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 MSN/CGS Graduate Student Handbook provides students with current information about curricula, policies, and other important information concerning the graduate programs in the College. The MSN/CGS Graduate Student Handbook is updated annually with periodic updates available on the College of Nursing website and Virtual Communities. It is important that students become familiar with the current MSN/CGS Graduate Student Handbook. All graduate students are required to read and understand the content and are responsible for adhering to the Policies and Procedures stipulated in the Handbook. Students are required to sign a statement annually attesting to the fact that they have read the current Handbook. The College of Nursing reserves the right to make changes to this handbook as necessary. Notifications of changes or additions to the MSN/CGS Graduate Student Handbook made throughout the year are posted in a timely fashion on the Virtual Community in Blackboard (Bb). Students are responsible for checking the program Bb on a regular basis for all program-related updates and handbook updates.

Supplemental Regulations

There are several resources available to assist 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:

University of South Carolina Nondiscrimination Statement

The University of South Carolina does not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities on the basis of race, sex, gender, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, genetics, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions. Questions or concerns regarding the University’s equal opportunity
programs should be directed to the Equal Opportunity Programs, 1600 Hampton Street, Suite 805, Columbia, SC 29208 or 803-777-3854 (Voice) or 803-777-5608 (TTY).

DISCLAIMER

The policies and procedures described in this manual are continually revised and updated. The College of Nursing and the University of South Carolina must reserve the right to make changes affecting policies, fees, curriculum, or any other matters announced in this publication. If you have questions regarding the contents of this handbook, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs.

Academic Calendar

- The College of Nursing follows the University Academic Calendar in the Fall and Spring terms.
- The College of Nursing Summer Calendar differs from the traditional University calendar.

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- Campus Safety
- Career Resources
- Child Care
- Dining Services
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College of Nursing’s Mission & Policies

College of Nursing Mission and Values

The University of South Carolina College of Nursing provides nationally recognized educational programs and advances science, practice, and policy to optimize health for all.

- View the complete College of Nursing Mission, Vision and Values Statement

Accreditation

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accredits the MSN degree programs ([http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation)). The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredit the University.

Important College of Nursing Policies

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

Academic Integrity

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. Carolinian Creed

Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct outlines students' responsibilities to themselves and the Carolina community.

Honor Code

Our Honor Code describes the university's expectations for students' academic integrity. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty may receive a zero for their course grade and/or be removed from further study in the CON.

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 link for complete Code of Ethics for Nurses developed by the American Nurses Association (ANA).
Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statement

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

Source: American Nurses Association, August 2015

Civility and Professional Conduct

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. Notifies professor when unable to submit assignment on time prior to the deadline
b. Completes reading all assignments
c. Engages in class discussion
d. Maintains appropriate demeanor during in line class activity

e. Refrains from the use of online discussion forum for posting of non-academic material (i.e. advertisements for jobs, products or services)

Core Performance Standards

The USC College of Nursing requires all applicants and continuing students in all nursing programs to meet certain standards based on the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing (CCEN) Core Performance Standards. These standards describe requirements in the six dimensions of ability/performance. These are critical thinking and related mental abilities, communication and interpersonal abilities, physical abilities, hearing, vision, and smell.

Core Performance Standards

The USC College of Nursing requires all applicants and continuing students in all nursing programs to meet the following standards based on the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing (CCEN) 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 devises 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 be worn at all times 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.*

**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 law 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 strictly 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 is a violation of the College of Nursing Professionalism Policy and may result in disciplinary action under University guidelines.

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 prior to graduation. Students must follow courses in the order and as outlined on the program of study. Modification to the Master’s Program of Study may be made only in consultation with the appropriate Program Directors. Any changes must be submitted prior to beginning any change to The Graduate School on the Program of Study Adjustment Form (GS-43 (POSA)), which is submitted by the student’s Graduate Advisor http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/.

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

Important Information about Programs Leading to Licensure: Each state has its own licensing board with its own Registered Professional Nurse and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse licensure requirements. Consequently, although the baccalaureate and master’s degree programs in the College of Nursing at the University of South Carolina are fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE, http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation/accredited-programs) thereby making BSN graduates eligible to sit for national licensure (NCLEX-RN) and MSN graduates eligible to sit for national certification (ANCC and AANP), thus meeting requirements for RN and APRN professional licensure in the state of South Carolina, we cannot confirm that the program meets all the requirements for professional licensure in another state (e.g., some states have specific topical requirements). Certificate in Graduate Studies (Post MSN) programs are similar in content. For students not living in South Carolina, the following link provides information regarding state licensure specific to individual states throughout the U.S. where a non-resident student lives: http://www.nursinglicensure.org/ for RN licensure and
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.

Student Social Media Policy

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 and foremost, nurses must recognize that they have an ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times.

b. Nurses are strictly 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 video 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 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. Student should also not make disparaging remarks related to their clinical site, faculty or school. The College of Nursing has adopted the NCSBN position statement:

Degree Requirements

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.*

MSN Overview

Four programs 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), and Nursing Administration (NA). Each program of graduate degree study is a distinct and sequential course plan leading to theoretical and clinical expertise within the specialty. Course work ranges in length from 30 to 45 credit hours, depending on the foci. Foundation course include nursing theory, research methodology, and statistics.

Advanced practice core foundation courses include advanced diagnostics, pharmacology, pathophysiology, and physical assessment. A detailed description of the courses required in each major and emphasis area is found in the USC Graduate Studies Bulletin website: [http://bulletin.sc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=76&ent_oid=1492&returnto=2192](http://bulletin.sc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=76&ent_oid=1492&returnto=2192).

The MSN-Nursing Administration program prepares nurses to be key leaders in health organizations managing the delivery of health services across the spectrum of health care. Applicants to the MSN-Nursing Administration program are accepted 3 times a year. Please see website for up to date admission deadlines. The MSN-Nursing Administration leadership courses are offered online in 7-week blocks. Upon completion, graduates may be eligible to take a certification exam through either AONL or ANCC. Exam eligibility is also dependent on the candidate’s work experience.

A detailed description of the courses required in each major and emphasis area is found in the USC Graduate Studies Bulletin website: [http://bulletin.sc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=76&ent_oid=1492&returnto=2192](http://bulletin.sc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=76&ent_oid=1492&returnto=2192).

Applicants to the MSN degree programs are reviewed after the published deadlines. Course schedules are planned around the semesters following admission with courses offered fall, spring, and summer. Program requirements must be completed within 4 years.
**MSN Admissions Requirements**

**Adult -Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Program**
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing from a nationally accredited program.
- Unencumbered, active registered nurse (RN) license in state where clinical experiences will occur.
- Preferred cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (official transcripts for all nursing coursework required). Applicants who attended a BSN program that issued pass or fail grades for all classes will not be considered a competitive applicant.
- Science grades will be strongly considered (e.g., Human Anatomy and Physiology, Microbiology, Chemistry, Pathology).
- Current CV or Resume (In addition to your education and professional experiences, include any certifications, leadership experiences, experiences with diverse or underserved population, paid or volunteer healthcare experiences.)
- Current BLS and ACLS certifications are required for students seeking admission into the AGACNP program.
- Must have a minimum of 600 hours of experience as a Registered Nurse within the past 2 years in an acute care setting (ICU, Med-Surg, and Emergency Department). Submit verification of work hours from employer. This must be completed and submitted on the University of South Carolina College of Nursing Form.
- Three (3) letters of recommendation that attest to the applicant's academic ability, professional competence and personal character. These letters must be from a master’s or doctorally prepared healthcare professional.
- Personal statement: Describe the role and scope of the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP). Describe how this program will advance your professional goals.
- GRE is not required

**Family Nurse Practitioner Program**
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing from a nationally accredited program.
- Unencumbered, active registered nurse (RN) license in state where clinical experiences will occur.
- Preferred cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (official transcripts for all nursing coursework required). Applicants who attended a BSN program that issued pass or fail grades for all classes will not be considered a competitive applicant.
• Science grades will be strongly considered (e.g., Human Anatomy and Physiology, Microbiology, Chemistry, Pathology).
• Current CV or Resume (In addition to your education and professional experiences, include any certifications, leadership experiences, experiences with diverse or underserved population, paid or volunteer healthcare experiences.)
• Current BLS certification is required for students seeking admission into the FNP program.
• Must have a minimum of 600 hours of experience as a Registered Nurse within the past 2 years. Submit verification of work hours from employer. This must be completed and submitted on the University of South Carolina College of Nursing Form.
• Three (3) letters of recommendation that attest to the applicant's academic ability, professional competence and personal character. These letters must be from a master’s or doctorally prepared healthcare professional.
• Personal statement: Describe the role and scope of the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP). Describe how this program will advance your professional goals.
• GRE is not required.

Nursing Administration Program
• Bachelor of Science in Nursing from a nationally accredited program.
• Unencumbered, active registered nurse (RN) license in state where clinical experiences will occur.
• Preferred cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (official transcripts for all nursing coursework required). Applicants who attended a BSN program that issued pass or fail grades for all classes will not be considered a competitive applicant.
• Current CV or Resume (In addition to your education and professional experiences, include any certifications, leadership experiences, experiences with diverse or underserved population, paid or volunteer healthcare experiences.)
• Three (3) letters of recommendation that attest to the applicant's academic ability, professional competence and personal character. These letters must be from a master’s or doctorally prepared healthcare professional.
• Personal statement: Describe your plan for obtaining a preceptor and/or project site. In addition, describe your plan for your project.
• GRE is not required
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing from a nationally accredited program.
- Unencumbered, active registered nurse (RN) license in state where clinical experiences will occur.
- Preferred cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (official transcripts for all nursing coursework required). Applicants who attended a BSN program that issued pass or fail grades for all classes will not be considered a competitive applicant.
- Science grades will be strongly considered (e.g., Human Anatomy and Physiology, Microbiology, Chemistry, Pathology).
- Current CV or Resume (In addition to your education and professional experiences, include any certifications, leadership experiences, experiences with diverse or underserved population, paid or volunteer healthcare experiences.)
- Current BLS certification is required for students seeking admission into the PMHNP program.
- Must have a minimum of 600 hours of experience as a Registered Nurse within the past 2 years strongly preferred. Submit verification of work hours from employer. This must be completed and submitted on the University of South Carolina College of Nursing Form.
- Three (3) letters of recommendation that attest to the applicant's academic ability, professional competence and personal character. These letters must be from a master's or doctorally prepared healthcare professional.
- Personal statement: Describe the role and scope of the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP). Describe how this program will advance your professional goals.
- GRE is not required.

MSN Certification Requirements
While program curricula offered by the University of South Carolina, College of Nursing prepare students to sit for national certification within their specialty area, Nurse Practitioner program graduates may be required to complete additional state specific requirements before being permitted to practice.

MSN Degree Requirements
Requirements for earning the MSN degree include:
1. Completion of an approved Master’s Program of Study in Nursing
2. Completion of an applied research course, NURS 791 (3 credits), or a thesis, NURS 799 (6 credits)
3. A cumulative GPA of at least 3.000 at time of graduation
4. 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.
5. Complete Clinical Hours
6. Successful completion of the Master’s Comprehensive Assessment Exam

MSN Time Limitations
A maximum of four (4) calendar years, beginning with the initial graduate course following matriculation, is allowed for completion of the work for the MSN degree. Additionally, when courses are taken at the University are beyond The Graduate School six-year limit, the course must be revalidated to be applied toward the degree. Please refer to the Graduate School Bulletin Academic Regulations section on Revalidation of Out of Date Courses http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=97&navoid=2837#Revalidation_of_Out_of_Date_Courses for more information. Coursework taken at other institutions cannot be revalidated.

MSN Research Requirements
Candidates for an MSN degree must complete research activities consistent with program requirements. For the MSN degree, the student may elect a thesis option or a non-thesis option. Students electing the thesis option must meet with the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs at matriculation in order to enroll in NURS 799 Thesis Preparation (6 credits) and complete a thesis under the supervision of a thesis committee. Students electing the non-thesis option enroll in NURS 791 Seminar in Clinical Nursing Research (3 credits). Thesis Guidelines are available at The Graduate School website http://gradschool.sc.edu/students/thesisdiss.asp.

MSN Comprehensive Assessment
The Graduate School requires that all master’s degree programs offered by the University of South Carolina have an end of program comprehensive assessment of graduating students. All MSN students must successfully pass a comprehensive assessment during the last semester of the program.

Masters Program Objectives
- Knowledge and skills required for advanced nursing practice or nursing administration
- Ability to apply theory and research in practice
- Leadership skills for nursing practice

Masters Learning Objectives
Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Program, Family Nurse Practitioner Program, and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program

- Apply knowledge from core courses in the assessment of clients.
- Integrate core and clinical course content in the diagnosis and treatment of clients.
- Use core and clinical course content within the context of the community and to understand the community as client.
- Apply theory to practice problems, to analyze practice guidelines, and to conduct an evidence-based practice project.
- Examine laws governing advanced practice, to understand scope of practice, and to apply evidence-based practice knowledge in treatment planning.

Nursing Administration

- Apply knowledge of nursing leadership practice in the healthcare system.
- Integrate core and clinical course content in the application to nursing leadership roles.
- Demonstrate nursing leadership knowledge to facilitate efficient and effective interdisciplinary teams.
- Integrate nursing leadership principles to actively engage and direct quality healthcare outcomes.

Post-Master’s Certificate of Graduate Study (CGS)

CGS Overview

The College offers three post-master’s certificate of graduate study program options in advanced practice. The curriculum is 25 to 30 credit hours for students who have a master’s degree in nursing and are not certified as advanced practice nurses. The curriculum is 18 or 19 credit hours* for students who have a master’s degree in nursing and are currently licensed, certified and practicing as advanced practice nurses (i.e., nurse practitioners), and are seeking an additional certification emphasis area. Additionally, students requesting the 18 hours CGS program must submit transcript and in some cases syllabi to support the following three separate, advanced APRN course across the life-span with a B or higher in: Pharmacology, Health Assessment and Pathophysiology

* Note: If the advanced practice core courses do not meet requirements for secondary certification, 25 to 30 hours may be required for these students.
The emphasis areas are Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, Family Nurse Practitioner, and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. Depending on the certification that the student currently has and is seeking, additional foundation courses or other courses may be required.

A post-master's Certificate of Graduate Study in Nursing Administration is offered. The curriculum is 18 credit hours for students who have a master’s degree in nursing.

Both the Certificate of Graduate Study in Advanced Practice Nursing and Certificate of Graduate Study in Nursing Administration are restricted to students who hold a master’s degree in nursing. The program of study is designed to augment the student’s prior graduate study through advanced practice preparation in one of four emphasis areas; Nursing Administration, Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, or Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

CGS Admission Requirements

Certificate of Graduate Study in Advanced Practice Nursing (already certified as an APRN)
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree from a nationally accredited program.
- Preferred cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for undergraduate and graduate coursework (official transcripts for all post-secondary school coursework are required). Applicants who attended a BSN or MSN program that issued pass or fail grades for all classes will not be a competitive applicant.
- Unencumbered, active advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) license in state where clinical experiences will occur. This includes telehealth visits (South Carolina) for PMHNP Certificate of Graduate Study.
- A copy of current APRN specialty certification must be submitted
- Current BLS is required for students seeking admission into the FNP and PMHNP Certificate of Graduate Studies.
- Current BLS and ACLS certifications are required for students seeking admission into the AGACNP Certificate of Graduate Study.
- Evidence of completion (with an earned grade of B or higher) of graduate level courses in Health/Physical Assessment (across the lifespan), Physiology/Pathophysiology (across the lifespan), and Pharmacology (broad categories of drugs). These must be three separate courses that meet current
criteria for content based on the Consensus Model for APRN regulation (AACN, 2008).

- Current CV or Resume (In addition to your education and professional experiences, include any certifications, leadership experiences, experiences with diverse or underserved population, paid or volunteer healthcare experiences.)
- Three (3) recommendations that attest to the applicant's academic ability, professional competency and personal character. These letters must be from a master’s or doctoral prepared health care professional.
- Personal statement: Describe the advanced practice role (AGACNP, FNP, PMHNP) and scope for which you are seeking certification. Describe how this program will advance your professional goals.
- GRE not required.

Certificate of Graduate Study in Advanced Practice Nursing (non-APRN)

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree from a nationally accredited program.
- Preferred cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for undergraduate and graduate coursework (official transcripts for all post-secondary school coursework are required). Applicants who attended a BSN or MSN program that issued pass or fail grades for all classes will not be a competitive applicant.
- Unencumbered, active registered nurse (RN) license in state where clinical experiences will occur. This includes telehealth visits (South Carolina) for PMHNP Certificate of Graduate Study.
- Current BLS certification is required for students seeking admission into the FNP and PMHNP Certificate of Graduate Studies.
- Current BLS and ACLS certifications is required for students seeking admission into the AGACNP Certificate of Graduate Study.
- Current CV or Resume (In addition to your education and professional experiences, include any certifications, leadership experiences, experiences with diverse or underserved population, paid or volunteer healthcare experiences.)
- Three (3) recommendations that attest to the applicant's academic ability, professional competency and personal character. These letters must be from a master’s or doctoral prepared health care professional.
- Personal statement: Describe the advanced practice role (AGACNP, FNP, PMHNP) and scope for which you are seeking certification. Describe how this program will advance your professional goals.
• GRE not required.

Certificate of Graduate Study in Nursing Administration
• Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree from a nationally accredited program and evidence of credentialing within the applicant’s specialty.
• Preferred cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for undergraduate and graduate coursework (official transcripts for all nursing coursework are required). Applicants who attended a BSN or MSN program that issued pass or fail grades for all classes will not be a competitive applicant.
• Unencumbered, active registered nurse (RN) license in state where clinical experiences will occur.
• Current CV or Resume (In addition to your education and professional experiences, include any certifications, leadership experiences, experiences with diverse or underserved population, paid or volunteer healthcare experiences.)
• Three (3) recommendations that attest to the applicant’s academic ability, professional competency and personal character. These letters must be from a master’s or doctoral prepared health care professional.
• Personal Statement: Describe your plan for obtaining a preceptor and/or project site. In addition, describe your plan for your project.
• GRE not required.

CGS Certification Requirements
Students who complete the program of study are eligible to apply for national certification examinations in the applicable specialty area.

CGS Plan of Study
In developing the plan of study, the following criteria will apply for Post Master’s Certificate:

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

CGS Degree Requirements
Requirements for earning the CGS degree include:
1. Complete an approved program of study.
2. Have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 and earn a 3.0 or better in all required classes and courses number 700 or higher.
3. Complete clinical hours.
4. The CON requires a comprehensive exam for all CGS Advanced Practice candidates.

Change of Program or Major

After the student has been admitted to an MSN, or CGS program, the program or major may be changed. Both the existing Program Director and the Program Director from the “new” program must approve this transfer. Some graduate programs require essays and/or interviews; this is up to the discretion of the “new” program. Requests will be evaluated on a space available basis and may require a delay in the program of study.

If both Program Directors approve the transfer, the Update Request Form (URF) http://gradschool.sc.edu/prospective/apply-grad.asp?page=apply must be submitted to the Graduate School. Along with Update Request Form, current students will submit new recommendations and updated goal statement for the new program requested. Students who missed a semester will also need to submit an updated nursing license and update CastleBranch information. There may be additional program specific requirements. (Alert: submission of this form puts a hold on registration and suspends the existing program of study.)
Courses & Registration

Online Courses

All nursing courses in the MSN and CGS Programs are delivered online through Blackboard Course Management System which allows USC faculty to create a secure course web site for class communications, posting assignments, posting readings, linking to complementary web sites, administering exams, and much more. In courses that use Blackboard, the course syllabus will provide basic information about accessing Blackboard https://blackboard.sc.edu. Additional information about Blackboard is available at http://www.uts.sc.edu/academic/blackboard/.

Students access online courses by logging in at https://blackboard.sc.edu. 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.

Academic Advising

For most graduate students, the academic advisor is the Program Director or student 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 orientation is required for all new MSN and CGS students. Each student receives advisement and is provided a Program of Study and a Plan of Study developed by the appropriate Program Director prior to initial registration. Thereafter, all MSN and CGS students are required to participate in advisement as needed as communicated via Blackboard announcements. Deviation from the plan of study will result in a mandatory advisement with the appropriate 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).
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 not register for nursing courses until they have been admitted to the program, agreed to the plan of study and completed orientation. See link below for Self Service Carolina (SSC) (our registration system).

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 https://my.sc.edu/ to determine the part of term for your classes.

Registration Tips

Step 1: Review your Plan of Study in Central. Log in: http://central.nurs.sc.edu/studentportal - make note of the courses you are projected to take in the next term. If you have questions about your plan 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.

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.

Step 4: Continuing students: Confirm your CastleBranch account is up to date - Sign in to your CastleBranch account and view your "To Do List" - take care of any overdue items before the time on your Registration Time Ticket.
Step 5: Register for the classes listed on your plan 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 plan of study. Students who deviate from their plan of study may be removed from courses by the College of Nursing.

Need help with the Registration Processes in SSC? See the SSC tutorials: https://tinyurl.com/yyc78wq3

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Course Restrictions

Registration for a clinical nursing course is limited to students admitted to a College of Nursing graduate degree or certificate 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 CastleBranch account by end of first semester of enrollment and request registration “signoff” from the student graduate advisor for the registration hold to be lifted and to register for classes. The registration holds are lifted by student graduate advisor(s). This is an opportunity for students and the Program Director/Advisors to ensure that the Program of Study and planned course registration is correct.

(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 student’s Graduate Advisor for the student’s file and in the USC Registrar's Office.

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Course Selection and Drop Period

The University of South Carolina Registrar’s web page SSC https://my.sc.edu/ 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](https://my.sc.edu/) to add, drop, or change a course or section. Any change in enrollment must be recorded with the Registrar’s Office. Students may check the [Academic Calendar](http://registrar.sc.edu/html/calendar/default.stm) 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 a “W” does constitute an attempt of 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 student graduate advisor prior to making the changes.

For a refund schedule, please see the [Tuition Refund](#) section below for more information. Please note that should a student fail to attend classes in a course for which s/he is registered, s/he **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 in that course.

Applicants to the MSN or CGS program may not register for nursing courses until they are admitted to the program, agreed to the plan 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 program.

All health requirements to include background checks and drug screenings must be compliant by the end of the first semester of enrollment or a registration hold for subsequent semester enrollment will issued.

Registration for independent study courses require an independent study contract (see Independent Study Courses).

**Enrollment Status**

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 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 submit an Update Request Form to renew your enrollment privileges. In some cases, if a planned term away is pre-arranged and approved prior to the term, this requirement may be waived. If three years or more lapse between enrollments, students must reapply for admission.

A student will be certified as half time for academic purposes with an enrollment of six graduate credits during a fall or spring term or three graduate credits during a summer session. This verification typically is for postponement of loan repayment and is routinely done on request by the Registrar’s Office. Certification of half-time status with enrollment less than that specified above can be approved only after the following conditions have been satisfied:

a. The student has completed coursework on his/her program of study excluding NURS 799.

b. The student verifies in writing that he/she is not employed full-time and that he/she is in fact working full-time on completion of the thesis, project, or dissertation.

Upon confirmation of the above conditions, a verification of half-time status with minimal enrollment will be authorized on a semester basis for a maximum of two semesters provided cumulative enrollment in NURS 799 does not exceed 18 credits. Enrollment status for scholarship purposes may vary from that for academic purposes.

Tuition Refund
Each part of term has specific drop, add, and refund dates. Review your schedule in SSC https://my.sc.edu/ to determine the part of term for your classes.

Withdrawal deadlines should not be used in determining how to receive a 100% refund on tuition. For more details, please review the withdrawal information provided by the University Registrar, or view the Parts of Term Dates and Deadlines located in the Academics section of my.sc.edu.

Course Load
The definition for full-time enrollment status for graduate students is found at https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/international_student_services/immigration/maintaining-your-immigration-status/full-time-enrollment-requirements/index.php.

Special Enrollment (Z Status)
Students whose need for under-enrollment results from an internship, practicum or field experience required by the graduate program can seek an exception to minimum
enrollment requirements (Z-Status.) A written request to the dean of The Graduate School with acceptable justification and the nature of the experience from the student’s academic advisor or the graduate director of the academic program should be submitted.

Independent Study Courses

The purpose of an independent study is to allow the student to pursue an area of academic interest not adequately 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 limited number of credits from NURS 769/769A, Independent Study in Nursing or NURS 840/840A may be applied toward MSN degree program completion. Students enrolled in the MSN programs may not enroll for nursing independent study courses on a pass/fail basis.

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 estimated 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 of the tasks should be 100 percent.
- Grading Scale

This form must be approved by course faculty and Graduate Director. See additional required approval below. Students send an approved copy of the G-ISC to the Office of the University Registrar before registering for the course.

Summer Sessions

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 typically 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. Unlike fall and spring registration, summer registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.
Class Attendance & Absences

Policies regarding absence from classes are determined by the instructor(s) responsible for the course. Any special circumstances (including but not limited to religious holidays) must be discussed with the course director prior to the start of the semester.

Students are required to attend all clinical components of their course work. Absences from the clinical portion of a nursing course will not be excused except for a documented illness (of the student), family death or critical illness. Students with excessive excused absences from clinical may be asked to share the cost of the make-up clinical hours with the School of Nursing. Excessive absences for any reason may necessitate repetition of the entire course.

Unexcused absences from clinical may result in a failing grade for the course based on the discretion of the course director. If the course director allows a student to make up an unexcused absence from clinical, and faculty coverage is needed, the student must pay the current rate per day missed.

Withdrawal from Course and/or from University

A student may attempt a specific graduate course twice in the graduate program. An attempt is any grade or W received in a course. Each MSN or CGS 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). Hardship Withdrawals (defined as medical, mental health, or special circumstance) are only considered for past semesters or the current semester’s WF period.

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. 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.).
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.

Students who have a serious and compelling extenuating circumstance may petition the Graduate School to grant a late withdrawal (AS-122A) for a course. Approval must be obtained from the Assistant Dean. Students petitioning for an exception must contact the Executive Director for Student Affairs to begin this process. Form AS-122A must be approved by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies (ADGS), student’s instructor and the Graduate School prior to withdrawal. 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.

Leave of Absence or Inactive Status

A student taking one or more semesters off from coursework will require submission of an Update Request Form. The Admission Committee will review the URF and determine the semester of return based on the student’s revised Program of Study.

MSN and CGS students must contact their program director and/or graduate advisor if taking one or more semesters off from coursework.

Transfer Credit

Graduate credit earned as part of a completed graduate degree or certificate program at USC or elsewhere may or may not be applied to a second USC master’s degree program. A limited number of graduate coursework not part of a completed certificate program or graduate degree from USC or another institution may be transferred for credit toward a Master’s degree.

Eligible courses must meet the following criteria:

- Taken at the graduate level
- Taken at an accredited, four-year institution
- Final grade of B or higher (no pass/fail or audit)

All transfer credit decisions are at the discretion of the course faculty. The appropriate content faculty member reviews the syllabus to determine equivalency and to make a formal recommendation to the appropriate program director. The Program Director routes his/her recommendation along with faculty member’s recommendation to the ADGS for final CON approval. Outdated transfer courses (courses completed outside the ten-year period preceding graduation date) cannot be revalidated. Approval for acceptance of transfer credit to a student’s program of study must be approved and justified by the student’s academic program and submitted to the dean of the Graduate School for final
approval on the Request for Transfer of Academic Credit (G-RTC) form. Please refer to the Graduate Studies Bulletin Academic Regulations section on Transfer Credit before contacting the graduate advisor for more information about transfer credit.

Revalidation of Outdated Courses

Students enrolled in a Master’s program at the University of South Carolina 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.

- **Note:** Coursework taken at other institutions may not be revalidated.

- 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 ADGS, 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.

Grades, Grade Reports and Transcripts

**Grades**

*Incomplete* (I) grades may be assigned in certain cases when, due to extenuating circumstances, the student is unable to complete required course assignments within the term time frame. Incomplete (I) grades convert to (F) or to the default grade assigned by faculty if the (I) is not removed within the time specified. When the incomplete course work is completed, the faculty member must file a special form to change the (I) grade. This form is filed in the appropriate graduate program office and forwarded to the Registrar's Office. 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 if additional time for course work completion is not officially authorized.

NR (no record) is a temporary mark on the transcript assigned by the Office of the University Registrar if a grade has not been submitted by the instructor at the proper time or if any grade not approved for a particular course has been submitted. As a temporary mark on the transcript, the NR must be replaced by a grade. If the NR is not resolved or replaced by the instructor with a valid end-of-term grade before the end of the major (Fall or Spring) term following the term for which the grade of NR was recorded, a grade of F will be assigned. No Report (NR) grades are administratively converted to (F) grades at the end of the next major semester if a grade is not assigned by faculty.

Graduate students in any nursing graduate program with two temporary grades of Incomplete (I) or No Record (NR) cannot register for additional coursework. Students will not be permitted to register for further coursework until both temporary grades have been replaced with a satisfactory permanent grade or if the Incomplete (I) was assigned to a course that is considered a pre-requisite for a subsequent course. Students enrolled in graduate study may not graduate with a temporary grade of I or NR on their record, even if the course is not listed on the Program of Study.

Grading of Theses
Completion or satisfactory progress in these courses will be indicated by the grade of 'T'; unsatisfactory progress will be indicated by a grade of 'U'. No other grading options (i.e., Incomplete) are available. These grades will not be used to calculate the student’s GPA. However, as noted above, the College of Nursing does not allow a student to continue in the program with a grade of 'U' in two courses.

Grades Reports and Transcripts
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.

At any point in the semester, it’s easy to view your USC GPA. Just log in to SSC to view your academic record. If you need an official copy of your grades, order a transcript. Transcripts are maintained by the Office of the Registrar https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/transcripts_and_records/transcripts/index.php, not by the College of Nursing.

Grade Disagreement
The role of the ADGS 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 ultimately determines the grade that is awarded.

Course Materials

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 textbook and academic supplies.

Course / Faculty Evaluations

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

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

- Maintains the proper GPA
- 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

A student must maintain a **cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0** to remain in good academic standing and to graduate from the College of Nursing and the University.

Academic Probation
A student will be placed on probation if they

- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 (**B**) at the end of any semester student is allowed one calendar year to raise the cumulative GPA to at least 3.00.
- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 due to conversion of grades of incomplete at end of semester in which the grade is posted. Student is allowed one major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the Incomplete conversion grade is received by the Registrar 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 in order 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).

Academic Dismissal and Appeals for Reinstatement
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 course or in any two NURS courses.
- Fail a required graduate course twice or withdrawing from the course on the first attempt and failing the course on the second attempt or vice versa. 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 3.0 at end of one calendar year of academic probation.
- Have a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 at end of major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the Incomplete conversion grade is received by the Registrar.
- Are banned from a clinical agency because of unprofessional, unethical, or illegal behavior.
- Have a professional (RN or APRN) licensure suspension or revocation.
- A student in a post-license program who becomes no longer licensed or has any form of restriction/probation as a registered professional nurse by any license granting authority, no longer meet the admission criteria of the program and are no longer eligible to progress. The student will need to notify the program director immediately of the change in their licensure status. An academic record hold will be placed on the student’s records. The hold may be released upon becoming licensed or restriction/probation removed.

Appeals for reinstatement from students should be reviewed first by the Executive Director of Student Affairs. 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 Committee below).

Grading Policies

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 4.0 grading system found at https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/transcripts_and_records/grade_point_scale/index.php.

Graduate School Academic Forgiveness
The Graduate School Academic Forgiveness Policy is outlined in the Graduate Student Bulletin in the Academic Regulations section.

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 an “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 ADGS will define the conditions under which the student may repeat the course.

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 Nurse 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. A 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.

Determining unsafe or unsatisfactory clinical practice. An evaluation with 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 ADGS 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 she/he must be removed from clinical, the faculty will determine if the student has failed the course. The ADGS will be consulted and will review documentation leading to the determination of unsafe practice and course failure. In collaboration with the faculty, the ADGS 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 in order to demonstrate the expected competencies are, with course faculty and faculty advisor 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 time frame not to exceed one academic semester. A course may be remediated only one time.

NURS 769A will be graded on a pass/fail basis and will not be factored into the student’s cumulative grade point average. Completion of NURS 769A may not be applied to program elective requirements.

Procedure
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 activities in the simulation lab, the Director of the Simulation Lab 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, that 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 is 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 his/her success in achieving the goals that were set for this individualized experience. All work must be accomplished with the grade of “pass” in order 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.

Current Competence in Advanced Physical Assessment Policy

Time away from clinical learning experiences is essential in determining whether the student needs to demonstrate current competence in advanced physical assessment. If more than two semesters have lapsed since the student was active in advanced clinical learning,
current competence in advanced physical assessment must be demonstrated before progression in the clinical sequence begins.

### Procedure

Components assessed in demonstration of current competence are:

- Demonstration of a comprehensive physical assessment (mandatory);
- Comprehensive documentation of physical examination findings (mandatory);
- Written comprehensive history of present illness (HPI) (completed at the discretion of the Program Director).

Successful demonstration of current competence as described above depends on adequate preparation for this examination. Faculty assistance in preparation for the examination is an additional educational activity. As such, faculty time and additional resources are directly billable to the student. The amount billed is calculated based on time and resources required.

A maximum of two attempts to demonstrate current competence is allowed. Demonstration is graded on a pass/fail basis. Demonstration, pass or fail, is not calculated in the student’s GPA. Failure to demonstrate current competence requires repeating NURS 704 at the student’s expense and achieving a passing grade. Failure to demonstrate current competence also delays re-entry into the clinical course sequence. The student may need to take a leave of absence until she or he is able to rejoin the clinical course sequence.

### Incomplete Policy

A student who fails to complete a course within the prescribed period and does not withdraw from the course will receive, at the instructor’s discretion, either a grade of I (incomplete) or F (failure). If an I grade is granted but not completed in the time period outlined the grade will revert to a F or faculty determined grade.

### Incompletes in Non-Clinical Courses

A grade of incomplete 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 completed an Assignment of Incomplete Grade Form (AS-5).

• 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.

### Incompletes in Clinical (Theory and Practice) Courses

A grade of incomplete 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 any required clinical hours (e.g. more than 50% of clinical hours are completed) in the course.

• The student and instructor have completed an Assignment of Incomplete Grade Form (AS-5).

• 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.

Prescriptive Authority and APRNs

The South Carolina Board of Nursing accepts the USC College of Nursing curricula and pharmacology hours as meeting the minimum of 45 contact hours of education for prescriptive authority licensure designation.

- The 45 didactic hours taken in NURS 702 are also sufficient for initial approval of prescriptive authority in accordance with the Laws Governing Nursing in South Carolina, section 40-33-34, if the application is made within two years of graduation from either the MSN degree program or a Certificate of Graduate Study in Advanced Practice Nursing degree program.
- Students must maintain continuous enrollment in their program of study or must repeat Nursing 702 Advanced Pharmacotherapeutics to meet the Board of Nursing application requirements for prescriptive authority. The University defines continuous enrollment as 2 or 3 major semesters per academic year Fall, Spring and Summer.
- If students do not remain continuously enrolled or do not apply for their license within 2 years of graduation, they will have to meet the Board of Nursing requirements for additional continuing education in pharmacology.
- Any student who will be looking to be certified outside of SC should check with their intended state Board of Nursing to determine the specific requirements.

Examination Policies

1. 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.
2. Point deductions will be incurred for failure to complete the exams in the designated time frame. If you exceed the time limits for the exams, 2 points per minute will be subtracted from the grade.
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, will be reported.
4. All exams must be proctored. Students have 2 options for taking proctored exams:
   1. Testing center at USC Columbia. No Fee.
   2. Proctor U. Per exam fee paid by the student.

Degree Completion and Graduation

Application for a Degree
To be eligible for graduation a student must meet all University and College of Nursing standards for receiving a degree. Candidates for degrees must file a formal application during the last semester before graduation prior to the deadline set by the Registrar’s Office. 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.
Role of Executive Director of Student Affairs

One of the roles of the Executive Director of Student Affairs is to serve as a student advocate in the College of Nursing. The Executive Director of Student Affairs serves as the initial contact for concerns such as requesting exception to a college policy (petitions) or a grievance. The Executive Director serves as a confidential, informal and independent resource for graduate student concerns and conflicts within the College of Nursing.

Role of Ombudsman

The Graduate School Ombuds serves as a confidential, neutral, informal and independent resource for graduate student concerns and conflicts. The Ombuds strives for impartiality, fairness and objectivity in the treatment of graduate students and the consideration of their issues. The Ombuds advocates for fair and equitably administered processes, but does not advocate on behalf of the student.

The University Ombuds adheres to the principles outlined in the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice of the International Ombuds Association.

Communications made to The Graduate School Ombuds are not notice to the University. However, the Ombuds may refer individuals to the appropriate place where formal notice to the University can be made. To ensure confidentiality, graduate students with concerns or conflicts should not email the Ombuds; instead, call or arrange a visit.

Dale Moore
Graduate Student Ombuds
803-777-4243

Close-Hipp Building
1705 College Street
Suite 552

Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support

The USC Division of Student Affairs collaborates with campus and external constituents to provide access, facilitate students’ progress and persistence, advance learning, and shape responsible citizens and future leaders. More information about the offices under the division is available at https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/index.php.

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 email 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 three times a year at the close of the fall, spring, and summer semesters, and as needed, to rule on specific academic problems.

Petitions

A student must petition the Committee in writing, describing the situation, and may be asked to present his or her case at the Committee meeting. The petition should be submitted to the Executive Director of Student Affairs.

Grievance Policy

Overview


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 resolution of differences are outlined in the Student Grievance Policy-Academic of the current USC Policies and Procedures Manual http://www.sc.edu/policies/policiesbydivision.php and this College of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook. Contact the Executive Director of 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 prejudiced 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 Executive Director of Student Affairs, who will explain the grievance policy and the student’s rights and responsibilities. The Director 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 ADGS and submit the written narrative describing the alleged violation. The ADGS will send to the student a written response within 10 regular working days following the meeting. If, after receiving the ADGS response, the complaint is not resolved to the aggrieved student’s satisfaction, the student must notify the ADGS within 10 working days of receiving the letter and request a grievance hearing. The ADGS 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 ADGS 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.

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 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.

It is the responsibility of the student and the faculty member, respectively, to arrange for the appearance of witnesses. The ADGS may not attend the grievance hearing.

The Ad Hoc Grievance Committee must schedule a hearing; inform the faculty involved in writing and schedule his/her 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 addition information.

A faculty member who feels aggrieved as a result of student grievance proceedings has the right to appear before the University Faculty Grievance Committee and present his/her case to the Committee. The process is described in the Faculty Manual.

*Policy may be changed at anytime
Clinical Policies

Clinical Compliance Policy

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 in order to enter the clinical setting. These requirements include immunizations as well as CPR certification, drug screen and background checks, and any other site-specific requirements. Records are to be submitted to and held by our compliance vendor, CastleBranch. Go to http://portal.castlebranch.com/UO26 to place an order. Students must complete clinical requirements by the designated deadline within the first semester of enrollment. Failure to complete requirements by the designated deadline could impact continued enrollment. For issues with package ordering, documentation submissions, etc., please contact CastleBranch using the Chat with us feature through your myCB account or call the User Experience Specialists at 888.723.4263

All students at University of South Carolina College of Nursing in either direct or indirect clinical coursework must meet the requirements of the clinical compliance policy in order to continue clinical coursework. Failure to do so may result in being dropped from coursework.

It may seem redundant, but because of HIPAA regulations, we must use different systems and Student Health Services and the College of Nursing cannot share your information with each other.

Due to the demands of our clinical agencies, requirements are subject to change.

Clinical Compliance

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As a part of the compliance process all students must submit proof of the following immunizations. 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.

### MMR (Measles - Mumps - Rubella)

- Titers for all three confirming immunity. 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.

### Hepatitis B

- A positive surface antibody titer (lab report required) indicates immunity. If a titer is negative or equivocal, Hepatitis B vaccines and a 2nd titer are required. Full immunization consists of three Hepatitis B vaccinations administered over a 6-month period to be followed by a 2nd titer given 1-2 months after the 3rd vaccination.

  * Alternatively, the Heplisav B vaccination series only requires 2 vaccinations one month apart followed by a repeat Hepatitis B titer. 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.

### Varicella (Chicken Pox)
• 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.

*Simply having had the disease is not enough, you must receive a titer and that titer must be positive for immunity.

Tdap (Tetanus - Diphtheria - Pertussis)

• Tdap within the past ten years

Tuberculosis Test

One of the following is required:

• 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
• Negative QuantiFERON Gold Blood Test administered within the past 12 months OR
• Negative T-Spot Blood Test administered within the past 12 months.
• If result is positive, a clear chest x-ray report must be submitted following last positive test result, administered within the past 12 months along with a physician clearance documented on letterhead.

The renewal date will be set for 1 year, requiring one of the following:

• Negative one-step test OR
• Negative QuantiFERON Gold Blood Test OR
• Negative T-Spot Blood Test

Influenza (Flu Shot)
One of the following is required:

- Documentation of a flu shot administered during the current flu season OR
- declination waiver, which must be completed on a school form

Due by November 1 (must be completed after seasonal vaccines are available)

**Criminal Background Check**

During the first course of enrollment, students are required to undergo a background check through the approved College of Nursing vendor. Additional screening may be required by clinical agencies or following a student’s break in enrollment. Students are responsible for all expenses incurred for background checks.

Criminal Background Checks include the screenings listed below but additional checks may be required depending on agency placements or other requirements. The following will be searched: 7-year County Criminal Search, National Sex Offender Registry, Nationwide Healthcare Fraud and Abuse Scan (FACIS level 3), I.S. Patriot Act Search, Residence History and Social Security Alert.

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 further 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.

**Drug Screening**

**12 Panel Drug Screen Check**

During the first course of enrollment, students are required to undergo a drug screening through the approved College of Nursing vendor. Students may be subject to random checks throughout the program. Additionally, other screening may be required by clinical agencies or due to student break in enrollment. Students are responsible for all expenses incurred for drug screenings.
Drug screens include but may not be limited to 9 panel + MDMA + Oxy Test screening for amphetamines, cocaine, marijuana, barbiturates, benzodiazepine, methamphetamine, methadone, opiates, oxycodone, phencyclidine, propoxyphene, and MDMA.

HIPAA and OSHA

All students must document their knowledge of protection against bloodborne disease annually. The documentation must be submitted to CastleBranch before the student is permitted to register for clinical courses, attend classes, or begin practicums.

Annual compliance of eLearning modules is required for HIPPA and OSHA training. Go to portal.castlebranch.com/UO26 to order modules. Code: UP68el for annual renewal.

CPR Certification

In addition to the immunizations, background checks and drug screens, all students must be certified in BLS CPR by one of the following agencies in order to enter the clinical setting.

- American Heart Association (preferred) OR
- American Red Cross

Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner students are also required to be certified in ACLS.

Nursing Licensure

All USC College of Nursing graduate students must have a SC Registered Nurse unencumbered licensure or be eligible for a SC unencumbered licensure when admitted and must maintain current unencumbered licensure throughout the program. Students must have a current RN licensure for the state in which precepted clinical experiences occur. USC must have state authorization for the student to engage in clinical in that state. Unencumbered SC licensure is required if the precepted clinical experience occurs in SC unless licensed in a Compact state.
Student Name Badge

All students completing a clinical 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 “UofSC Graduate Student.” Other unique identifying tags may be required per clinical site. Information on how to order nametags is found in Blackboard in the Clinical Information section. A photocopy of the student name badge must be uploaded into CastleBranch.

Authorization for Release of Records and Information/Participant Clinical Education Experience Agreement

All students will be required to sign and upload into CastleBranch an Authorization for Release of Records and Information and Participant Clinical Education Experience Agreement.

Handbook Acknowledgment

All students are required to read the Graduate Student Handbook annually. Students will sign and upload into CastleBranch a Handbook Acknowledgement form found at https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/internal/handbook_signature.pdf

Academic Bulletin(s) and Code of Conduct Acknowledgment

All students are required to read the Academic Bulletin(s) and Code of Conduct annually. Student will sign and upload into CastleBranch an Academic Bulletin(s) and Code of Conduct Acknowledgement. The form is downloaded from CastleBranch.
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.

Additional information regarding all program fees can be found at https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/bursar/tuition_and_required_fees/usc_columbia_fees_academic/department_fees/index.php.

Guidance for All Clinical Experience

A student enrolled in a course with a clinical component is responsible for finding an approved health agency and an approved preceptor for their clinical experience. A list of current clinical agreements held by the CON are found in the Student Portal under Clinical Contract. Students are advised to locate a preceptor at least a semester before the clinical course begins. Students having difficulty finding an experience must contact the course faculty member and the Director of Clinical Partnerships for assistance.

Students will be able to use the C360/Web CASE Form application from their desktop or mobile device, available at http://con-central.nurs.sc.edu/studentportal for submission of the Clinical Agreement for Student Experience Form (CASE Form). Students will submit their CASE Form after having secured a preceptor for their course and it must be submitted no later than one (1) week prior to the beginning of each course. If the college already approves a site or preceptor, the student will select them from a list. If new, students must enter all prompted information. A confirmation email will be sent to the preceptor and site contact including a confirmation link. The student will be able to track the progress of the approval in the system. See instructions on how to submit in Bb Clinical Information and Documents. Students who use multiple preceptors need to submit a preceptor agreement (CASE Form) for each preceptor.

Upon receipt of this information, 4 - 9 months are required to complete the approval process for a new site contract or renewal site contract for clinical placement. Students CANNOT begin clinical experience until they receive contract verification and preceptor approval by the student’s course professor. Going to clinical without the appropriate approval of contracts, course professor, and necessary forms in place will result in course failure and may be grounds for dismissal from the program and the CON, a violation of Academic Integrity, liability exposure, and possible Board of Nursing sanction due to possible HIPAA violations among others. If you have questions regarding a contract, please contact the Clinical Compliance Coordinator for the College of Nursing at 803-576-7301.
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. The following are specific stipulations of the code:

• Conservative business attire covered by a clean, white knee length lab coat with name tag identifying you as an RN and USC graduate student is to be worn at all times
• Shorts, jeans, tightly fitted clothing, and see-through, low-cut midriff revealing tops and bottoms are all inappropriate attire
• Hair should be clean, neat, and off the collar
• Other than one earring per earlobe, piercing jewelry is to be removed
• All tattoos must be covered either by clothing or an appropriately sized bandage
• No perfumes or colognes, scented makeup or hair products may be worn
• Nails must be clean and not extend beyond the fingertip. Artificial nails in any form are unacceptable. If nail polish is worn, it must be clear
• Appropriate clinical equipment that is operational includes but is not limited to cardiology stethoscope, ophthalmoscope/otoscope, percussion hammer, and tuning fork. Other equipment may be needed as outlined by the Agency or Clinical setting.
• Name tag with appropriate credentials following USC guidelines.

Although this dress code is congruent with the majority of 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 carry out the clinical duties.

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 Simulation Laboratory (CSL)

The Clinical Simulation Lab (CSL) is located on the first floor 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 about the CSL, please refer to the lab’s website at: [http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/clinics_labs/simulation_lab/index.php](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/clinics_labs/simulation_lab/index.php)

Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Protocol (Reviewed April 2019)

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.

Procedures for needle sticks or other exposure to a potentially infectious material:

- 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 (i.e., eyes, nose or mouth) – Flush the exposed area with water. If exposure is to the eyes, flush 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 occurs, in order 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, seek medical treatment as soon as possible after the incident (see below for specific instructions)

- Notify Executive Director of Student Affairs of incident at 803-608-7770 between the hours of 9am-9pm. Leave a message with return phone number if no answer. If no response within one hour, call the Office of Academic Affairs at 803-777-7412.

- Call CompEndium for non-emergency injuries. In an emergency, visit a local emergency room or call 911. Follow these five important steps to report your injury:
  - Immediately report the injury to your supervisor. You and your supervisor call CompEndium together at 877-709-2667 to report the injury.
  - Follow CompEndium’s Nurse Case Manager’s instructions for any authorized treatment and further reporting.
  - Complete an Employee Injury Report [pdf] and have your supervisor complete a Supervisor’s Report [pdf]. Fax both reports to CompEndium at 877-710-2667 and to (803 777-0616, ATTN: Executive Director of Student Affairs.)
  - If the treating physician does not release you to return to work, be sure to complete the Benefits Election section at the bottom of the Employee Injury Report. Meet with your department HR Contact for an explanation of your options or call the Benefits Office at 803-777-6650 for assistance.
  - Report the injury to CompEndium Services within 10 days of the date of injury.

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

Workers’ Compensation covers the following populations who experience a bloodborne pathogen exposure while working or at clinical if, appropriate reports are filed:
• All university employees and apprenticeship students in the Colleges of Education, Exercise Science, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, and Social Work.
• Work study students and graduate assistants who are exposed while on the job.

Students who suffer a Non-Job Related/Non clinical related Blood borne Pathogen Exposure during an enrolled academic session:
• Should report to the Student Health Services for initial evaluation and referral. If the SHC is closed, students may seek care at the Palmetto Richland Hospital Emergency Department. If away from Columbia area, the student should report to the nearest hospital emergency department.

**Evaluation and Review**
The ADGS is responsible for annually reviewing this policy and procedures and its effectiveness and for updating the program as needed.

**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 in consideration preceptor evaluation, the course faculty determines the student’s final grade. See Preceptor guidelines below.

https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/internal/current_students/graduate_nursing_preceptor_handbook.pdf
Financial Information

Tuition and Fees

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

Please see the Courses and Registration section of this handbook for Tuition Refund policies.

Financial Assistance

The USC Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship 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 of 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 no later than March 15th of the following year. College of Nursing award decisions are expected to be finalized and announced late July/early August of each year.

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.

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 requires 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

Opportunities to participate on funded research programs may be available to full-time graduate students. 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 (Gene Brown).

External Scholarship Opportunities

External Scholarships List

We encourage all students to seek outside funding opportunities. Many nursing societies and private organizations offer a variety of grants that are open to students who are not eligible for traditional need-based financial aid. This list is not all inclusive.

40 Nursing Scholarships for All Kinds of Students
This this comprehensive resource is provided through allnursingschools.com. Choosing a career in nursing means you’ll be entering a meaningful field that has a positive outlook for job growth as well as increasing opportunities for advancement. However, it can take years of costly education to qualify as a nursing professional and figuring out how you’ll pay for school can be an overwhelming task.

50 Great Scholarships for Nursing Students
This scholarship resource is provided through healthcare-administration-degree.net

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses Foundation (AMSN)
This program is available to students in LPN-to-RN, RN-to-BSN, RN-to-MSN, BSN-to-MSN, or MSN-to-Doctorate programs. Applicants must be a member of AMSN.

Action Behavior Center ABA Therapy Scholarship
ABA Therapy Scholarship for undergraduate students pursuing a degree in some field relating to research on autism spectrum disorder or clinical therapy positions (psychology, applied behavior analysis, education, or a variety of natural or applied sciences). $1,000 awarded semi-annually.

After College
A searchable database of internships. For more help on finding internships that are right for you, we urge you to meet with your academic mentors, who are there to help guide you through the process.
**AfterCollege/AACN Nursing Faculty Scholarship**
This scholarship is for full-time students in a baccalaureate-to-doctoral degree or Doctor of Nursing Practice program who want to pursue nursing faculty careers. When they graduate, recipients of this scholarship must teach at a nursing school for at least the duration equivalent to each year of support they received.

**Air Force Nurse Nurse Corps**
The US Air Force offers various two-, three-, and four-year scholarships for nursing majors pursuing a BSN degree. When these students graduate, they are commissioned as second lieutenants with an active duty service requirement of at least four years.

**American Association of University Women (AAUW) International Fellowships**
AAUW’s International Fellowship program has been in existence since 1917. The program provides support for women pursuing full-time graduate or postdoctoral study in the U.S. who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents. A limited number of awards are available for study outside of the U.S. (excluding the applicant’s home country) to women who are members of Graduate Women International (see the list of GWI affiliates). Preference is given to women who show prior commitment to the advancement of women and girls through civic, community, or professional work.

Up to five International Fellowships for master’s/first professional degrees will be renewable for a second year; fellows will receive application information for this competitive program during their fellowship year.

**American Holistic Nurses’ Association (AHNA)**
To qualify, students must be a current member of AHNA and be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate nursing program related to holistic nursing.

**American Nephrology Nurses’ Association (ANNA)**
ANNA provides various scholarship opportunities for their members who are working on a BSN or advanced nursing degree. To qualify, you must be a full member of ANNA for at least two years and be currently employed in nephrology nursing.

**Army Nurse Corps Nurse Anesthetist Scholarships**
The US Army offers three scholarship programs to provide opportunities for nurses who serve in the Army Nurse Corps or Army Reserve Nurse Corps to become nurse anesthetists. Please note that this scholarship requires an active duty service obligation.

**Army ROTC Nurse Program Scholarships**
Offers two-, three-, and four-year scholarships for undergraduate nursing students who are US citizens.
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
This initiative funds tuition for low-income minority students who are seeking undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Caring.com Scholarship
Caring.com is a leading senior care resource for family caregivers seeking information and support as they care for aging parents, spouses and other loved ones. The Caring.com Student-Caregiver scholarship is open to full-time college students at an accredited two-or-four year college or university in the United States.

Cherokee Uniform Scholarship Inspired Comfort Award
Cherokee Uniforms recognize the compassion, competence, and skill of those who take care of our sick and injured and provide scholarships to those who are called to the nursing profession.

Discover Nursing Scholarship Search
Nurses are the unsung heroes of healthcare. Every day, their creativity, innovation, and healing touch change patients’ lives—and the world. Johnson & Johnson is proud to advocate for those changing human health in this dynamic profession.

ENA Emergency Nurses Association
This program is for undergraduate, advanced practice, doctoral, and faculty doctoral students.

Fastweb
Fastweb scholarship search is a comprehensive source of local and national college-specific scholarships.

FinAid.org
FinAid.org was established in the fall of 1994 as a public service. This award-winning site has grown into the most comprehensive source of student financial aid information, advice and tools — on or off the web.

Fund for Lesbian and Gay Scholarships (FLAGS)
This fund provides financial assistance to gay, lesbian, and bisexual students who are involved in their community.

Giva Nursing Student Scholarship
This is a semi-annual scholarship for outstanding nursing students.

Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF)
Through collaboration with major corporations, HSF is the nation’s largest provider of scholarships and financial aid to Latino/Latina students.
**Indian Health Service (IHS)**
The Health Professions Scholarship Program is open to full- and part-time American Indian and Alaska Native students who want an undergraduate or graduate education in the healthcare field. Priority is given to graduate students, as well as junior- and senior-level undergrad students. To qualify, one must be a member of a federally recognized tribe and agree to serve one year in an IHS facility (or other program that serves Indian people) for each year of financial support. Pre-nursing scholarships are also available.

**Kaplan Marx Scholarship**
This is a $1000 scholarship given annually to a current or incoming college student who produces the best essay on the given topic.

**The League Foundation**
Scholarships are available to LGBTQ high school seniors in the US.

**Minority Nurse Faculty Scholarship**
AACN, with support from the Johnson & Johnson Campaign for Nursing’s Future, is currently offering scholarship funding to underrepresented minority (URM) nursing students who plan to work as nursing faculty after graduation. Applicants must be enrolled full-time in a doctoral nursing program or a clinically-focused master’s degree program.

**Minority Nurse Magazine Scholarship Program**
For racial and ethnic minority nursing students who are enrolled in their third or fourth year of an accredited four-year BSN program, or in an accelerated program that leads to a BSN degree or an accelerated master’s entry nursing program that bypasses the traditional BSN degree (such as a BA-to-MSN). Only open to US citizens or permanent residents.

**National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN)**
NAHN provides scholarships and financial aid based on academic standing and potential to be a role model for future nursing students.

**National Black Nurses Association (NBNA)**
NBNA provides scholarships to current students with at least one year left in a nursing program. Applicants must be members of NBNA and be associated with a local chapter.

**National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations (NCEMNA)**
This award is for BSN and master’s degree nursing students who are members of one of the five NCEMNA member associations: Asian American/Pacific Islander Nurses Association, National Alaska Native American Indian Nurses Association, National Association of Hispanic Nurses, National Black Nurses Association, and
Philippine Nurses Association of American. Scholarship recipients must be nominated by their association.

**National Health Service Corps (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)**
In exchange for at least two-year service at a health care facility with a critical shortage of nurses, the Nursing Scholarship Program pays full tuition, educational costs, and provides a monthly stipend.

**National Institutes for Health (NIH)**
The NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program (UGSP) offers competitive scholarships to exceptional students from disadvantaged backgrounds that are committed to biomedical, behavioral, and social science research careers at the NIH.

**National Student Nurses Association (NSNA)**
NSNA provides scholarships to students based on academic achievement, financial need, and involvement in community health and student nursing associations.

**Nurse.org – List of Nursing Scholarships**
Nurse.org impacts the lives of nurses and nursing students by publishing thought-provoking content and launching culture-changing initiatives.

**Nursing.org – Scholarship Database**
Nursing.org offers their own scholarships to assist users of their site, however they also offer a searchable nursing scholarship database. There are an incredible number of funding opportunities available and we encourage students to apply for as many sources of funding as they can! Use their customizable filters to discover the different nursing scholarships available to you.

**Nurse Corps Scholarship Program**
This program enables students who are accepted or enrolled in diploma, associate, baccalaureate, or graduate nursing programs—including RN to BSN, RN to MSN-NP, and Direct Entry MSN-NP programs—to receive funding for tuition, fees, and other educational costs in exchange for working at an eligible NURSE Corps site upon graduation. The NURSE Corps Scholarship Program is a selective program of the US Government that works to alleviate the critical shortage of nurses in specific types of health care facilities located in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

**Nurses Educational Funds, Inc**
This program is for minority RNs who are enrolled in a master’s or doctoral degree program in their field. Various other graduate-level scholarships are also available. All recipients must be US citizens and members of a professional association.
Nurses Faculty Loan Program
The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Bureau of Health Professions provides a loan program to prepare nursing faculty. These loans are available on a limited basis to full-time students who complete a nursing education component and commit to teaching in a nursing education program for four consecutive years following graduation. Up to 85% of the load may be forgiven and the remaining 15% repaid at 3% interest, depending on the HRSA criteria. These loans are available depending on Congressional budget approval. Announcements posted in Blackboard.

Nurse Practitioner Healthcare Foundation (NPHF)
NPHF awards scholarships to practicing nurse practitioners and graduate nurse practitioner students.

Oncology Nursing Society Foundation (ONSF)
ONSF supplies over seventy scholarships to students and practitioners who are committed to patients with cancer.

The Point Foundation
This foundation provides financial support, mentoring, leadership training, and hope to promising students who are marginalized due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Transcultural Nursing Society (TCNS)
This award is for a TCNS member who is enrolled full- or part-time in a graduate program and is focusing on transcultural, cross-cultural, or international nursing.

Tylenol® Scholarship
The pain-reliever company awards $350,000 each year to students dedicated to healthcare professions.

US Department of Defense
The DoD provides multiple scholarship and financial assistance programs to US military veterans. Military.com has additional scholarship information.

Additional Scholarship Search Resources:

- College Board Scholarship Search
Student Records

Confidentiality of Student Records

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), passed by Congress in 1974, requires educational institutions to provide students access to their educational records, to allow students to correct inaccurate or misleading information in these records, and to limit the release of information to third parties. Additional information is available online.
Graduation

Requirements

All degree requirements are expected to be completed within a four-year or less period after admission to MSN degree standing and within a three-year or less period after admission for the CGS. Candidates who are unable to meet this requirement must petition for an extension to the ADGS. 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 3.0 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.

Procedures

The graduation application is the first step you will need to take in order to graduate from your academic program. Review the application and award processes here to better understand what happens once you submit your application.

Ceremonies

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. Click here for additional information regarding commencement.

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

Diplomas

Students with outstanding University balances, incompletes, “NR” 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 at https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/graduation/degree_diploma_faq/index.php
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 of the College become alumni of the University of South Carolina. The College's alumni family is a major support system for the College and alumni donors help to support several scholarships annually. Alumni are electronically sent copies of *USC College of Nursing Gamecock CONnexion* and invited to attend annual alumni events and celebrations. All graduates are encouraged to notify the alumni office or the My Carolina Alumni Association of address changes. Contact us at sc.edu/nursing/alumni.