



COLORADO MESA
UNIVERSITY

Department of Health Sciences

Graduate Nursing Programs

Student Handbook

Revised Spring 2021

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**Moss School of Nursing**

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Dear Graduate Student,

Welcome to the Colorado Mesa University (CMU) Moss School of Nursing Graduate Program! We are glad you have chosen CMU to further your formal nursing education. We welcome you and want you to know we are here to help you succeed in your graduate studies.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with selected guidelines for CMU's Graduate Nursing Program. This handbook supplements the *CMU Graduate Policies and Procedures*, located at <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/graduate/documents/GraduatePoliciesProcedures.pdf>.

Please read this handbook carefully so that you are familiar with the general policies and procedures that pertain to the Graduate Nursing Program. We also post news and information on the CMU Department of Health Sciences website, located at <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/health-sciences/graduate-nursing-program-news.html> and in periodic Graduate Nursing Program Newsletters.

Sincerely,

Graduate Nursing Faculty

I. Colorado Mesa University Mission

Committed to a personal approach, Colorado Mesa University (CMU) is a dynamic learning environment that offers abundant opportunities for students and the larger community to grow intellectually, professionally, and personally. By celebrating exceptional teaching, academic excellence, scholarly and creative activities, and by encouraging diversity, critical thinking, and social responsibility, CMU advances the common good of Colorado and beyond (<https://www.coloradomesa.edu/about/values.html>).

II. Graduate Nursing Program Overview

Mission, Philosophy, & Vision

Mission. The CMU Graduate Nursing Program provides learners with an advanced understanding of the concepts, issues, and practices of the domain of nursing. This requires the ability to think independently and generate new knowledge with a respect for the diversity among ideas, programs, and people. Graduates develop expertise in a defined body of knowledge and are prepared to provide ethical leadership in the delivery of health services and education. Graduates, as nursing leaders, serve society while promoting and protecting the health of the individual, family, and public through clinical practice, administration, education, and research.

Philosophy. The Graduate Nursing Program supports the overall mission of CMU. Furthermore, we believe the focus of nursing is defined by connecting science to the experience of human health and caring (Newman, 1991). Recognized ways of knowing in nursing include empirics, esthetics, ethics, and personal knowledge (Carper, 1978). CMU's Graduate Nursing Program honors scientific, theoretical, and nursing knowledge to advance the discipline.

Vision. Faculty, students, and alumni value the expansion of nursing science, knowledge, and practice. This entails nursing leadership in the delivery of care for individuals across the life span, communities, and populations.

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree is for nurses who are interested in an advanced practice role as a family nurse practitioner (FNP) and nurse leader in health care systems. DNP graduates are prepared as experts in the delivery of primary care, with a focus on critical thinking, leadership, and public policy skills needed to advocate for and create changes in healthcare practice at all levels. Courses are delivered via an online format allowing students to reside in their home communities. The DNP program includes a minimum of 1000 clinical hours, approximately 80% of which are completed in primary care settings. Approximately 20% of clinical hours are completed in specialty settings or during the Scholarly Project. Students may complete most clinical hours in their home communities but may need to travel for specialized clinical experiences (e.g., rural health care settings) or graduate program student intensives (GPSI).

DNP Mission. The mission of the DNP program is to prepare experts in advanced practice to utilize specialized knowledge and evidence-based nursing to influence and deliver primary care to diverse populations. Graduates translate scientific findings, evaluate programs and outcomes, produce clinical scholarship, and transform healthcare systems and policies.

DNP Goals. The goals of the DNP program are to prepare graduates to:

1. Assume clinical leadership roles in service and academic settings.
2. Influence health policy and systems of healthcare in local, state, regional, and national forums.
3. Use information technology and analytic methods to evaluate multiple sources of outcome data.
4. Utilize current practice guidelines and policies, care delivery models and strategies to impact health outcomes.
5. Develop therapeutic approaches to reduce disparities in the care of families, communities, and populations.
6. Design evidence-based, ethical, safe, and cost-effective strategies that improve healthcare outcomes for individuals or populations.
7. Incorporate strategies to stay abreast of healthcare policies and issues.

DNP Program Outcomes. Graduates of the DNP program will:

1. Build intra- and interprofessional collaboration to improve health care quality across diverse populations. (CMU 2; NONPF-Leadership, Quality, Health Delivery System; DNP Essentials VI, VII, VIII)
2. Compile and evaluate health care information systems to strengthen, support, or improve the health delivery system. (CMU 2, NONPF-Scientific Foundation, Practice Inquiry; DNP Essentials III, IV, VIII)
3. Interpret social justice, equity, and ethical policies in health care for complex decision making for individuals and populations. (CMU 6, NONPF-Literacy, Policies, Ethics, Independent Practice; DNP Essentials V, VII)
4. Develop theoretical and scientific practice initiatives and/or policies for quality improvement to promote a culture of safety in diverse organizational cultures and populations. (CMU 1, 6; NONPF-Leadership, Quality, Policies, Ethics; DNP Essentials I, II, V)
5. Modify complex clinical situations and health care systems through the integration and utilization of evidence-based practice to promote optimal outcomes. (CMU 3; NONPF-Scientific Foundation, Leadership, Policies, Health Delivery System, Independent practice; DNP Essentials I, II, VIII)
6. Improve the delivery of care to individuals, families, and communities through advanced nursing science. (CMU 1, 4, 5; NONPF-Scientific Foundations, Independent Practice, Practice Inquiry, Health Delivery System; DNP Essentials I, VI, VII, VIII)

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program prepares nurses for roles as family nurse practitioners (FNPs) and nurse educators (NE) in healthcare or academic settings. MSN

graduates formulate clinical, administrative, or policy decisions to promote health among patients, families, or communities along the continuum of wellness and illness. Graduates may advance to higher levels of nursing education including Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs. Students choose one of two cognates as their substantive area of study: NE or FNP. The courses are delivered via an online format, allowing students to reside in their home communities. However, students may be required to travel for completion of clinical hours or for GPSI sessions. Students in the MSN FNP cognate are required to complete a minimum of 700 clinical hours and students in the MSN NE cognate are required to complete a minimum of 250 clinical hours in both direct and indirect care. Clinical rotations vary based on MSN cognate but may include academic settings, and inpatient, long-term care, community-based, and primary care sites.

MSN Mission. The mission of the MSN is to prepare nurses to provide expert leadership in the delivery of healthcare services and programs to individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan in a variety of settings. Graduates are prepared to practice as advanced practice clinicians, nurse educators and leaders with the critical thinking skills and knowledge necessary to promote the profession of nursing through clinical practice, teaching, program development and implementation, and scholarship.

MSN Goals. The goals of the MSN program are to prepare graduates as:

1. Leaders and educators in healthcare systems or academic settings.
2. Seekers of new knowledge by means of critical thinking, creative reasoning, and scientific investigation in relation to nursing theory, science, and practice.
3. Disseminators of nursing knowledge and research to consumers and other healthcare professionals.
4. Leaders capable of determining effective strategies to promote change within the profession and leading to a more effective management of the healthcare delivery system.
5. Decision-makers who consider ethical principles in serving the needs of diverse individuals, populations, and society.
6. Learners who possess the foundation for doctoral education.

MSN Program Outcomes. Graduates of the MSN program will:

1. Discover leadership skills and behaviors for interprofessional collaboration. (CMU 1, 3; Master's Essential II-Organization and Systems Leadership; Master's Essential VII-Interprofessional collaboration; NONPF-Leadership, Quality, Independent Practice)
2. Analyze quality improvement initiatives to improve the practice environment. (CMU 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Master's Essential III- Quality Improvement; Master's Essential IV-Scholarship; NONPF-Quality, Policies, Independent Practice)
3. Utilize information technology for interprofessional collaboration, learning, and practice. (CMU 5, 6; Essential V-Informatics and Technology; Essential IX-Master's Level nursing practice; NONPF-Technology, Information Literacy, Independent Practice)
4. Distinguish legal, ethical, and regulatory processes for the impact on professional nursing practice. (CMU 6; Master's Essential VI-Health Policy and Advocacy; NONPF-Policies, Ethics, Independent Practice)

5. Create culturally relevant health policy strategies for individual and aggregate populations. (CMU 4, 5; Master's Essential VIII-Clinical Prevention and Population Health; NONPF-Practice Inquiry, Policies, Independent Practice)
6. Synthesize nursing and related sciences for applied learning across diverse populations. (CMU 1, 4, 5; Master's Essential I I-Science and Humanities; Master's Essential IX-Level Nursing Practice; NONPF-Scientific Foundation, Practice Inquiry, Health Delivery System, Independent Practice)

Graduate Nursing Program Accreditation

The DNP and MSN programs at CMU are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<http://www.ccnaccreditation.org>).

Professional Standards & Guidelines & Related Resources

The Graduate Nursing Program follows professional standards, national guidelines, and related resources. Those include, but are not limited to,

- Colorado State Board of Nursing (CSBON)
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)
 - MSN education
 - DNP education
 - Standards for accreditation of baccalaureate and graduate degree nursing programs (2018)
 - Graduate-level quality and safety education for nurses (QSEN, 2012)
 - The essentials of doctoral education for advanced nursing practice (2006)
 - Position statement on the practice doctorate in nursing
- American Association of Nurse Practitioners
- American Nurses' Association (ANA) (2010). Nursing: Scope and standards of practice.
- American Nurses' Credentialing Center
- National League for Nursing (NLN) nurse educator core competencies (2005)
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) (2010). The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health.
- National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) (2017).
 - Doctor of Nursing Practice nurse practitioner clinical scholar
 - Nurse practitioner core competencies
 - Criteria for evaluation of nurse practitioner programs
- Healthy People

III. Academics

Admissions

The application process for the Graduate Nursing Program is outlined at <https://www.coloradomesa.edu/health-sciences/graduate/apply.html>. Applicants must complete the application process by **April 1st** for an anticipated **fall admission**. Letters of acceptance or denial are sent out in the spring. Accepted applicants receive registration and advising instructions in their letter of acceptance for fall admission. Once accepted, students should contact the Graduate Nursing Program co-coordinators, Dr. K. Bridget Marshall (brmarshall@coloradomesa.edu) and Dr. Kathleen Hall (khall@coloradomesa.edu) to schedule an appointment for academic advising.

Non-degree-seeking students and students not yet admitted to the Graduate Nursing Program may enroll in a limited number of Graduate Nursing courses. Non-degree-seeking students and students not yet admitted to the program cannot take clinical courses unless granted permission by course instructors. Clinical courses require students to arrange clinical preceptors, set up clinical hour tracking accounts, complete criminal background checks, and obtain graduate nursing student malpractice insurance. Students should select non-clinical courses if time constraints exist that prevent the completion of these necessary steps required for clinical courses.

Applicants must do the following by **April 1** for an anticipated fall admission.

1. Complete the online CMU graduate application, located at <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/admissions/apply.html> and pay the associated graduate application fees.
2. Request official transcripts from all colleges or universities at which you previously completed coursework.
3. Using CMU Connect, submit the following:
 - a. Copy of unrestricted nursing license in the state of residence.
 - b. Three letters of professional and academic recommendation.
 - c. Professional writing sample. This can be a published manuscript, grant application, or scholarly paper written for a nursing course.
 - d. Essay of 500 words or less on why you are seeking a graduate degree in nursing. Explain why a graduate degree is necessary for you to meet your professional development goals.

4. Additional screening may be required to assess the applicant's ethical or critical reasoning abilities.

Criminal Background Check & Drug Screen. All graduate nursing students complete a criminal background check upon entry into the program. Students may be required to undergo additional screening by some agencies prior to clinical or academic placement. If the investigation reveals criminal information relevant to the student's application, the student is not permitted to enter or to progress through the program. All graduate nursing students also complete a urine drug screen prior to entry into the program. Failure to submit a urine drug screen results in non-admittance to the Graduate Nursing Program.

Immunizations. Students obtain the following vaccines prior to admittance into the Graduate Nursing Program. It is the students' responsibility to provide updated immunization records to DHS. Note also that some vaccines require booster doses (e.g. tetanus) or annual administration (e.g. influenza).

1. Hepatitis B - Students must have received the series of shots in order to continue in the program. Documentation that students have started the series is required on admittance to the Graduate Nursing Program and dates of completion of the series must be submitted to DHS.
2. Tetanus - current vaccination must be documented for admittance into the Graduate Nursing Program. Tetanus boosters are required every 10 years and must be current to continue in the program.
3. Measles, Mumps, Rubella - Documented immunity is required for admittance into the Graduate Nursing Program. Immunity may be documented by one of the following:
 - a. Born before 1/1/57
 - b. Documentation of physician-diagnosed measles
 - c. Documentation of two doses of vaccine
 - d. Laboratory evidence of immunity to measles (titer)
4. Tuberculosis - Students must obtain either a two-step TST or proof of negative TST documented yearly for 2 years. If the student has proof of a single two-step TST in the preceding year, a one-step TST should be done. TST's must be current within one year.
5. Pregnant students are referred to their healthcare providers for advice on immunizations. Pregnant students must submit a written waiver for immunizations to DHS.
6. Annual influenza immunizations are required October through May. If you are opposed to influenza vaccinations, it is your responsibility to find out if you can continue with practicum rotations during these high peak months.
7. Additional vaccinations (e.g., COVID-19) may be required by individual clinical/practicum sites. Students are responsible for ensuring that all appropriate immunizations are obtained prior to the first practicum course.

Advising

Faculty advisors are assigned to students upon entering the academic program. Students' advisors are listed on students' MAVZONE pages. Advisors develop course progression sheets (CPS) with students to guide course registrations each semester. Students are responsible for

contacting their assigned advisors for advising each semester and as needed. Students are strongly encouraged to have their advisors review their course load, but advisors' signatures are not necessary for the student to proceed with the registration process. When registering for courses, students follow the instructions for adding courses described by the CMU Registrar's Office located at <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/registrar/registration/index.html>. Advisors maintain current progress records on the CPS for advisees. Students are ultimately responsible for their own education and for contacting their advisors. Students are responsible for knowing and completing curriculum requirements and assuming the following:

1. Knowing their degree requirements.
2. Making initial contact with advisors through email or phone contact.
3. Meeting with advisors (in person, email, telephone) for CPS review and advice if failing courses or encountering difficulties that might affect progression.

Students who wish to change academic advisors may do so by emailing the Graduate Nursing Program coordinator(s) to request changes. Student experiencing academic difficulties should contact the course instructor and their faculty advisor. At any time during a course, instructors may initiate performance improvement contracts (PIC) for students. If student receive PICs, they should meet with both the instructor and their faculty advisor. Students must contact advisors regarding possible leaves of absence from the Graduate Nursing Program. If students get off-track, it is their responsibility to meet with advisors for alternative options.

Degree, Program, or Cognate Changes. Students admitted as non-degree seeking may change their admission status to degree seeking as long as the student is in good standing with the Graduate Nursing Program. To make the change from non-degree seeking to degree seeking, students should contact the CMU Admissions Office (Phone: 970.248.1875; Email: admissions@coloradomesa.edu) for further assistance.

Students who wish to change their cognate within the MSN program can contact the Graduate Nursing Program coordinators to modify their CPS. Students who wish to change their program from the MSN to the DNP should contact the CMU Admissions Office (Phone: 970.248.1875; Email: admissions@coloradomesa.edu) for further assistance.

Program Progression

Faculty have a responsibility to ensure the academic integrity of the curriculum. Complexity of course work increases as students progress through their academic program. This scaffolding of content requires all pre-requisite course to be completed before taking higher-level courses in the curriculum. The following guidelines are in place to support graduate students' progression through the Graduate Nursing Program.

1. Students must earn at least a grade of B in all required courses in the curriculum, including electives, and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher in the Graduate Nursing Program.

2. Any student without a passing grade of "B" or above in required courses must re-take the course the next time it is offered if space is available. If a student fails a second graduate nursing course (below a B), he/she is withdrawn from the program and is not re-admitted.
3. If a student fails (below a B) more than one course in a semester, faculty review the situation and determine the appropriate action on an individual basis.
4. If a student fails a course due to unsafe physical or emotional care of patients, faculty may remove the student from the course and submit a Course Failure/Instructor Withdrawal to the CMU Registrar.
5. All graduate nursing courses must be completed within four years for the MSN and within six years for the DNP.
6. A student may not obtain credit by examination for a failed course.
7. A student may not obtain credit by examination to improve a grade.
8. If a student is readmitted after having been absent for one academic year or more, he/she follows the curriculum outlined in the catalog which is current at the time of re-enrollment and is required to demonstrate knowledge and clinical competency from the previous coursework.
9. All didactic and clinical courses must be completed with passing grades (grade "B" or higher) prior to enrolling in MSN Capstone and DNP Scholarly Project courses.

For graduate students pursuing either the MSN-FNP or the DNP-FNP degree, the following guidelines also exist.

1. Students enrolled in a course with co-requisites (e.g., theory + clinical components) should take the components concurrently. If a student receives a grade of less than "B" in *either* component, both components *may* need to be repeated. The Health Sciences Department Director (HSDD) determines, on a case-by-case basis, whether only one course within the course pairs is retaken. Students may not progress to the next course pair until both the didactic and clinical courses that preceded it are completed.
2. Students must choose as their first course pair NURS 602/620 (Primary Care of the Adult) or NURS 603/630 (Primary Care of Older Persons).
3. At least two clinical courses (NURS 610, 620, or 630) must be completed prior to taking NURS 640.
4. All course pairs must be completed before enrolling in NURS 650 Preceptorship I.

Progression for Out of Sequence Courses. Students who wish to revise their CPS should meet with their advisors to discuss changes to the existing CPS. There is no guarantee that specific courses will be offered "off schedule." It is the student's responsibility to adhere to the CPS or wait until specific courses are offered.

Course Cancellations

Courses may be cancelled if less than six students are enrolled. If a course is cancelled, the student may opt to take the course at an outside university and have the course transferred in. Outside courses must be pre-approved by the HSDD before students enroll. Students must also be within the 18-credit hour limit for transferring courses into CMU's Graduate Nursing Program.

Grading Guidelines

Didactic Courses. Instructors have the freedom to determine the grading scale for individual courses. All sections of the same course follow the same grading scale. Instructors determine the components that comprise the final grade in a course and include this information in the course syllabus, along with course expectations. Graduate students must earn an 80% (B) or better in all graduate course work.

Didactic Course Grading Scale	
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	76-79%
D	70-75%
F	69 & below%

Clinical Courses. The following guidelines describe students' clinical performances. The descriptions indicate how well students met outcomes or objectives for clinical courses. Only grades "A" and "B" are acceptable at the graduate level. Students receiving the grade of "C" or below constitutes a failing grade.

Clinical Course Grading	
Grade	Description
A	Exemplary performance. Consistently functions above expectations; demonstrates superior knowledge & consistently integrates appropriate knowledge with skills; is consistently self-directed in his/her approach to learning.
B	Satisfactory performance. Functions consistent with expectations; demonstrates adequate performance of teaching, clinical or leadership skills; demonstrates accurate & appropriate knowledge & usually integrates knowledge with skills; recognizes learning opportunities but may require assistance in utilizing them.
C	Unsatisfactory performance. Functions below expectations; requires moderate assistance in integrating knowledge with skills; requires direction in recognizing & utilizing learning opportunities.
D	Unsatisfactory performance. Functions well below expectations; teaching, clinical, or leadership skills lack understanding of role function; demonstrates gaps in knowledge & requires frequent assistance in integrating knowledge & skills; requires frequent, detailed instruction regarding learning opportunities.
F	Unsatisfactory performance. Unsafe & fails to meet course objectives; frequently lacks necessary knowledge & skills & unable to integrate these into practice; requires constant, detailed instruction regarding learning opportunities & is often unable to utilize them.

Grade Reporting. Final grades are submitted to the CMU Records Office by the deadline specified in the CMU academic calendar. Course assignment grades are entered online within D2L classrooms. Final grades are posted in MAVZONE. A copy of the final grade submitted by faculty is kept on file in DHS.

Grading Grievances & Appeals. Students have five working days following the grade or decision in dispute to schedule a meeting with the course instructor member. Meetings for online students are conducted via telephone or other technology. If the problem is resolved through the initial meeting, no further action is necessary. Failing successful resolution, students may appeal, doing so within five working days by filing a written appeal with the HSDD. The HSDD renders a decision in writing, with explanation, within 10 days. If the student still does not believe the conflict has been resolved, the student is directed to the *CMU Student Handbook* for further steps to be taken.

If a student is appealing a grade, the student must demonstrate in writing that the grade is unfair based on one or more of the following conditions.

1. The grading decision is based on something other than course performance unless the grade was a result of penalty for academic dishonesty.
2. The grading decision is based on standards that were unreasonably different from those applied to other students in the same section of that course.
3. The grading decision is based on standards that differed substantially and unreasonably from those previously articulated by the instructor.

Incomplete Grades. This grade is assigned only when instructors are presented with serious and compelling reasons why the student should be allowed to complete the course at a later date. These reasons are customarily medical. The “I” grade is not an automatic extension. If the “I” grade has not been completed by the end of the term when the course is offered again, the grade is changed automatically to “F.” Students cannot take a course for which the incomplete course is a prerequisite until the incomplete course is passed with a grade of B or higher.

Course Evaluations

Courses and instructors are evaluated by students at the end of each semester. Students evaluate whether course objectives were met and whether the teaching methodologies were effective in fostering learning. Students may provide constructive suggestions for course and/or instructor improvement. Course and instructor evaluations are anonymous. Forms for course and instructor evaluations are on MAVZONE. If students cannot locate course evaluation forms, please contact the instructor of the course prior to the last week of the semester.

Graduation

To graduate with a MSN or DNP degree, students must satisfy all general and specific requirements of CMU including the fulfillment of all financial obligations. The catalog used to determine graduation requirements is the academic year in which the student enrolls in the first graduate nursing course. Students must complete the curriculum or course of study in which they initially enrolled, provided courses needed to complete the program are available. Students cannot choose part of the program from one catalog and part of the program from another. If students resume study or begin new courses of study at CMU after being absent for one academic year or more, they must follow the curriculum or course of study at the time of re-

enrollment. CMU reserves the right to evaluate any transferred credits that students wish to apply toward any degree. To graduate from CMU, graduate students must:

1. Submit the Intent to Graduate form to Registrar form by required date.
2. Make an appointment with the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor reviews the student's Degree Works and verifies that all materials (e.g. transcripts, transcript evaluations, course substitutions) are in the student's file.
3. Turn in following information to HSDD by midterm of the semester prior to graduation: CPS, any transcripts from other colleges, transcript evaluation from Registrar's Office.
4. The HSDD reviews and signs the petition to graduate and forwards it to the Registrar's Office for processing.

IV. Disciplinary Actions

Academic Dishonesty & Plagiarism

Academic dishonesty is an intentional act of fraud in which an individual claims credit for work belonging to another individual. Upon entrance into the program, all students sign a statement regarding academic dishonesty. This is in effect for the entire program of study. Signed forms, turned in to the DHS administrative assistant, are kept in students' files. Students should also read the *CMU Student Handbook* sections on student conduct as it applies to all CMU students. According to the *CMU Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual*

“Plagiarism is the act of appropriating the written, artistic, or musical composition of another, or portions thereof; or the ideas, language, or symbols of same and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. Plagiarism includes not only the exact duplication of another's work but also the lifting of a substantial or essential portion thereof. Regarding written work in particular; direct quotations, statements which are a result of paraphrasing, summarizing the work of another, and other information which is not considered common knowledge must be cited or acknowledged. As long as a student adequately acknowledges his or her sources and as long as there is no reason to believe that the student has attempted to pose as the originator, the student shall not be charged with plagiarism even though the form of the acknowledgement may be unacceptable. However, students should be aware that most professors require certain forms of acknowledgment and some may evaluate a project on the basis of form.”

DHS faculty may require students to submit their written assignments to a plagiarism software program. Faculty reserve the right to enforce sanctions for academic dishonesty according to the *CMU Student and Academic Policies Guide*. Such sanctions include, but are not limited to, lowering grades, failing students for the assignment, failing students for the course, and expelling the student from the program. Students who become aware of acts of academic dishonesty can file a written report and turn it into the Graduate Nursing Program coordinator(s). Students may appeal sanctions for academic dishonesty reports made against them as stipulated in the *CMU Catalog* and *The Maverick Guide*.

Withdrawal, Probation & Suspension

The Graduate Nursing Program follows the policies as outlined in the current *CMU Catalog* and graduate curriculum policies related to withdrawal, probation, and suspension of students. Faculty reserve the right to dismiss from the program any student who fails to meet academic and/or clinical standards. Students who present physical or emotional problems that conflict with safety essential to nursing practice are dismissed from the program. Unsatisfactory behavior may consist of a pattern of behavior of performance or a single incident, depending on the incident. Such offenses may include but are not limited to patient safety, abuse, and/or criminal incidents. Preceptor evaluations and negative feedback from a preceptor site can result in failure of the clinical and lead to dismissal from the program.

V. Graduate Student Resources

Electronic Portfolio (ePortfolio)

All graduate nursing students have access to and are required to create an electronic portfolio (ePortfolio). This is something that you will create for yourselves as you move through the Graduate Nursing Program. Faculty recommend that you populate your ePortfolio with major assignments that you complete while in the Graduate Nursing Program. Once you reach the end of the program, you will have amassed evidence of your knowledge, skills, and abilities to use as you seek employment or consider additional advanced education. You can learn more about ePortfolio by going to <https://coloradomesa.digication.com/mav-folio/home>.

Email Address

To access information technology services, students are assigned a network username and password in the CMU acceptance letter. It is the student's responsibility to check his/her email address on a routine basis. Important student announcements and program information are sent to all nursing students via CMU email. Personal emails are not accepted for correspondence in CMU courses or clinical rotations. The Information Technology and Communications Help Desk (970-248-2111) is the primary point of contact for all technology-related issues including:

1. Usernames and passwords
2. Online learning
3. MAVZONE
4. Outlook email
5. Connecting to the wireless network

Graduate Advisory Board Meetings

All graduate students and alumni are invited to participate in the Graduate Advisory Board (GAB). This board consists of representatives from local agencies, the media, and consumers. Its purpose is to inform the graduate program about issues occurring in healthcare in the region and

the nation. It is also an opportunity for the graduate program to inform the community of the accomplishments of the graduate program. The GAB generally meets twice yearly.

Graduate Faculty Meetings

Graduate faculty meetings are open to all graduate nursing students who wish to attend. Students may attend in person or via distance (e.g. conference call, video conferencing). Please email the graduate faculty at least 24 hours in advance if attendance is desired so that appropriate technology can be set up. Designated graduate students may also serve on ad-hoc committees.

Graduate Program Student Intensives (GPSI)

Students participate in episodic GPSIs throughout the year. GPSIs are designed to provide students with in-depth training and hands-on skills building in selected topics. Topics vary based on students' interests and faculty availability. GPSIs are held on CMU's campus, via Zoom technology, or in the surrounding area. Continuing education credits may be available for some GPSIs. Contact course instructors to inquire about GPSI schedules.

Regional Conferences

Graduate nursing students are encouraged (and sometimes required) to submit their course work to regional conferences as either poster or podium presentations. Students should familiarize themselves with the following professional conferences:

- National Nurse Practitioner Symposium
- Nurse Educator's Conference in the Rockies
- Public Health in the Rockies
- Western Institute of Nursing

Students are encouraged to attend these regional conferences, especially those that are congruent with the student's graduate program cognate (FNP, NE). It is part of professional role development that graduate students participate in these and other professional organizations.

Sigma Theta Tau Nu Kappa Chapter

All graduate nursing students are encouraged to apply to Sigma Theta Tau, the International Honor Society of Nursing. CMU's chapter is Nu Kappa. Meetings are held periodically throughout the year where members participate in a variety of activities. Membership in Sigma Theta Tau includes a subscription to *The Journal of Nursing Scholarship*. To find out more about Sigma Theta Tau, see <https://www.nursingsociety.org/>. To find out more about the Nu Kappa chapter, contact DHS.

Tomlinson Library

Graduate students have access to information and research resources through Tomlinson Library (<http://www.coloradomesa.edu/library/students/off-campus-students.html>). A CMU student identification card, or "MAVcard," is required to access online library databases. Questions about the MAVcard can be directed to the MAVcard Office at 970.248.1059.

Typhon Group LLC Clinical Tracking System

The Graduate Nursing Program uses Typhon Clinical Tracking System to document all clinical hours accrued in the Graduate Nursing Program. Students will establish an account with Typhon (typhongroup.net) and pay all associated fees. This program allows students to track all clinical experiences and clinical hours. Typhon is an internet-based system so students can access it anywhere they have internet access.

When students begin their first clinical course, the course faculty will send them user names and CMU's Typhon account number. Students will receive an email directly from Typhon to create a password. Once students' accounts are established, students must pay approximately \$80 as a onetime fee directly to Typhon Group. A video tutorial is available to students on the Typhon website where students can learn about entering and tracking their clinical data. Students can also generate clinical data reports to use for credentialing/certification and employment.

VI. Student Responsibilities

American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual

Students must follow the APA's most current guidelines, unless otherwise noted by course instructors. Evaluation of students' assignments must demonstrate integration of content explicated throughout the *Publication Manual of the APA*. Graduate students are required to review tutorials and may be asked to pass a competency evaluation of tutorial content upon entrance into the Graduate Nursing Program.

Testing

Exams and quizzes are delivered electronically via D2L. In order to support the integrity of the testing process, all students are required to do the following:

1. Download the Respondus Lockdown Browser. This application is located in MAVZone. No students should complete an exam or quiz via D2L using a computer that does not have this application downloaded.
2. Proctoring. All graduate students are required to take exams at approved testing sites. There are currently two approved sites, one in Grand Junction and one in Montrose. If students are not local to Grand Junction or Montrose, they must choose an approved testing site and select a testing proctor. Please see the link under the Start Here folder of each D2L course shell titled, "Student D2L Resources." Click on the folder titled, "Exam

proctoring.” Once you identify the testing site and proctor, complete the [Examination Request Form](#) and submit it to the course instructor at least two weeks prior to the exam/quiz date.

Graduate Writing

All graduate students must write at the graduate level. The following checklist outlines the Graduate Nursing Program’s graduate writing expectations. The Writing Center (<https://www.coloradomesa.edu/tutoring/writing-center.html>) is available to graduate nursing students who need support with writing.

Graduate Writing Checklist

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Paragraphs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas sequenced clearly in each section and as a whole • Paragraphs focus on one subject and present details about it • Clear sequencing of ideas within and between paragraphs • Clear transitions between paragraphs • First sentence of the paragraph introduces the subject and provides transition from the preceding paragraph • Paragraphs do not end in citations • Paragraphs are appropriate in length (4-6 sentences) |
| Sentences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly written and convey intended meaning • Sentences appropriate length (avoid run-on sentences) • Variety in types of sentences and how they begin (avoid repeating same words over again) • Clear transitions between sentences within paragraphs • Subjects and verbs agree in each sentence • Write in past-tense if talking about things in the past • Write in future-tense if projecting something in the future • Write in present-tense if discussing something “right here; right now” • Comparisons specify all elements • Use first person sparingly |
| Words | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words express intended meaning and are used correctly (avoid slang; “boils down” – literally means “boils down” – this is slang) • Clear antecedents for pronouns • Excessive and unnecessary words omitted (eliminate “fluff”) • Stereotypes, abstractions, nominalizations, jargon, and abbreviated terms avoided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Abbreviations: expanded 1st time cited in text followed by initials in parentheses ○ No abbreviations in the title or abstract ○ No author invented abbreviations |

- Use active voice
- Quotes are to be used minimally (ex. 1 quote per page at the maximum); all other evidence must be paraphrased
- Numbers – typical “rule” – words used for numbers below 10 except when grouped with numbers 10 and above (see APA manual for “rules for numbers”)
 - Words used for common fractions

Throughout Manuscript

- Correct grammar
- Correct punctuation
- Correct capitalization
- Correct spelling

APA

- Title – reflects purpose and meaning from the manuscript
- Abstract – summarizes most important content
 - Describes background, purpose, methods, results, and conclusions (or sections of the paper as required for individual classes)
- Text
 - Purpose – introduced early in the paper
 - Introduction – explains importance of the content
 - Main concepts are in the purpose and throughout the paper
 - Literature review is synthesized
 - Literature is current (less than 5 years old, unless otherwise noted)
- References
 - Are all references in the reference page used within the paper?
 - Have any references been omitted by accident?
 - Check APA manual for proper in-text citations and for the reference page
- Headings and Subheadings
 - Use level of headings
 - Organized in an effective manner that reflects the content under each heading (hint, see grading criteria for courses, this will help with organization of content too)
- Remember, for APA, 1-space after each sentence

Additional Requirements

- Editors are not to be used for course work
 - Exceptions only after passing oral defense and in final edits prior to submission to CMU repository
 - If you need additional assistance with writing, please let your professors know so they can help find a tutor (editors are not allowed) if they know of a tutor. You may use a tutor, but not an editor

- Citations for PowerPoint or presentation software
 - All citations must be reflected at the “bullet point” that paraphrased from that reference
 - Citations cannot be just put at the bottom of a PowerPoint slide. This indicates that all the references used are saying everything on that slide.
 - Place citations with the information that was obtained from that source

Revised by K. Hall (2020). Adapted by E. Donovan, J. Holvoet, & A. Cox (2019) from Checklist for Revising Writing Structure & Style (Exhibit 11.6) p. 276-277 in Oermann, M. H., & Hays, J. C. (2016). *Writing for publication in nursing* (3rd ed.). Springer Publishing.

MSN Capstones & DNP Scholarly Projects

All graduate nursing students complete either a MSN Capstone or DNP Scholarly Project at the end of their program of study. The purpose of Capstones and Scholarly Projects is to allow students to demonstrate a synthesis of all the knowledge and skills gained throughout the Graduate Nursing Program. See the Capstone and Scholarly Project course syllabi for specific details. All students working with human subjects must follow the processes set forth by the CMU IRB. The IRB is the committee that protects the rights and welfare of human subjects recruited as research subjects. Federal, state, and university regulations require all human subject research to be approved by the IRB before research is conducted. Prior to beginning their project, all DNP students complete online training on the protection of human subjects. After passing this training, DNP students develop and submit their IRB applications. Information about the CMU IRB, including the required online training, is located at <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/sponsored-programs/human-subjects--irb.html>. All defended DNP Scholarly Projects are submitted electronically to the CMU Tomlinson Library and become permanent records of CMU.

Clinical/Practicum Rotations

Clinical/practicum expectations are outlined in the [Clinical/Practicum Handbook](#).

All graduate nursing students are required to complete clinical/practicum hours as part of their graduate studies. Clinical/practicum hours and types of hours vary by degree (MSN, DNP) and cognate (nurse educator, FNP). Students are required to complete 50 clinical/practicum hours for each clinical/practicum course credit. For example, a three credit hour clinical/practicum requires students to complete a total of 150 hours at selected clinical and/or academic sites. Additionally, DNP student clinical/practicum hours must meet the DNP Essentials outlined in AACN's (2006) *The Essentials for Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* located at <http://www.aacnursing.org/Portals/42/Publications/DNPEssentials.pdf>. Students are responsible for arranging their own clinical/practicum rotations for each of their practicum courses. Students are also expected to participate in objective structured clinical exams (OSCEs) at pre-identified points in their graduate studies.

Additional requirements for DNP-FNP and MSN-FNP students include the following.

1. In order to be eligible to sit for national certification as a FNP, at least 500 hours of direct care must be performed in primary care sites. Thus, students choose preceptors who work as primary care providers across practice settings (outpatient, long-term care, home-based care).
2. CMU faculty recommend students complete approximately 80% of their hours in primary care and approximately 20% in specialty rotations (e.g. cardiology, oncology, DNP Scholarly Project, etc.).
3. Clinical progression through each clinical practicum course subsumes the competencies of the course(s) before it. To progress to the next clinical practicum course, the student must demonstrate competency at the required level in all clinical practicum course outcomes as well as those described on the Clinical Evaluation Tool (CET). The clinical practicum faculty and preceptor discuss the results of the CET with the student after each clinical practicum course. Evaluations are kept in students' academic files. If students meet the clinical practicum course outcomes and performs at least at the minimum level required (first clinical, second clinical, etc.) specified on the CET, they can progress to the next clinical practicum course.
4. If students do not meet the outcomes for the prerequisite clinical practicum course, they must retake that clinical practicum course. By the end of the last clinical practicum course, FNP students must obtain a level of "competent" on the CET in all areas.

Practicum Competencies. All graduate nursing students are expected to demonstrate competency in each setting where practicum hours are accrued. Mental and physical requirements for graduate students are determined by the agencies where practicum rotations are performed. Graduate nursing students are held liable for their own acts of negligence committed in the course of practicum experiences. If they are performing duties that are within the scope of professional nursing, they are held to the same standard of competence as RNs. Practicum requirements are specified within specific graduate program practicum course.

Confidentiality. A confidential communication contains information given by one person to another under circumstances of trust and confidence with the understanding that such information must not be disclosed. Information about a patient or student, gathered by examination, observation, conversation, or treatment, is confidential information protected by law. Breach of confidentiality results in disciplinary action up to and including immediate expulsion of the student(s) involved. Students should de-identify all protected health and academic information in all practicum coursework submitted.

Dress Code. A professional appearance and attitude must be maintained while in clinical and academic areas. Students are required to follow the dress code stipulated by each agency where practicum hours are accrued. Agency-specific dress code policies should be consulted prior to the first practicum. The CMU name pin (with first name and last initial), which is ordered prior to the first practicum course, is worn during the entire practicum. Please note that some practicum sites also require students to wear agency-specific identification. A laboratory coat may be required during some practicum rotations.

Licensure & Certifications

All graduate nursing students must maintain an unencumbered RN license throughout all graduate course work. Failure to do so may result in immediate expulsion from the Graduate Nursing Program. It is the student's responsibility to provide DHS with a current copy of his/her RN license. It is also the student's responsibility to notify the graduate faculty if, for any reason, his/her RN license is encumbered in any way. Graduate nursing students must carry cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) with automatic external defibrillation (AED) certification for healthcare providers throughout their graduate studies. CPR-AED certification is obtained through the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross. Failure to maintain CPR-AED certification may result in immediate expulsion from the clinical setting in which the student is accruing clinical hours. It is the student's responsibility to provide proof of CPR-AED certification to DHS. Graduate students may also have certifications from accrediting bodies [e.g. American Nurses' Credentialing Center (ANCC)]. Students should submit copies of these certifications as well.

Liability Insurance

Graduate nursing students must carry their own liability insurance throughout the Graduate Nursing Program. Liability policies must be comprehensive, covering general bodily injury and property damage liability with minimum coverage limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence/\$2,000,000 general total limit, and medical professional liability insurance with minimum coverage limits of \$1,000,000 per claim/\$3,000,000 annual aggregate. Students must provide proof of insurance coverage to DHS prior to participation in any clinical rotations. If the graduate student is in the DNP/FNP program, the student must carry *nurse practitioner student liability insurance* once the student enrolls in 600 level clinical courses.

Professional Behavior in the Academic & Clinical Settings

Professional behaviors, consistent with safe and ethical professional nursing practices, are expected in the learning environment and in the clinical setting. When student behavior interferes with the conduct of class or the clinical experience or when safety of members of the campus community is endangered, the Vice President for Student Affairs and/or campus police is notified. Such behavior results in disciplinary action up to and including immediate expulsion from the graduate nursing program. During clinical rotations, students should adhere to the agency policies and procedures related to professional behavior. Students should clarify agency policies related to patient confidentiality, patient safety, emergency response protocols, exposure to blood and body fluids, and personnel policies (e.g. missed clinical days, late arrival, or early dismissal) with their clinical preceptors.

Social Networking & Media Guideline

All materials posted to online classes are the property of CMU. Students cannot disseminate course information without the express permission of the course instructor or CMU. Students must refrain from posting anything in courses that violates patient or student privacy.

At times, videos of students performing clinical skills [e.g. during skills check-offs, objective structured clinical exams (OSCEs)] are required by graduate courses. The videos are used to verify skill competencies for distance-learning students. These videos remain in the D2L classrooms as part of students' coursework.

Technology Requirements

To participate in online courses, students must have a computer, reliable internet access, and basic computer skills. Basic computer skills include but are not limited to using a word processing program (e.g. Microsoft Word), browsing online websites, copying and pasting between programs, and use of audio/video programs (e.g. Zoom, Skype for Business). Upon program admittance, students receive a username and password in order to access the CMU online community. Brightspace by Desire2Learn (D2L) is the learning management system used to deliver online graduate nursing courses. You can access D2L via the MAVZONE login page. Technology issues, including computer failure, is not an excuse for missed or late work. Therefore, be sure that you have a minimum of the following technology functions prior to enrolling in the graduate program: DSL/Cable modem, high-speed internet connection, Microsoft Windows XP or later, Microsoft Office 2003 or later, and Java Runtime Environment 7.

Prior to starting the first online graduate nursing class, students are required to pass an orientation to online learning via D2L. Technical assistance is available to online students via the CMU Distance Education staff and via the Information Technology HelpDesk. The HelpDesk can be accessed online at <http://coloradomesa.edu/it/helpdesk.html> or by calling 970.249.2111.

CMU adheres to "netiquette." Netiquette refers to the etiquette by which students should abide when using online services for classes or campus communications. This includes email, social media, online chats, blogs, online discussions, meeting boards, instant messages, etc. Although you are participating in course activities and using course materials online, the CMU *Student Code of Conduct* still applies. Online participants are expected to behave in a respectful manner that is supportive to other learners, participants, and faculty. Online behavior should foster an environment that is productive and thoughtful. Netiquette provides guidelines for facilitating this positive atmosphere.

Transportation Requirements

Students are responsible for securing their own transportation to and from their clinical rotations. Students are also responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from the CMU main campus in the event that the student is required to be onsite.

References

- Carper, B. A. (1978). Fundamental patterns of knowing in nursing. *Advances in Nursing Science*, *1*(1), 13-23.
- Newman, M. A. (1991). The focus of the discipline of nursing. *Advances in Nursing Science*, *14*(1), 1-6.

Appendix



Student Agreement of Understanding: Graduate Nursing Program Student Handbook*

I understand that it is my responsibility to read and understand all the policies and information contained in the *Graduate Nursing Program Student Handbook*. This includes the policies related to academic honesty.

Printed name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Program of Study:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Master of Science in Nursing (MSN):
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Nurse Practitioner
<input type="checkbox"/> Nurse Educator | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor of Nursing Practice/Family Nurse Practitioner (DNP/FNP) |
|---|---|

I expect to graduate Spring Fall Year: _____

* Return signed form to via emailed .pdf to: healthscience@coloradomesa.edu

Disclaimer: The purpose of this handbook is to provide students, faculty, and applicants with consistent, current information about CMU Graduate Nursing guidelines. Information is updated approximately once a year. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information, CMU reserves the right to make changes as circumstances arise. The contents of this handbook do not, in whole or part, constitute a contractual obligation on the part of CMU, its employees or agents, nor does any part of this handbook constitute an offer to make a contract. This handbook is provided for the convenience of the reader, and CMU expressly disclaims liability, which may be otherwise incurred.

Copy to student file.

Performance Improvement Contract

Student Name: _____ Course: _____

Objectives:

To identify areas of weakness in student performance in the didactic or clinical courses.

To construct a written improvement plan to facilitate student success in program continuation.

Background:

Faculty have identified the following areas of weakness that require improvement in order to successfully progress through the CMU graduate program in nursing.

(Identify specific instances where student's performance fell below the CMU graduate nursing program expectations.)

Performance Improvement Contract (continued)

Plan of Correction

At the conclusion of _____, the student will:
(semester, year)

(Identify measurable objectives as part of the plan of correction)

Your signature indicates you have read and understand this document.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Signature: _____ Date: _____

Original to student. Copy to student file.

Colorado Mesa University Incomplete Grade Form

CMU ID _____ Name (please print) _____

CMU Email _____ Phone _____

Current Program

____ Master of Science in Nursing ____ Doctor of Nursing Practice

____ Non-degree-seeking student

Course Information

Course number (e.g. NURS 600): _____ Number of Credits _____

Course Title _____

Enrollment term/year _____ Course Instructor _____

The signatures below verify that the instructor and student agree to the following the terms and schedule for completion of the course.

Terms of Completion

Deadline for Completion (max. length of time: Next time course is taught) _____

Please note: Grade will revert to an 'F' if the 'Incomplete' is not completed by the deadline specified above. Exceptions maybe considered for special circumstances.

Student Signature _____ **Date** _____

Faculty Signature _____ **Date** _____

Original to student. Copy to student file.