clinical Remediation (NURS 769A)

Students whose clinical performance would benefit from additional clinical exposure to demonstrate the expected competencies are, with course faculty and program director approval, eligible to register for NURS 769A. This experience will be allotted credit hours based on the number of clinical hours needed for remediation (1 credit = 112 hours) and must be completed in a period of one academic semester. A course may be remediated only one time. Completion of NURS 769A may not be applied to program elective requirements.

Procedures:

1. Approval to register for the remedial experience must be obtained from the faculty responsible for the course and from the program director as well. If the course involves simulation lab, the Director of the SAEL or designee must be involved in the planning of the remedial experience.
2. The student, in collaboration with course/program faculty, will design an individual experience that addresses the areas of deficit, and which affords the student sufficient time and clinical exposure so that expected course outcomes are achieved. This experience will be detailed in a contract format, using the Independent Study Contract (ISC) Form, which will be signed by both student and faculty.
3. Specific objectives for the experience should fully address the areas of deficit and be congruent with the course in which the clinical difficulties were encountered. Additionally, the student will be held to the objectives that are detailed on the course clinical evaluation form that correlates with the specific course involved.
4. The course/program faculty must approve the plan for remediation before the student can proceed to the clinical area for practice.
5. The course/program faculty will determine the credit allotment for this remedial experience. The tuition will be determined based on this credit allotment and will apply to the costs associated with personnel costs necessary to oversee this experience.
6. Total hours completed during the remediation experience are not to exceed the number of hours originally assigned to the course.
7. At the conclusion of the experience, the student will complete the clinical evaluation tool as part of the self-evaluation process. Additionally, in narrative form, the student will evaluate their success in achieving the goals that were set for this individualized experience. All work must be accomplished with the grade of “pass” for the student to progress to the next level and for the successful completion of the course to be noted on the transcript.
8. A copy of all materials related to the completion of this course will be maintained in the student’s file.

Student Resources

Role of the Interim Associate Dean for Access, Belonging and Community Engagement (ABC)

Petition process - The Interim Associate Dean for ABC strives for impartiality, fairness, and objectivity in the treatment of all students and the consideration of their issues in the College of Nursing. She also serves as a confidential resource for student concerns and conflicts within the College of Nursing. Dr. Sevilla Bronson can be reached at (803) 777-5109 or by e-mail sbronson@mailbox.sc.edu.

College of Nursing Comments and Kudos

The College of Nursing has an electronic box [Comments and Kudos \(https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/internal/current_students/suggestions.php\)](https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/internal/current_students/suggestions.php) to allow students to make comments, share ideas, ask questions, and provide feedback to the Dean. The Office of the Dean reviews all submissions. Suggestions and comments submitted will be shared with the appropriate personnel as applicable. All submissions can be done anonymously. However, if you would like a response, you have the option to provide your contact information on the form.

Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support

The Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support offers a wide range of services to enhance student experience and support academic success. To learn more about available opportunities and to access the services, visit the [SAAS Programs & Services web page \(http://www.sa.sc.edu/about/programs/\)](http://www.sa.sc.edu/about/programs/).

Graduate School Opportunities and Support

https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/opportunities_support/index.php

Graduate Student Resources Hub

The Grad Hub provides graduate students with greater access to student services and resources through a collaboration with National Fellowships and the University Career Center.

Student Organizations

- Graduate Student Association
https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/leadership_and_service_center/student_organizations/graduate_student_association/index.php
- Black Graduate Student Association – Instagram at @BGSA_USC or Facebook at BSA_USC
- Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing
- Black Nurses Association
- Student Nurses Association
<https://garnetgate.sa.sc.edu/organization/sna>
- Chi Eta Phi
<https://garnetgate.sa.sc.edu/organization/chietaphi>

Campus Life

https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/our_experts/our_offices/student_life/index.php

Career Center

https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/career_center/index.php

Carolina Alert

https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/law_enforcement_and_safety/carolina-alert/index.php

CON Carolina Cares Cupboard (CCC)

The CCC contains food, personal care/toiletry items, and professional clothing for College of Nursing students who are in need. The CCC will also provide limited "scholarships" in cases where students need financial assistance (e.g., gas to get to clinical, clinical supplies, books). CCC Request Form-
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=GUsqSzXRDkKLsrHNI4mYzGf-NpH7R_xKvdNVGGjc_aZUQTg0UEdLSkNKRjVNRFY1T004SzJINIM4OC4u

Dining Services

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/dining_services/index.php

Diversity and Inclusion

https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/diversity_equity_and_inclusion/index.php

Law Enforcement and Safety

https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/law_enforcement_and_safety/index.php or contact USCPD as follows:

Emergencies: 911

Police Dispatch: 803) 777-4215

Libraries

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/university_libraries/index.php

Transportation

https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/parking/index.php

Student Disability Resource Center

The USC College of Nursing is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for Students with disabilities. Students with disabilities must contact the Student Disability Resource Center prior to or early in their program to determine if reasonable accommodations will be provided. [Student Disability Resource Center website \(https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_disability_resource_center/index.php\)](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_disability_resource_center/index.php).

Student Disability Resource Center
1705 College Street; Close-Hipp, Suite 102
Columbia, SC 29208
Phone: 803-777-6142; Fax: 803-777-6741
Email: sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu

Students with disabilities must be able to continuously meet the core performance standards and functional abilities established to ensure that the objectives of the nursing program are met.

University Health Services

Health and Wellness

https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/health_services/index.php

Mental Health Services

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/health_services/mental-health/

- **Mental Health Emergencies:**

Mental health resources are available. Students have access to virtual counseling and support 24/7. Go to <https://thriveatcarolina.com/> or call 833-664-2854.

If you think you may harm yourself or someone else, call the USC Police Department at 803-777-4215.

Medical Services

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/health_services/medical-services/index.php

Sexual Assault or Interpersonal Violence

Call (803) 777-8248 to speak to a trained interpersonal violence advocate 24/7.

Student Success Center

https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_success_center/index.php

Veterans and Military Services

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/veterans_and_military_services/index.php

Writing Center

Students who need assistance with writing can receive assistance from the USC Writing Center. Contact information and hours of operation are posted on the [Writing Center website](#):

[Writing Center - Department of English Language and Literature | University of South Carolina \(sc.edu\)](#)

Tuition and Required Fees

Tuition is charged based on the number of credit hours taken in each semester. You will also be charged a Health Professions Fee and Technology Fee each semester, and in some semesters may be charged added fees (such as laboratory fee and malpractice insurance fee) that are associated with certain courses.

Health Profession Fee Explanation

- Resources to identify, secure, and support clinical and/or experiential placements for training purposes.
- Staff and support systems to maintain regulatory and compliance standards (to include background checks, immunizations, drug screens, etc.) with experiential training in healthcare systems as mandated by respective accrediting bodies.
- Provides additional resources to improve health professional student experiences and remain competitive against peer programs by recruiting and retaining high quality faculty, preceptors, staff, and graduate assistants.
- Professional and specialized staff to support various activities related to student affairs, advisement, and student services.

Lab Fee Explanation

- Covers simulation lab with immersions, supplies, guest faculty for immersions, staff to ensure all regulatory, legal and compliance issues are met with your respective clinical sites (as each site differs),
- Standardized patient costs including training, fees, and costs of development and oversight of the experiences.
- While students may not be currently in the simulation lab with immersions, the regulatory, legal and compliance portions are still occurring. We are still contacting facilities to see if students can remain, processing clinical contracts, and assisting students with clinical placements for future terms. If you review the [Bursar's](#) website, you will see that this fee is assessed to each clinical course in your program. Therefore, this fee will not be reimbursed, nor can it be reduced.

Tuition Refund

Withdrawing from class can have both an academic and monetary impact. For information regarding academic withdrawal, please review the withdrawal information provided by the [University Registrar](#). You can also view the Parts of Term Dates and Deadlines located in the Academics section of [my.sc.edu](#). Each part of term has specific drop, add, and refund dates. Review your schedule in [SSC](#) to determine the [part of term](#) for your classes.

If you withdraw from all courses during a semester, contact regapeal@mailbox.sc.edu to obtain information on the Tuition Refund Appeal process.

Financial Aid

Financial Assistance

The USC Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship can help you evaluate your costs and determine what type of financial aid support you need — loans, scholarships, grants, or student employment. To be fully considered for all financial aid resources, you must complete a new Free Application for Federal Student Aid each year and all your paperwork must be received before the April 1 annual priority deadline. You may contact the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships directly with any financial aid questions: uscfaid@mailbox.sc.edu or 803-777-8134.

The College of Nursing has one graduate scholarship application that is used for consideration for all eligible departmental scholarships in the college. Each year, the online scholarship application will be available on our website in December, and the application will be due by March 15th of the following year. The funding for the submitted application is effective for the upcoming academic year. College of Nursing award decisions are expected to be finalized and announced each year in late May/early June.

In addition, as external scholarships are announced, this information is shared with students via Blackboard in the appropriate communities under Fellowship and External Scholarship Opportunities. Scholarships, traineeships, and research funding opportunities may be available through the College, The Graduate School, the University, and extramural sources.

Federal Nurse Faculty Loan Program

The [Federal Nurse Faculty Loan Program](#) is a federally subsidized loan to cover tuition, fees, books, laboratory experiences, and other reasonable educational expenses.

The NFLP is a loan cancellation program with a service obligation for recipients of the loans. To be eligible for the maximum 85 percent cancellation, the borrower must agree to serve as full-time or part-time nurse faculty at a nursing school for a consecutive four-year period following graduation. To learn more, select this [link](#).

Graduate Assistantships

The College offers a limited number of graduate assistantships with stipends. Tuition assistance for graduate assistantships is sometimes available to graduate students enrolled in at least six (6) credit hours during the fall and spring semesters; summer assistantships require at least three (3) credit hours of enrollment. Contact the College of Nursing Human Resources Director for more information at (803) 777-6918.

Funded Research Opportunities

Full-time graduate students may have Opportunities to participate in funded research programs. This experience can be a valuable addition to a student's studies. For further information, the student may consult the Office of Research at (803) 777-6488.

External Scholarship Opportunities

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Students/Financial-Aid>

The Foundation of the National Student Nurses' Association, Inc.

www.forevernursing.org

50 Great Scholarships for Nursing Students

This [scholarship resource](#) is provided through healthcare-administration-degree.net

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses Foundation (AMSN)

These [grants and scholarships](#) are available to applicants who are AMSN members for one year at the time of application date. There may be additional requirements based on grants or scholarships.