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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 programs. This handbook supplements the CMU Graduate Policies and Procedures, located at http://www.coloradomesa.edu/graduate/documents/GraduatePoliciesProcedures.pdf.

Please read this handbook carefully throughout your program as guidelines may change over time. We also post graduate program news and information on the CMU Department of Health Sciences website, located at http://www.coloradomesa.edu/health-sciences/graduate-nursing-program-news.html.

Sincerely,

Graduate Nursing Faculty
I. 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 programs support 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 programs honor 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 assuming an advanced practice role as a family nurse practitioner (FNP). 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 in an online format allowing students to reside in their home communities. The DNP program also includes a minimum of 1000 clinical hours, 80% of which are completed in primary care settings. Approximately 20% of total clinical hours are completed in specialty settings or during the scholarly project. Students complete most clinical hour requirements 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:

- Assume clinical leadership roles in service and academic settings.
- Influence health policy and systems of healthcare in local, state, regional, and national forums.
- Use information technology and analytic methods to evaluate multiple sources of outcome data.
- Utilize current practice guidelines and policies, care delivery models and strategies to impact health outcomes.
- Develop therapeutic approaches to reduce disparities in the care of families, communities, and populations.
- Design evidence-based, ethical, safe, and cost-effective strategies that improve healthcare outcomes for individuals or populations.
- Incorporate strategies to stay abreast of healthcare policies and issues.
DNP Expected Student Learning Outcomes (ESLOs). Graduates of the DNP will:

1. Facilitate intra- and interprofessional collaboration to address health disparities and to improve health-care quality across diverse populations and cultures (DNP Essential VI; NONPF Leadership Competencies).

2. Appraise organizational and system leadership principles in the analysis, delivery, and management of nursing care for safe practice environments (DNP Essential II; NONPF Leadership Competencies; Health Delivery System Competencies).

3. Critique complex primary care clinical situations and health care systems to promote optimal outcomes through evidence-based practice (DNP Essential III; NONPF Practice Inquiry Competencies).

4. Evaluate current and emerging health technologies to improve care delivery and organizational systems (DNP Essential IV; NONPF Technology and Information Literacy Competencies).

5. Integrate advanced knowledge of nursing theories, methods of inquiry, humanities, and sciences in the delivery of care to individuals, families, and communities (DNP Essential I; NONPF Scientific Foundation Competencies).

6. Advocate for social justice, equity, and ethical policies in health care (DNP Essential V; NONPF Ethics Competencies; NONPF Policy Competencies).

7. Design practice environments that support quality improvement, a culture of safety, accountability and communication to improve patient outcomes in diverse settings (DNP Essential II; NONPF Quality Competencies).
8. Design evidence-based, ethical, safe, and cost-effective strategies that use technology to improve health care outcomes for individuals and/or populations (DNP Essentials IV, VII; NONPF Health Delivery System Competencies).

9. Initiate changes in health care systems through the design and implementation of health policies that strengthen the health care delivery system (DNP Essentials V, VII; NONPF Practice Inquiry Competencies, NONPF Leadership Competencies).

10. Lead practice initiatives that influence population health care outcomes with a focus on underserved individuals, families, and communities (DNP Essentials VI, VII; NONPF Practice Inquiry and Leadership Competencies).

Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN)

The Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN) program prepares nurses for roles as leaders 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) nursing programs. Students choose one of three cognates as their substantive program of study: nursing education, advanced nursing practice, or administration/leadership. The courses are delivered in an online format, allowing students to reside in their home communities. However, students may be required to travel for completion of clinical immersion hours or for GPSI sessions. The MSN program also requires students to complete a minimum of 160 clinical hours. Clinical rotations vary based on MSN degree cognate but may include inpatient or acute care sites, 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 nurse educators and leaders with the critical thinking skills and knowledge necessary to promote the profession of nursing through clinical practice, teaching, research, program development and implementation, and scholarship.

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

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

**MSN Expected Student Learning Outcomes.** Graduates of the MSN will:

1. Incorporate leadership skills and behaviors to foster best practices, promote professional growth, interprofessional collaboration, and positive change in people and systems within health care and education (MSN Essential II, VII).
2. Analyze quality improvement and safety initiatives, accountability and communication to improve patient outcomes (MSN Essential III).
3. Advocate for policies to improve the health outcomes of populations and the quality of the health care delivery system as it impacts professional nursing practice (MSN Essential VI, VIII).

4. Apply current evidence-based knowledge to inform and/or initiate change in educational, clinical, and organizational environments (MSN Essential IV).

5. Synthesize advanced theoretical, empirical, and ethical knowledge to engage in systematic critical inquiry for a chosen domain of nursing (MSN Essential I, IV).

6. Appraise the impact of social determinants, culture, diversity, values, and globalization in the delivery of population health (MSN Essential VIII).

7. Utilize information systems, technology, and patient data for ethical, clinical decision-making that promotes cost effectiveness and positive health care outcomes (MSN Essential V).

8. Develop strategies to improve individual and population health outcomes based on health promotion and disease reduction principles (MSN Essential VIII, IX).

Professional Standards & Guidelines & Related Resources

The graduate nursing program follows the professional standards, national guidelines and related resources.

- Colorado State Board of Nursing (CSBON), located at https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dora/Nursing_Laws

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)
  - MSN education, located at http://www.aacnnursing.org/Nursing-Education-Programs/Masters-Education
  - DNP education located at http://www.aacnnursing.org/Nursing-Education-
Programs/DNP-Education

- Standards for accreditation of baccalaureate and graduate degree nursing programs (2013), located at http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation/standards-procedures-resources/baccalaureate-graduate/standards
- Position statement on the practice doctorate in nursing, located at http://www.aacn.nche.edu/dnp/position-statement

- American Association of Nurse Practitioners, located at https://www.aanp.org/education/student-resource-center/starting-your-career/9-education/1060-certification-for-entry-level-nps

Revised 9/18
- Nurse practitioner core competencies, located at

- Criteria for evaluation of nurse practitioner programs (2012), located at

II. Academics

Admissions

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

- Complete the online CMU graduate application located at http://www.coloradomesa.edu/admissions/apply.html and pay the associated graduate application fee.

- Submit directly to DHS
  - One copy of official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended. Students must have a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in nursing coursework.
  - Copy of unrestricted license to practice as a registered nurse.
  - Three letters of professional and academic recommendation.
  - Professional writing sample. This can be a published manuscript, grant application, or scholarly paper written for an undergraduate or graduate nursing course.
  - 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.

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

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.

Advising

A faculty advisor is assigned to each student upon entering the academic program.
Students’ advisors are listed on students’ MAVZONE pages. Students develop a course progression sheet (CPS) with their advisors that guide students’ registrations each semester. Students are responsible for contacting their assigned advisors for initial advising each semester and at any other time that the student and advisor may deem necessary. 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 a current progress record on the CPS for each advisee. Each student is ultimately responsible for his/her own education and for contacting his/her advisor as needed. Students are responsible for knowing and completing all the curriculum requirements and assuming the following:

1. Knowing the degree requirements.
2. Making the initial contact with the advisor through email or phone contact.
3. Meeting with the advisor (in person, email, telephone) for CPS review and advice if the student is failing a course or encountering difficulties that might affect progression.

Students who wish to change their academic advisor may do so by emailing the appropriate program coordinator(s) to request a change. A student experiencing academic difficulty should contact the course instructor and his/her faculty advisor. At any time during a course, the instructor may initiate a performance improvement contract (PIC) for a student. If a student receives such a contract, s/he should immediately make an appointment with both the instructor and his/her faculty advisor. Students must contact the advisor regarding a possible leave of absence from the graduate program. If students get off-track, it is their responsibility to meet with their advisors for alternative options.
American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual

Students in the graduate program must be fluent in written communication consistent with the APA’s most current guidelines, unless otherwise noted by the course instructor. 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 program.

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 the capstones and scholarly projects is to allow students to demonstrate the synthesis of all the knowledge and skills gained throughout the graduate program. The capstone and scholarly project courses consist of clinical practice hours related to the area or population of interest, a written manuscript, an oral presentation, and oral defense. All defended DNP scholarly projects are submitted electronically to the CMU Tomlinson Library and become permanent records of CMU.

MSN Students. MSN students’ capstones are generally completed in a single semester. Students, in conjunction with their faculty advisors, develop a service-learning project. Students also complete 60 clinical practicum hours in a selected clinical agency that informs their capstone.

DNP Students. DNP students’ scholarly projects are completed over three semesters. Students, in conjunction with their faculty advisors, develop a project that translates research into practice, and disseminates and integrates new knowledge as an advanced practice nurse (APN). Evidence is generated through a practice setting to guide improvements in practice and in
outcomes of care. Students also complete clinical hours while developing their project.

All DNP students follow the processes set forth by the CMU IRB as part of the DNP scholarly project. 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.

Clinical Rotations

All graduate nursing students are required to complete clinical hours as part of their graduate studies. Clinical hours and types of hours vary by program (MSN, DNP) and cognate (nurse educator, administration/leadership, advanced nursing practice, FNP). Students are required to complete 50 clinical hours for each clinical practicum credit. For example, a three credit hour clinical practicum requires students to complete a total of 150 clinical hours at selected clinical sites.

Students are responsible for arranging their own clinical rotations for each of their clinical courses. Students are expected to adhere to the following process when arranging clinical rotations.

1. Identify an appropriate preceptor. Appropriateness of each preceptor is dependent on each clinical course’s stated objectives. All preceptors, regardless of course, must be at least master’s degree-prepared. Preceptors should be identified at least one semester prior to when the clinical hours are set to begin.
2. Students must verify that the agency where the preceptor(s) work are contracted with CMU as a clinical site. Contact DHS for the most current list of contracted sites. Students should verify that the agency of interest is contracted with CMU at least one semester prior to when the clinical hours are set to begin as it can take several months for agency contracts to become approved.

3. After verifying that the preceptor works at a contracted site, the student provides the preceptor with the Preceptor Handbook and asks that the preceptor review its contents.

4. Preceptors sign and return the Preceptor Agreement Form and provide a copy of their curriculum vitae (CV) to the course instructor.

5. The instructor for the clinical course where the hours are being accrued verifies the contractual agreement between CMU and the clinical agency and the licensure and certification of the preceptor.

6. The instructor notifies the student via email that the student can begin clinical hour accrual.

Additional requirements for DNP students include:


2. In order to be eligible to sit for national certification as a FNP, at least 500 hours 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).

3. CMU faculty recommend students complete at least 80% of their hours in primary care and no more than 20% in specialty rotations (e.g. cardiology, oncology, etc.).
4. Clinical progression through each clinical course subsumes the competencies of the course(s) before it. To progress to the next clinical course, the student must demonstrate competency at the required level in all clinical course outcomes as well as those described on the Clinical Evaluation Tool (CET). The clinical faculty and preceptor discuss the results of the CET with the student after each clinical course. Evaluations are turned in and kept in the student’s academic file. If the student meets the clinical course outcomes and performs at least at the minimum level required (first clinical, second clinical, etc.) specified on the CET, he/she progresses to the next clinical course.

5. If the student does not meet the outcomes for the prerequisite clinical course, the student retakes that clinical course. By the end of the last clinical course, DNP students must obtain a level of “competent” on the CET in all areas to be eligible for the DNP degree.

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 DHS department head before the student enrolls in it. Students must also be within the 18-credit hour limit for transferring courses into CMU’s graduate program.

Course Evaluations

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

**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. The signed form is turned in to DHS administrative assistant to be kept in the student’s file. 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. The graduate nursing faculty reserves 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.

**Grading Guidelines**

**Clinical Courses.** The following guidelines describe students’ clinical performance. The descriptions indicate how well the student has met outcomes or objectives for the clinical course. See Table 1. Only grades “A” and “B” are acceptable at the graduate level. Students receiving the grade of “C” or below constitutes a failing grade.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Consistently functions with little or no guidance, except in very complex situations; demonstrates superior knowledge &amp; consistently integrates appropriate knowledge with skills; is consistently self-directed in his/her approach to learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Functions satisfactorily with minimum guidance; demonstrates above average performance of primary care; demonstrates accurate &amp; appropriate knowledge &amp; usually integrates knowledge with skills; recognizes learning opportunities but may require assistance in utilizing them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Functions with moderate amount of guidance; requires moderate assistance in integrating knowledge with skills; requires direction in recognizing &amp; utilizing learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Requires intense guidance for safe practice; clinical performance reflects difficulty in the provision of primary care; demonstrates gaps in knowledge &amp; requires frequent assistance in integrating knowledge &amp; skills; requires frequent &amp; detailed instruction regarding learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unsafe to practice without constant, intense guidance; failed to meet clinical objectives; frequently lacks necessary knowledge &amp; skills &amp; is unable to integrate these into practice; requires constant, detailed instruction regarding learning opportunities &amp; is often unable to utilize them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**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. The graduate grading scale is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A = 90 – 100%</td>
<td>C = 76 – 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B = 80 – 89</td>
<td>D = 70 – 75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F = 69% &amp; below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade Reporting.** Final grades are submitted to the CMU Records Office by the deadline specified in the CMU academic calendar. Grades are entered online. 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 faculty 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 graduate program coordinator(s). The graduate program coordinator(s) render a decision in writing, with explanation, within 10 days. If dissatisfied with the graduate program coordinator(s’ decision, within five working days, the student may file a written appeal with the DHS department head. The DHS department head investigates and renders a decision in writing 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:

a. The grading decision is based on something other than course performance, unless the grade was a result of penalty for academic dishonesty.

b. The grading decision is based on standards that were unreasonably different from those applied to other students in the same section of that course.

c. 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 the instructor is 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.

**Graduation**

To graduate with a graduate degree (MSN, DNP), the student 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 are required to complete the curriculum or course of study in which they initially enrolled, provided courses needed to complete the program are available. The student cannot choose part of the program from one catalog and part from another.

If a student resumes study or begins a new course of study at CMU after having been absent from university for one academic year (spring, summer, and fall semester) or more, the

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student follows the curriculum or course of study at the time of re-enrollment unless the DHS department head gives written authorization for the student to pursue a different curriculum or course of study. CMU reserves the right to evaluate, on a case-by-case basis, any transferred credits that the student wishes to apply toward any degree.

Guidelines for Completing Petition to Graduate. In order to graduate from CMU, graduate students must:

a. Submit the Intent to Graduate form to Registrar form by required date.

b. Make an appointment with the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor completes the program sheet and verifies that all materials (e.g. transcripts, transcript evaluations, course substitutions) are in the student’s file.

c. Turn in following information to DHS department head by midterm of the semester prior to graduation: CPS, any transcripts from other colleges, transcript evaluation from Registrar’s Office.

d. The DHS department head reviews and signs the petition to graduate and forwards it to the Registrar’s Office for processing.

Program Progression

Faculty have a responsibility to ensure the academic integrity of the curriculum and faculty availability to deliver courses. Therefore, the following guidelines are in place for graduate students’ progression.

1. All pre-requisite courses must be completed prior to beginning graduate nursing courses.

   Some exceptions may be made by the DHS department head or graduate program coordinator(s) on an individual basis.
2. Students must attain 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 for all graduate courses. This guideline applies regardless of when or where the course is taken.

3. Any student without a passing grade of "B" or above in required nursing classes have to 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.

4. 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.

5. If a student fails a course due to unsafe physical or emotional care of patients, the faculty do not allow the student to repeat the course.

6. All graduate nursing courses must be completed within four years for the MSN and within six years for the DNP.

7. A student may not obtain credit by examination for a failed course.

8. A student may not obtain credit by examination to improve a grade.

9. 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.

10. All didactic and clinical courses must be completed with passing grades (grade “B” or higher) prior to enrolling in capstone courses. Exceptions are made by the graduate program coordinator(s).

**For graduate students pursuing the DNP 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 DHS department head determines, on a case-by-case basis, whether only one course within the course pairs is retaken. The student may not progress to the next course pair until both the didactic and clinical courses that preceded it are completed.

2. Students 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) are completed prior to taking NURS 640 clinical practicum.

4. All course pairs are completed before enrolling in NURS 650 Preceptorship.

**Progression for Out of Sequence Courses**

Students who wish to revise their CPS meet with their advisors to assess the desired change to the existing CPS. The advisor consults with the graduate program coordinator(s) and the DHS department head to discuss the revised CPS. The graduate program coordinator(s) or DHS department head inform the student in writing of the decision regarding the petition within 10 working days of receipt of the petition.
III. Graduate Student Resources

Alumni Opportunities

All graduates 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 work taking place in the graduate program. The GAB generally meets twice yearly.

Email Addresses

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 Program Student (GPS) Intensives

Students are invited to participate in episodic GPS intensives throughout the year. GPS intensives are designed to provide students with in-depth training and hands-on skills building in selected topics. Topics vary based on students’ interest and faculty availability. GPS intensives
are held on CMU’s campus or in the surrounding area. Continuing education credits may be available for some GPS intensives. Contact DHS to inquire about GPS intensive schedules.

**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/](https://www.nursingsociety.org/). To find out more about the Nu Kappa chapter, contact DHS.

**Student Attendance at 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.

**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.
IV. Student Responsibilities

Clinical Competencies

All graduate nursing students are expected to demonstrate clinical competency in each setting where clinical hours are accrued. Mental and physical requirements for graduate students are determined by the clinical agencies where clinical rotations are performed. Graduate nursing students are held liable for their own acts of negligence committed in the course of clinical 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. Clinical practice requirements are specified within each graduate program track.

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, 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 information in all course work submitted.

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 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.

Revised 9/18
Dress Code

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

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 program and dates of completion of the series must be submitted to DHS.

2. Tetanus - current vaccination must be documented for admittance into the 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 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 clinical rotations during these high peak months.

7. Additional vaccinations may be required by individual clinical sites. Students are responsible for ensuring that all appropriate immunizations are obtained prior to the first clinical course.

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 is 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.

**Technology Requirements**

In order 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.
Appendix
Student Agreement of Understanding: Graduate Nursing Student Handbook*

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

Printed name: ________________________________ Date: __________

Signature: ____________________________________________

Program of Study:

□ Master of Science in Nursing (MSN):
  □ Advanced Nursing Practice
  □ Nursing Education
  □ Leadership & Administration

□ 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)

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**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.
References
