COLORADO MESA
UNIVERSITY

Department of Health Sciences

Graduate Nursing Programs

Student Handbook

Revised Fall 2023

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COLORADO MESA
U N I V E R S I T Y

Moss School of Nursing
1100 North Avenue • Grand Junction, CO 81501-3122
970.248.1398 (o) • 970.248.1133 (f) • 1.800.982.6372

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*.

Please read this handbook carefully so that you are familiar with the general policies and procedures that pertain to the Graduate Nursing Program. You are expected to sign an Agreement of Understanding (Appendix A) confirming that you have read and understand the contents of this handbook. We also post news and information on the CMU Department of Health Sciences (DHS) website 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 baccalaureate- or master's- prepared 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, at least 800 of which must be completed in direct care. Two hundred clinical hours are completed in specialty settings and 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 (GPSIs).

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 baccalaureate-prepared nurses

for roles as nurse practitioners (family [FNP], adult-gerontology [AGNP]), and nurse educators (NE) in healthcare or academic settings. Note that the NE track is no longer accepting new applications. 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), Doctor of Education (EdD) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs. Students choose one of three cognates as their substantive area of study: FNP, AGNP, or NE. 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 direct care clinical hours. Students in the MSN AGNP cognate are required to complete a minimum of 600 direct care clinical hours. Students in the NE cognate are required to complete a minimum of 250 clinical hours, 90 of which must be in direct care. Clinical rotations vary based on MSN cognate but may include academic settings, and inpatient, long-term care, community-based, and primary care clinical 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 communication and 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 generate or evaluate data for 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 literacy 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. Evaluate legal, ethical, and regulatory processes that impact professional nursing practice. (CMU 6; Master's Essential VI-Health Policy and Advocacy; NONPF-Policies, Ethics, Independent Practice)

5. Create culturally relevant evidence-based 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 (CCNE, http://www.ccneaccreditation.org).

Professional Standards & Guidelines

The Graduate Nursing Program follows professional standards, national guidelines, and related resources including:

- Standards for the Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs (AACN, 2018)

- The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (AACN, 2006)

- The Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing (AACN, 2011)

- Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (NTF, 2016)

- Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (2011)

Additional professional standards and guidelines are used to inform specific curricular content (e.g., Healthy People, American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, etc.). Refer to course syllabi for specific standards and guidelines used to inform course content.

III. Academics

Requirements for Admitted Students

Students' letters of acceptance are sent out in late spring. Accepted applicants receive registration and advising instructions in the letter of acceptance. Non-degree-seeking students and students not yet admitted to the Graduate Nursing Program may enroll in up to nine graduate credits. 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 prevent the completion of these necessary steps required for clinical courses.

All students admitted to the graduate nursing program are required to complete (upon entry) and maintain for the duration of their time in the program all of the following.

Criminal Background Check & Drug Screen. All graduate nursing students must 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 progress through the program. All graduate nursing students 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 must obtain the following vaccines prior to admittance into the Graduate Nursing Program. It is the student's 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 tuberculin skin test (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. TSTs 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 have the right to refuse immunizations based on medical and nonmedical exemptions. Colorado law requires students to be vaccinated against certain diseases unless a certificate of medical or nonmedical exemption is on file. More information about immunization exemptions can be found at [Vaccine exemptions | Department of Public Health & Environment (colorado.gov)](#). Note that clinical sites may refuse to allow unvaccinated students to perform clinical duties at those sites. Students are responsible for verifying vaccination requirements of clinical sites prior to arranging clinical rotations.

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) to guide course registration each semester. Students are responsible for contacting their advisors 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. Follow the instructions for adding courses described by the [CMU Registrar](#). Advisors maintain records for advisees. However, students are ultimately responsible for their own education and for contacting advisors when problems or curricular modifications arise.

Students are responsible for 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, Zoom) for CPS review and advice if failing courses or encountering difficulties that might affect progression.

Students must contact advisors regarding leaves of absence from the 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 they are in good standing (i.e., maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher). To make the change from non-degree-seeking to degree-seeking, students should contact the [CMU Admissions Office](#) (Phone: 970.248.1875) for further assistance. Students who wish to change their cognate within the MSN program can contact the Graduate Nursing Program co-coordinators to modify their CPSs. Students who wish to change their program from the MSN to the DNP should contact the [CMU Admissions Office](#) (Phone: 970.248.1875) for further assistance.

Program Progression

Faculty have a responsibility to ensure the academic integrity of the curriculum. Complexity of course work increases as the curriculum progresses. This scaffolding of content requires all pre-requisite courses to be completed before taking higher-level courses. 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 and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

2. Students who do not receive a grade of "B" or above in a graduate nursing course must retake 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 readmitted.

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 exhibits unsafe physical or emotional care of patients, staff, faculty, or peers, faculty may remove the student from the course and submit a Course Failure/Instructor Withdrawal to the CMU Registrar. Students exhibiting unsafe physical or emotional behaviors are dismissed from the Graduate Nursing Program.

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 all previous coursework.

9. All didactic and clinical courses must be completed with passing grades (grade "B" or higher) prior to enrolling in MSN capstone (NURS 604/NURS640) and DNP (NURS 725, NURS 750, NURS 760) scholarly project courses.

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

1. Students enrolled in a course with a co-requisite (e.g., theory + clinical components) should take the courses concurrently. If a student receives less than "B" in *either* course, both courses *may* need to be repeated. The program co-coordinators determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether only one course is retaken.

2. Students must choose as their first course pair NURS 602/620 (Primary Care of the Adult) or NURS 603/630 (Primary Care of the Older Person).

3. For DNP students, all course pairs must be completed before enrolling in NURS 650 Preceptorship I.

Progression for Out of Sequence Courses. Students who want to modify their CPSs should meet with their advisors. 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 take the course at an outside university and have the course transferred in. Outside courses must be pre-approved by program co-coordinators 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 grading scales 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 $\geq$80% (B) in all graduate course work.

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

Clinical Courses. The following guidelines describe students' clinical performances. The descriptions reflect how well students met outcomes or objectives for clinical courses. Only grades "A" and "B" are acceptable at the graduate level.

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 in

D2L classrooms. Final grades are posted in MAVZONE.

Academic Difficulty. A student experiencing academic difficulties should contact his/her course instructor. At any time during a course, the instructors may initiate a performance improvement contract (PIC, Appendix B). If a student receives a PIC, he/she should meet with the instructor to discuss actions to improve academic performance.

Grade Appeals. Per the [Maverick Guide](pp. 19-21), the burden of proof to support a grade appeal rests upon the student. Students must demonstrate in writing that a grade was unfairly based upon one or more of the following:

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

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

3. The grading decision was based on standards that differed substantially and unreasonably from those previously articulated by the instructor.

Students wishing to appeal a grade must follow these steps.

1. Meet with the course instructor to verbally discuss the grade.

2. If the grade issue is not resolved by speaking with the instructor, the student must appeal in writing to the instructor within six weeks of the recording of the grade by the Registrar. If the student is unwilling to approach or notify the instructor in writing, then a written appeal should be forwarded to the Department of Health Sciences department director within the six-week time frame. A dated copy of the appeal should be provided to the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs (AVPAA). The written appeal must include:

   a. A statement addressing how the appeal meets one or more of the three criteria necessary for a formal grade appeal.

   b. A description of what occurred during the informal resolution process.

   c. Copies of all graded materials from the course that are in the student's possession.

   d. Any relevant documents the student would like to be reviewed as part of the appeals process.

   e. A copy of the course syllabus.

3. Following the submission of the written appeal, the instructor must respond in writing to the student with his/her decision.

4. If the student is dissatisfied with the instructor's response, the student has two weeks to file an appeal with the department director. The department director serves as a mediator between the instructor and the student to resolve the dispute. The department director will investigate and recommend a resolution.

5. If the dispute is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student or the instructor, either party may appeal in writing to the Academic Grade Appeal Committee (AGAC). The point of contact for that complaint is AVPAA. The student or instructor must submit

his/her case in writing to the AVPAA within two weeks following the department director's decision. No later than two weeks from the filing of the grade appeal to the AVPAA, a hearing is convened that includes the student, the instructor, and the authority to whom the appeal was directed. All materials reviewed by the AGAC are educational records protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). A decision will be issued no later than one week from the date of the final hearing/meeting. (Note: The timeline may change if the procedure, or a portion thereof, includes school breaks or times when the university is responding to a large-scale threat such as a public health issue).

6. In instances when the AGAC issues a ruling that is being appealed, the appeal should be directed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The student who wishes to have an appeal considered by the VPAA must submit an appeal within one week following the adverse decision of the AGAC. There are no appeals beyond the level of the VPAA. The ruling of the VPAA is final.

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 an 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, follow the instructions listed at Graduation and Commencement | Colorado Mesa University. Note that you must submit the Intent to Graduate form the semester prior to your planned graduation date. Contact the CMU Bookstore for information regarding ceremonial regalia [Colorado Mesa University (herffjones.com)]

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 Maverick Guide* 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 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 the assignment, failing 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 co-coordinators. Students may appeal sanctions for academic dishonesty reports made against them as stipulated in *The Maverick Guide*.

Complaint Process

CMU defines a student complaint as "an official complaint when a student alleges:

1. the institution has violated local, state, and/or federal law;

2. a breach of contract (e.g. failure to meet institutional obligations as presented in a recruiting material document, application for enrollment or student housing, course syllabus, etc.); or

3. a passive response by the institution to a complaint by a student that resulted in material damages to the student."

Student complaints must be in submitted as promptly as possible following the alleged violation, but no later than February 15 for a concern occurring during the prior fall semester, June 15 for the prior spring semester, and September 15 for the prior summer term. Timely initiation of a complaint rests with the student. The complaint should be in writing and signed by the complainant or submitted electronically from a CMU student email address. The complaint

should

1. describe the issue that is the basis for the complaint, including the steps have been taken to informally resolve the problem;

2. include any relevant documents the student would like to be reviewed as part of the complaint process.

Depending on the nature of the violation, the complaint should be sent to:

- Office of the VPAA if related to academics;

- Vice President for Finance and Administration if related to campus services;

- Vice President for Student Services if related to behavior or conduct;

- Director of Human Resources if related to suspected discrimination in employment or education.

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the relevant administrator investigates the complaint and responds in writing to the student with his/her decision within 30 days. The intent of the administrator is always to reach a decision in as timely a manner as possible. The administrator protects the rights of both the student and CMU when such situations arise. All materials reviewed by the administrator are protected, where appropriate, by FERPA. The ruling of the investigating Vice President/Director of Human Resources is final. There are no further appeals.

Withdrawal, Probation & Suspension

The Graduate Nursing Program follows the policies outlined in the *CMU Student and Academic Policies Guide* 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 safe nursing practice are dismissed from the program. Unsatisfactory behavior may consist of a single incident, or a pattern of behavior. Offenses may include, but are not limited to, unsafe behavior, abuse, and/or criminal incidents. Preceptor evaluations and negative feedback from clinical sites may result in failure of the clinical and program dismissal.

V. Graduate Student Resources

Electronic Portfolio (ePortfolio)

All graduate nursing students have access to an electronic portfolio (ePortfolio). This is something you may create as you move through the Graduate Nursing Program. Faculty recommend that you populate your ePortfolio with major assignments completed 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 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 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:

- Usernames and passwords
- Online learning
- MAVZONE
- Outlook email
- Connecting to the wireless network

Graduate Advisory Board Meetings

All graduate students are invited to participate in the Graduate Advisory Board (GAB). This board consists of representatives from local agencies, preceptors, employers, faculty, and alumni. Its purpose is to inform the Graduate Nursing Program about healthcare issues occurring in the region and the nation. It is also an opportunity for the Graduate Nursing Program to inform the board of student and faculty accomplishments. The GAB generally meets twice yearly.

Graduate Faculty Meetings

Graduate faculty meetings are open to all graduate nursing students. 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. Contact course instructors to inquire about GPSI schedules.

Regional Conferences

Graduate nursing students are encouraged (and sometimes required) to disseminate their course work to regional conferences. 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 conferences, especially those that are congruent with

the students' cognates (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. 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 the Nu Kappa chapter president Diana Bailey PhD, RN at dlbailey@coloradomesa.edu.

Tomlinson Library

Graduate students have access to information and research resources through Tomlinson Library. 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 and pay all associated fees. Typhon is an internet-based system so students can access it anywhere they have internet access. When students begin their first clinical course, course faculty will send them user names and CMU's Typhon account number. Students 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.

Writing Center

The Writing Center provides tutoring for graduate students who struggle with technical and professional writing. There is no charge for students currently enrolled in graduate nursing courses. Students should reach out to Dr. Susan Konantz EdD at extension 1335 or via email at skonantz@coloradomesa.edu if they would like help from the Writing Center. Students may also submit manuscripts online Writing Center | Colorado Mesa University.

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.

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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 student 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 by proctored by course faculty via Zoom (or similar) technology. Alternatively, faculty may allow students to choose a testing site and select a 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 Graduate Writing Checklist (Appendix C) outlines the Graduate Nursing Program's graduate writing expectations. The [Writing Center](#) is available to students who need support with writing.

MSN Capstones & DNP Scholarly Projects

All students complete either an 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 details. All students working with human subjects must follow the processes set forth by the CMU [Institutional Review Board (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 subjects research to be approved by the IRB before research is conducted. Prior to beginning their project, all students complete online training on the protection of human subjects. After passing this training, students develop and submit their IRB applications. Information about the CMU IRB, including the required online training, is located at [Human Subjects & Institutional Review Board (IRB) | Colorado Mesa University](#). All defended capstones and scholarly projects are submitted 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 (NE, nurse practitioner). 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.* 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.

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. If students meet the clinical practicum course outcomes and perform at least at the minimum level required (first clinical, second clinical, etc.) specified on the CET, they may progress to the next clinical practicum course. If students do not meet the outcomes for a prerequisite clinical practicum course, they must retake that clinical practicum course.

Competency. All graduate nursing students are expected to demonstrate competency in each setting where practicum hours are accrued. Practicum requirements are specified within each practicum course. Clinical sites may have additional mental, physical, or behavioral requirements that students must comply with. If students perform duties that are within the scope of professional nursing, they are held to the same standard of competence as RNs.

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.

Preceptor/Student Relationships. The relationship between a student and his or her preceptor must be professional in nature. Thus, students may not use relatives, friends, supervisees, or immediate supervisors as preceptors. It is the responsibility of clinical practicum course instructors to approve all preceptors selected by students. Additional role expectations of students and preceptors are outlined in the Clinical Practicum Handbook.

Licensure & Certifications

All graduate nursing students must maintain an unencumbered RN license throughout all 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 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 may 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 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 or clinical community is endangered, authorities (e.g., campus police, hospital security) are 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 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 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 examples of students' coursework.

Technology Requirements

Students must have a computer, reliable internet access, and basic computer skills upon entry in the Graduate Nursing Program. Basic computer skills include, but are not limited to, using a word processing program, browsing online websites, copying and pasting between programs, and use of audio/video programs. Upon admittance, students receive a username and password

in order to access CMU's online community. Brightspace by Desire2Learn (D2L) is the learning management system used to deliver courses. You can access D2L via the MAVZONE login page. Technology issues, including computer failure, are not excuses for missed or late work. Be sure that you have the following technology functions prior to enrolling in the 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 course, students are required to pass an orientation to online learning via D2L. Technical assistance is available to online students via the Information Technology HelpDesk. The HelpDesk is accessed 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 course 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. Netiquette provides guidelines for facilitating this positive atmosphere. Some basic principles of netiquette include:

- **Be respectful.** Remember that you are communicating with actual people. Be courteous and show respect, even if you have differences of opinion. Remember to treat others as you'd like to be treated. Good manners apply online as well as in the traditional classroom.

- **Think before you post.** Follow posting directions and examples. Be aware of who may be able to view your posting, and how your post may be interpreted. Try to maintain a fair and objective tone.

- **Stay on topic.** Make sure your communication is related to the subject and does not wander off-topic. Ask questions that are appropriate and relevant to the topic. Keep academic discussions free of "chit-chat."

- **Write clearly.** Even though the online environment may seem more informal than your face-to-face class, you are still in an academic course and mature communication is expected. Correct spelling and grammar are required. Proper sentence structure and punctuation should be used. Avoid abbreviations and "text speak."

- **Use appropriate language and style.** Profanity or offensive wording is not acceptable. ALL CAPS and repeated punctuation (???? or !!!!) is considered rude and should be avoided. While it is okay to have robust discussions and differences of opinion, avoid inflammatory wording 'flaming' that might start arguments. To disagree, use language that encourages intelligent discourse and discussion. Ignore statements by others that appear inflammatory.

- **Be considerate of others.** Do not make derogatory, condescending, or harassing remarks. Communication should be well-intentioned and well-articulated. It should foster a positive learning environment. Be aware of how sarcasm may be misinterpreted by your readers. Bullying, threatening, or abusive language will not be tolerated.

- **Allow for misunderstandings.** Keep in mind that writing can often convey the incorrect tone or intention. Make allowances for unintended rudeness or misunderstanding.

- **Cite your sources.** If you post work that is not your own or contains work that is not your own, be sure to reference your sources.

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- **When in doubt, do not send or post.**

Transportation Requirements

Students are responsible for securing their own transportation to and from 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 A
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:

□ Master of Science in Nursing (MSN):   □ Doctor of Nursing Practice/Family Nurse

    □ Family Nurse Practitioner   Practitioner (DNP/FNP)

    □ Adult/Gerontology Nurse Practitioner

    □ Nurse Educator

I expect to graduate   □ Spring   □ Fall   Year: _____

* Return signed form as an 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.

Appendix B
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.

(Identify specific instances where student's performance fell below the CMU Graduate Nursing Program expectations.)

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Plan of Correction

At the conclusion of_____ (semester, year), the student will:

(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.

Appendix C
Graduate Writing Checklist

Item	Expectations
Paragraphs	Ideas are sequenced clearly in each section & as a whole.
	Paragraphs focus on one subject & present details about it.
	There is clear sequencing of ideas within & between paragraphs.
	Clear transitions occur between paragraphs.
	First sentence of the paragraph introduces the subject & provides transition from the preceding paragraph.
	Paragraphs do not end in citations.
	Paragraphs are appropriate in length (4-6 sentences).
Sentences	Sentences are clearly written & covey intended meaning.
	Sentences are appropriate length (avoid run-on sentences).
	There are a variety in types of sentences & how they begin.
	Clear transitions exist between sentences within paragraphs.
	Subjects & 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	Words express intended meaning & are used correctly (avoid slang).
	Clear antecedents are included for pronouns.
	Excessive & unnecessary words are omitted.
	Stereotypes, abstractions, nominalizations, jargon, & abbreviated terms are avoided.
	Abbreviations are expanded the 1st time they are cited followed by abbreviation in parentheses.
	No abbreviations are listed in the title or abstract.
	No author invented abbreviations are included.
	Use active voice.
	Quotes are used minimally (ex., 1 quote per page maximum); all other evidence must be paraphrased.
	Numbers – typical "rule" – words used for numbers below 10 except when grouped with numbers 10 & above (see APA manual for "rules for numbers").
	Words are used for common fractions.
Throughout the Manuscript	Correct grammar is used.
	Correct punctuation is used.
	Correct capitalization is used.
	Correct spelling is used.
APA	Title reflects purpose & meaning of manuscript.
	Abstract summarizes most important content.

	Introduction explains importance of the content.
	Purpose is clearly stated & is introduced early in the paper.
	Literature review is current (< 5 years old unless it is a seminal article) & synthesized (no "book reports").
	Main concepts are threaded throughout the manuscript & link to purpose.
	References page lists all references used in manuscript.
	Headings & subheadings are organized in an effective manner that reflects the content under each heading.
Additional Requirements	Editors or artificial intelligence programs (e.g., ChatGPT) cannot be used for course work. An exception is when students are completing their capstone or scholarly project & have passed their oral defense.
	You may use a tutor, but not an editor. Notify your instructor if needing a tutor.
	On presentations, all citations reflect the bullet point corresponding to that citation.

Adapted from E. Donovan, J. Hovoet, & A. Cox (2019). Graduate Writing Checklist. Adapted from Checklist for Revising Writing Structure and Style (Exhibit 11.6) p. 276-277 in Oermann, M. H., & Hays, J. C. (2016). *Writing for publication in nursing* (3rd ed.). Springer Publishing Company, LLC.