HEALTH SCIENCES
COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

Graduate Nursing Program Student Handbook

Effective Fall 2026

COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

MOSS SCHOOL OF NURSING
1100 North Avenue • Grand Junction, CO 81501-3122
O: 970.248.1398 • Toll Free: 1.800.982.6372
coloradomesa.edu/health-sciences

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* and the *Maverick Guide*.

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.

Sincerely,

Graduate Nursing Faculty

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I. Colorado Mesa University

Institutional & Statutory Mission*

Institutional Mission. As a Human Scale University, our mission is to provide an affordable and accessible education and form meaningful and mutually enriching partnerships that support the well-being and vibrancy of our community.

Statutory Mission. The role and mission of the institution was reenacted in 2010 by the Colorado General Assembly (Colorado Revised Statutes 23-53-101) and amended in 2011 when Mesa State College was renamed Colorado Mesa University:

> *There is hereby established a university at Grand Junction, to be known as Colorado Mesa University, which shall be a general baccalaureate and graduate institution with selective admission standards. Colorado Mesa University shall offer liberal arts and sciences, professional, and technical degree programs and a limited number of graduate programs. Colorado Mesa University shall also maintain a community college role and mission, including career and technical education programs. Colorado Mesa University shall receive resident credit for two-year course offerings in its commission-approved service area. Colorado Mesa University shall also serve as a regional education provider.*

*From Values, Vision and Mission | Colorado Mesa University.

II. Graduate Nursing Program

Mission, Philosophy, & Vision**

Mission: The Graduate Nursing Program prepares ethical, evidence-informed nursing leaders who advance nursing science and health outcomes through therapeutic relationships, scientific inquiry, critical thinking, clinical excellence, and respect for the complexity and diversity of human systems.

Philosophy. The Graduate Nursing Program expands nursing science and advances health outcomes for individuals, families, and populations.

Vision. The Graduate Nursing Program empowers individuals to achieve their highest potential as clinicians, leaders, scholars, and advocates.

**Approved following student and alumni collaboration on 9.10.2026.

Statement of Belonging

The Department of Health Sciences (DHS) is intentional about creating a culture of belonging for students, faculty, and staff. We align with the University's passion to build a scaled model of the world we wish to see, a human scale university. We are firmly committed to the seven values of Colorado Mesa University: love, dignity, courage, humility, resilience, curiosity, and power. We recognize that when we practice these values, we are able to support the diversity of our campus, learning from and honoring the rich assortment of beliefs and backgrounds that converge on our campus that make for a vibrant culture and community.

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree is for baccalaureate- or master's- prepared nurses who want 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. Courses are delivered online, allowing students to reside in their home communities. The DNP program includes 1050 clinical hours. Students may complete most clinical hours in their home communities but may need to travel for specialized clinical experiences (e.g., rural health care) or graduate program student intensives (GPSIs).

DNP Program 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)
2. Compile and evaluate health care information systems to strengthen, support, or improve the health delivery system. (CMU 2)
3. Interpret social justice, equity, and ethical policies in health care for complex decision making for individuals and populations. (CMU 6)
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)
5. Modify complex clinical situations and health care systems through the integration and utilization of evidence-based practice to promote optimal outcomes. (CMU 3)
6. Improve the delivery of care to individuals, families, and communities through advanced nursing science. (CMU 1, 4, 5)

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program prepares baccalaureate-prepared nurses for roles as primary care nurse practitioners (family [FNP], adult-gerontology [AGNP]). 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 between two nurse practitioner cognates: FNP or AGNP. The courses are delivered online, allowing students to reside in their home communities. Students may need to travel for completion of clinical hours (e.g., rural health care) or for GPSI sessions. Students in the MSN program are required to complete a minimum of 750 direct care clinical hours. Clinical rotations vary based on MSN cognate but may include long-term care, community-based, and primary care sites.

MSN Program 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)
2. Analyze quality improvement initiatives to generate or evaluate data for the practice environment. (CMU 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
3. Utilize information literacy for interprofessional collaboration, learning, and practice. (CMU 5, 6)
4. Evaluate legal, ethical, and regulatory processes that impact professional nursing practice. (CMU 6)
5. Create culturally relevant evidence-based health policy strategies for individual and aggregate populations. (CMU 4, 5)
6. Synthesize nursing and related sciences for applied learning across diverse populations. (CMU 1, 4, 5)

Graduate Nursing Program Accreditation

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master's degree program in nursing, and Doctor of Nursing Practice program at Colorado Mesa University **is** accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791.

Professional Standards & Guidelines

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

- The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (AACN, 2026).
- Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (NTF, 2022).

See https://www.nonpf.org/page/NP_Role_Core_Competencies for mapping of the NTF and AACN competencies. Additional professional standards and guidelines are used to inform specific curricular content (e.g., American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association). Refer to course syllabi for specific standards and guidelines informing course content.

III. Student Responsibilities

Requirements for Admission & Program Continuation

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 the following.

Criminal Background Check. 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. Changes to your criminal background status may affect your ability to sit for licensure and/or attend a clinical site. Students must notify program faculty if the status of their background check changes while in the program. Students must report arrests, charges, or legal/ethical allegations within 24 hours of the incident as this may impact your existing RN license or future NP license.

Drug Screening. 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. Students may be required to complete additional blood or urine screenings by clinical agencies where the student plans to accrue clinical hours. Students are expected to maintain congruence with all university and clinical agency policies related to drug screening and avoidance of drug use. Failure to do so will result in the student's dismissal from 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 that some vaccines require booster doses or annual administration.

- Hepatitis B - Documentation that students have completed or started the series is required upon admittance and dates of completion of the series must be uploaded to Typhon prior to clinical hour accrual.
- Tetanus - current vaccination must be documented for admittance. Tetanus boosters are required every 10 years and must be current to continue in the program.
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - Documented immunity is required for admittance. Immunity may be documented by one of the following:
    - Born before 1/1/57.
    - Documentation of physician-diagnosed measles.
    - Documentation of two doses of vaccine.

  - Laboratory evidence of immunity to measles (titer).

- 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.
- Pregnant students are referred to their healthcare providers for advice on immunizations. Pregnant students must submit a written waiver for immunizations to DHS.
- 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.
- Additional vaccinations 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. If you want to claim an exemption, contact the Clinical Placement Coordinator to obtain the necessary forms. Note that clinical sites may refuse to allow unvaccinated students to perform clinical hours at those sites. Students are responsible for verifying vaccination requirements of clinical sites prior to beginning clinical rotations.

Licensure. All graduate nursing students must maintain an unencumbered RN license throughout all course work. Failure to do will result in program dismissal. It is the student's responsibility to provide a current copy of his/her RN license **to program staff**. It is also the student's responsibility to notify graduate faculty if, for any reason, his/her RN license **becomes** encumbered in any way.

CPR Certification with AED. 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.

Liability Insurance. Graduate nursing students must carry nurse practitioner student liability insurance throughout their graduate nursing studies. 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 prior to clinical rotations.

Professional Behavior in the Academic & Clinical Settings

Professional behaviors, consistent with safe and ethical nursing practice, are expected in all academic and clinical settings. The American Nurses Association (ANA) outlines the nursing code of ethics which is accessible at https://codeofethics.ana.org/provisions. Students' failure to adhere to the ANA code of ethics may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including program dismissal. Students exhibiting unsafe or unprofessional behaviors in academic or clinical settings will face disciplinary actions, up to and including program dismissal. Community authorities,

including law enforcement, will be contacted when any student behavior threatens the safety of the campus or clinical community. During clinical rotations, students must 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.

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. 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.

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.
- **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 if the student is required to be onsite.

IV. Academics

Course Enrollment Prior to Admission

Students' letters of acceptance are sent out in the spring. Accepted applicants receive registration and advising instructions in the letter of acceptance. Non-degree seeking students including students planning to apply but who are not yet admitted may enroll in up to 9 credits based on course instructor permission and space availability.

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. Students are responsible for contacting advisors when problems 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.

Students who wish to change their cognate within the MSN program can contact the Graduate Nursing Program co-coordinator(s) to modify their CPSs. Students who wish to change their program from the MSN to the DNP should contact the CMU Admissions Office for further assistance.

Testing

Exams and quizzes are delivered electronically via the learning management system (LMS). 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 the LMS using a computer that does not have this application downloaded.
2. Proctoring. All graduate students are required to take proctored exams. Ask individual faculty which proctoring option(s) they allow.
    a. The Respondus Lockdown Browser includes a video and audio recording feature that faculty may enable. This application feature proctors students while tests are in progress.
    b. CMU has two testing centers, one on the Grand Junction campus and one on the Montrose campus. Students must schedule a testing date and time through RegisterBlast if planning to use one of the CMU testing centers. See Testing Center | Colorado Mesa University for more information.
    c. Students may be proctored by course faculty via Zoom or Microsoft Teams technology.
    d. Students, with faculty permission, can arrange their own proctor by having their proctor sign and submit an exam proctor agreement form. Contact course faculty to see if this is an option.

Students are prohibited from sharing any exams or portion of exams with other students. Copying exam questions or taking screen shots of exams is strictly prohibited. Doing so constitutes academic dishonesty. Students who commit academic dishonesty risk program dismissal.

Graduate Writing

All graduate students must write at the graduate level. The Graduate Writing Checklist (Appendix B) outlines the Graduate Nursing Program's graduate writing expectations. Students must follow the American Psychological Association **(**APA**)** most current *Publication Manual of the APA*, unless otherwise noted by course instructors. **Note that the use of artificial intelligence (AI), including the use of Grammarly, ChatGPT, and other AI applications, is prohibited. Use of these constitutes academic dishonesty and may result in program dismissal.**

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 vary by degree (MSN, DNP). 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.

Competency. All graduate nursing students are expected to demonstrate competency in each setting where clinical hours are accrued. Clinical 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 clinical 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. 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.

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 checkoffs, 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.

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 completion of all pre-requisite courses prior to enrollment in subsequent courses. The following guidelines are in place to support students' progression through the program.

1. Although some CMU graduate programs allow grades of C to count towards degree completion, the Graduate Nursing Program requires students to achieve at least a grade of B in all required courses in the curriculum and to 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 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 or unprofessional behavior with 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 or unprofessional behaviors are dismissed from the program.
5. All graduate nursing courses must be completed within four years for the MSN and within six years for the DNP. Exceptions are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Health Sciences Department Director.
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. Students who have been absent for one academic year or more must reapply to the Graduate Nursing Program. 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 competencies 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 and DNP scholarly project courses.
10. Students enrolled in a course with a co-requisite should take the courses concurrently. If a student receives less than a B in *either* course, both courses *may* need to be repeated. The program co-coordinator(s) determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether only one course is retaken.
11. For DNP students, all course pairs must be completed before enrolling in NURS 650 Preceptorship I.

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 due to low enrollment. If a course is cancelled, the student may take a similar course at an outside university, provided the student has written approval from the program coordinator(s). Students cannot transfer more than 18-credit hours from outside universities.

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.

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.

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 in online 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 instructor may initiate a student success plan (SSP). If a student receives an SSP, he/she should meet with the instructor to discuss actions to improve academic performance.

Grade Appeals. The Graduate Nursing Program requires students are faculty to adhere to the grade appeal process outlined in the Maverick Guide (pp. 20-22).

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 & Student Complaint Policy

Courses 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. Evaluations are anonymous and are provided near the end of the course by CMU. Students may lodge formal complaints when they disagree with The CMU student complaint policy is accessible at Complaint Process | Colorado Mesa University.

MSN Capstones & DNP Scholarly Projects

All students complete either an MSN capstone or DNP scholarly project towards 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 CMU Culminating Activities handbook and course syllabi for specific requirements.

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 people 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. All defended capstones and scholarly projects are submitted to the CMU Tomlinson Library and become permanent records of CMU.

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 after being absent for one or more academic years, they must follow the curriculum or course of study at the time of re-enrollment. CMU has 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.

V. Graduate Student Resources

Learning Management System & Information Technology

The Graduate Nursing Program uses learning management systems (LMS) for all coursework. Prior to the first course, students must pass an orientation to online learning. Student resources including tutorial videos can be accessed at Center for Digital Learning and Innovation.

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.

Graduate Advisory Board

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 meets annually.

Graduate Faculty Meetings

Graduate faculty meetings are open to all graduate nursing students. Students may attend in person or via distance (e.g., Zoom). 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.

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 Conference in the Rockies
- Public Health in the Rockies

It is part of professional role development that graduate students participate in these and other professional opportunities. Financial support may be available to students presenting their original work. Reach out to course faculty for more information.

Sigma Honor Society - Nu Kappa Chapter

Graduate nursing students may be eligible to be inducted into Sigma Honor Society. CMU's chapter is Nu Kappa. Meetings are held periodically throughout the year. To find out more about the Nu Kappa chapter, contact your academic advisor.

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.

Typhon 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. Prior to students beginning 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 $100 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.

The Center for Academic Support

The Center for Academic Support provides tutoring for graduate students who struggle with technical and professional writing. There is no charge for students currently enrolled in graduate nursing courses.

VI. Disciplinary Actions

Student Conduct

Students are required to read the *CMU Maverick Guide* sections on student conduct (pp. 18-19) as it applies to all CMU students.

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to adhere to CMU policies related to academic dishonesty as outlined in the *Maverick Guide* (p. 19).

Academic Probation & Program Withdrawal

Probation. Probation indicates that the student is not in good standing with the expectations of the Graduate Nursing Program. Probation constitutes a warning to the student that the student's academic and/or clinical performance needs improvement. Students placed on probation may continue their studies for one semester, provided that they do not exhibit unsafe or unprofessional behaviors. Academic and/or clinical performance that meets the Graduate Nursing Program standards allows the student to be removed from probation and to continue in the Graduate Nursing Program. Students whose academic and/or clinical performance does not improve after being on probation are permanently dismissed from the Graduate Nursing Program.

Withdrawal. The Graduate Nursing Program follows the withdrawal policies outlined in the *CMU Student and Academic Policies Guide*. Faculty reserve the right to withdraw from the program any student who fails to meet academic and/or clinical standards. Students who present physical, psychological, or emotional problems that conflict with safe nursing practice are permanently 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 unethical or criminal incidents. Preceptor evaluations and negative feedback from clinical sites may result in failure of the clinical and program dismissal.

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):

□ Family Nurse Practitioner

□ Adult/Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner

□ Doctor of Nursing Practice/Family Nurse Practitioner (DNP/FNP)

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
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. Holvoet, & 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.