WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF NURSING & ALLIED HEALTH (SONAH)

MASTER ENTRY PROFESSIONAL NURSING (MEPN) STUDENT HANDBOOK 2026-2027

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master's degree program in nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice program and post-graduate APRN certificate program at Western Kentucky University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791. (http://www.ccneaccreditation.org).

Note: Policies stated within this document relate to any student enrolled in the MEPN program in the 2026-2027 academic year.

Revised May 11, 2026

GENERAL POLICIES

THE PROVISIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT DO NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE STUDENT AND THE SCHOOL OF NURSING & ALLIED HEALTH. THE FACULTY AT WKU SCHOOL OF NURSING & ALLIED HEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE REASONABLE CHANGES AS NECESSARY.

Students at Western Kentucky University are expected to review and abide by policies within the University Student Handbook. However, in addition to the University Student Handbook, there are specific policies related to nursing students. This section of the handbook contains policies that apply to students in the School of Nursing & Allied Health.

STUDENT POLICIES

The following sections cover general policies that apply to all students in programs within the School of Nursing & Allied Health.

Academic Policies

Academic Advisement

Students are assigned a faculty advisor who will assist in planning a program of study consistent with the student's interests and abilities. Each student assumes responsibility for initiating an advisement conference each semester, and any time there may be questions or concerns regarding the academic plan of study.

Computer Literacy

Students are expected to have adequate computer skills for writing papers, using electronic mail to communicate, and accessing information using the Internet. If computer skills are not adequate, it is suggested the student investigate learning experiences to improve skills. Introductory computer courses are available here at WKU, local community colleges and/or technical schools, etc. Students are expected to use Microsoft Office and some specialty software (see class syllabi for details). Many courses are web-enhanced or web-based using the Blackboard Educational Package, which requires internet access and a current version of either Internet Explorer or Fire Fox. Students without appropriate computer hardware and software will be expected to either upgrade their personal systems and/or make use of the student computer labs to complete computer-based assignments.

All students must use their **WKU EMAIL ADDRESS** and are responsible for checking their email on a regular basis for updates and instructions from their course and clinical faculty.

SON General Student Attendance and Illness Policy

Classroom, Lab, and Clinical Attendance

Attendance: Students are expected to be present, punctual, and attentive for class, lab, and clinical experiences.

Tardiness: Students are expected to arrive prior to the start of class, to avoid disrupting the classroom. Students who arrive after class begins may be asked to wait until break to enter the classroom. Admittance to the clinical setting/laboratory in the event of tardiness for exceptional circumstances will be at the discretion of the instructor.

Extra Assignments: Faculty members may assign extra work for students who have missed any part of a class or clinical to help the student regain what was lost during their absence if the faculty member feels this is appropriate.

Extenuating Circumstances: *Unforeseen events* such as an auto accidents, deaths in the immediate family or personal illness which requires a student to be absent from class or clinical may be viewed as an extenuating circumstance. In the case of such events the student must notify faculty members as soon as possible. ***Vacations, weddings, doctor appointments, studying for an exam, childcare issues, job interviews, working, etc. are not considered extenuating circumstances as these are not unforeseen events.*** Students wishing to claim extenuating circumstances will be asked to provide documentation of the condition which led to excessive absenteeism. The presence of extenuating circumstances does not guarantee that a student will be exempted from this attendance policy.

Personal Illness and Emergency
Students may not attend class or clinical if they have a fever or other evidence of a contagious illness. Students are expected to be fever free for 24 hours after an acute illness before returning to the class or clinical setting. If students are unable to attend the regularly scheduled class, lab, or clinical rotation due to illness or such an emergency, they are required to provide advance notice via telephone or email to the faculty member teaching the course. In an emergency where advance notice is impossible, the student is required to notify the faculty member teaching the course as soon as possible.

If an emergency situation occurs during a class, lab, or clinical session that requires immediate medical attention for a student, the nursing faculty is to contact 911 and provide directions to the student's location. The student is responsible for any transport and treatment costs. Students should contact their own health care provider for recommendations for follow-up treatment.

Approved Jan 2017 SON Faculty

SON Core Performance Standards

DIVISION:	School of Nursing
TITLE:	School of Nursing Core Performance Standards
DATE:	May 2016
REVISED:	N/A
AUTHORIZED:	Mary Bennett, Director WKU School of Nursing

I. Purpose and Scope
To document the required Core Performance Standards for WKU School of Nursing Pre- Licensure Students. To document student's acknowledgement of their awareness of these standards and that they can meet these standards upon application to one of the WKU pre- licensure nursing programs.

II. Otherwise Qualified Person with a Disability
An otherwise qualified individual with a disability is a person with a recognized disability who is otherwise qualified (meets the academic requirements for placement within an admission cohort) but may not be able to meet the core performance standards without accommodations.

III. Students who require accommodation
(Academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aids or services) to meet the core performance standards must contact the WKU SARC Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC) and obtain evaluation of any necessary accommodations prior to entering the nursing program. Written documentation from the SARC must be presented to the nursing program prior to starting nursing courses, so that any necessary arrangements can be made to provide appropriate accommodations (more information below). *Please note that admission into the nursing program does not guarantee the student with a disability will be able to be placed at specific clinical agencies, or that every clinical agency will be able to provide the same level of accommodations for students with disabilities.*

IV. Testing Accommodations
Students requesting testing accommodations within WKU School of Nursing must meet the same rigorous standards as those required for nursing licensure and accreditation exams. See School of Nursing Testing Accommodations Policy for details. Students should work with SARC to obtain the needed documentation and make arrangements for extended testing prior to the first timed graded assignment or exam within a course, or within 4 weeks of starting the course, whichever comes first. Last minute requests for extended time on exams may not be able to be accommodated.

V. The Core Performance Standards
These are approved technical standards for students in nursing programs. Each institution must make explicit essential eligibility requirements for its nursing program by citing the core performance standards. The standards set forth cognitive, sensory, affective, and psychomotor performance requirements. Each core performance standard should be accompanied by examples of activities nursing students are required to perform.

VI. Core Performance Standards

To enter, remain and progress in the WKU pre-licensure nursing program, all students must be able to meet the following core performance standards, with or without reasonable accommodation. Examples of abilities listed below are not comprehensive.

- **Gross Motor:** Students must have sufficient physical mobility to travel independently to and within hospitals, homes, clinics, schools, and other health-related agencies. They must be able to quickly and safely move from room to room and maneuver in small places. They must have the gross and fine motor capability to provide safe care to clients independently. This requires the ability to sustain work requiring delivering services at the bedside, standing/walking for 8-12 hours, traveling independently, ability to reach above shoulders to manage IVs or monitors, ability to reach below waist to manage equipment, twist, bend, stoop, squat, push, pull, lift, support at least 50 pounds in order to position, transfer, and ambulate patients, ability to administer CPR to adults, children and infants, and perform physical movements quickly and efficiently to provide safe patient care.
- **Sensory and Fine Motor:** Students must have sufficient tactile and manual dexterity to (a) accurately manipulate equipment, (b) complete a physical assessment (palpation, percussion, auscultation, taking a pulse), (c) prepare and administer medications, (d) legibly print dates and times on medication vials, (e) perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation, (f) use a computer keyboard, (g) legibly and accurately document nursing care, and (h) perceive attributes of objects such as dimension, shape, color, temperature and texture.
- **Visual Acuity:** Students must have sufficient visual acuity to (a) observe subtle changes in clients' conditions, (b) accurately read medical records and orders, (c) accurately read computer monitor screens and other equipment indicators, and (d) legibly and accurately document nursing care. Detect changes in color of various alarm lights and laboratory assays which are color based.
- **Auditory Acuity:** Students must have the auditory acuity with and without background noise that enables them to communicate with others and to assess the physical status of a client (breath sounds, heart sounds, bowel sounds, auscultating blood pressure, etc.). Students must possess sufficient auditory acuity to respond to various alarm signals from different types of equipment, such as when the alarm is sounding from the patient's room and the student is in the hallway. Must be able to respond to normal volume speech in situations where unable to see lips move, as when the speaker is not facing the student or when the speaker is wearing a mask.
- **Communication Skills:** Students must have sufficient receptive, written and oral communication skills to accurately receive, read, interpret and comprehend the English language in written and verbal forms in order to (a) to communicate effectively and professionally with clients, faculty, staff, and peers from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds; (b) Give oral and written reports to faculty and other members of the health care team: (c) teach clients and families; (d) accurately document, interpret, and comprehend nursing interventions and actions and client responses; (e) communicate data about clients in a timely manner; and (f) demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback.
- **Emotional and Cognitive Skills:** Students must have sufficient emotional stability and cognitive skills to (a) process both verbal and written information in a reasonable amount of time; (b) demonstrate good judgement; (c) respect differences in patients, families and other students; (d) establish and maintain appropriate relationships and boundaries with clients, faculty, staff, and peers; (e) work closely with others, including touching and being touched by others during patient care and in training situations; (f) take responsibility for their own actions; (g) complete all responsibilities in the assessment and implementation of nursing care for patients in a timely, safe and effective manor; (h) adapt to changing and high paced environments without becoming overwhelmed; and (i) have adequate environmental awareness and emotional stability to remain calm and function effectively in multiple, complex settings that may be stressful, noisy and may be potentially harmful. This includes exposure to communicable diseases, personal injury, death of patients, and violence in the workplace.

Change in Ability to Meet the Core Performance Standards

Students who experience a change that affects their ability to meet any of the core performance standards must notify their assigned faculty. Students unable to function safely and effectively in the clinical setting may be required to drop out of the clinical courses during the time they are unable to meet the core performance standards. If the student experiences a change but feels that they can continue to perform safely in the clinical setting, the faculty member will require documentation from the student's health care provider indicating that the student can safely function in the clinical setting.

Requesting Reasonable Accommodations
Students diagnosed with disabilities covered by the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act may be granted special accommodation in the nursing classroom or laboratory setting. Details concerning the accommodations required in each setting must be documented. Accommodations granted in one setting may be different than those granted in another setting and are not automatic. For example, *an accommodation of double testing time for a learning disability in the classroom does not mean the student will automatically get double time to perform a procedure in a laboratory or clinical setting.* It should be noted that in the clinical setting the ability to perform skills safely and effectively is mandatory and students must be able to perform the assigned clinical skills within the allotted clinical time. For example, it is not reasonable for the student to take 12 hours to provide the assigned patient care instead of 6 hours. It is the responsibility of the student to follow the appropriate procedure for requesting an accommodation through the WKU Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC).
SARC, Downing Student Union (DSU) Room 1074, Monday-Friday, 8-4:30, 270-745-5004. sarc.testing@wku.edu.

Testing Accommodations Policy and Procedure

Policy & Procedure Document

NUMBER:	N.1003
DIVISION:	School of Nursing
TITLE:	School of Nursing Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
DATE:	1/27/2012
REVISED:	N/A
AUTHORIZED:	Mary Bennett, Director WKU School of Nursing

I. Purpose and Scope

In order to standardize application for testing accommodations within the school of nursing to those required for students taking nursing licensure and certification exams, the following policy will apply to nursing students who are requesting testing accommodations for School of Nursing courses.

II. Policy

Students requesting testing accommodations within WKU School of Nursing must meet the same rigorous standards as those required for nursing licensure and accreditation exams.

III. Procedure

1. All students seeking testing accommodations within the School of Nursing must work through student disabilities PRIOR to taking any exam for which they want accommodations. Retroactive accommodations will not be allowed under any circumstances.
2. Students must submit a written statement, on letterhead, from the disability coordinator at your high school or other former educational program, listing a detailed diagnosis, the date of your initial diagnosis, and the accommodations provided to you while attending the program. The disability coordinator may require you to sign a release of information form before the documentation can be released to WKU.
3. Documentation from a licensed health care provider (Physician, Psychologist or Nurse Practitioner) with expertise in evaluation of learning disabilities. Document must include all of the following:
    a. Recent (within the past two years) reports, test results, evaluations, and assessments of the need for accommodations due to a physical or mental disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities, and the applicable DMI code(s).
    b. A description of your substantial day-to-day functional limitations resulting from your stated disabilities.
    c. A history of the disability and any past accommodations granted to the candidate, as well as a description of the disabilities impact on the individual's functioning.
    d. Identification of the specific standardized and professionally recognized adult test/assessments given (such as Woodcock-Johnson, Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale,), the scores resulting from testing, interpretations of the scores and evaluations.
    e. Recommendations for testing accommodations with a stated rationale as to why the requested accommodations are necessary and appropriate for the diagnosed disability.
4. After all required documentation has been submitted to SARC the School of Nursing will be notified by SARC of the recommended testing accommodations.
5. The School of Nursing will work with testing services to provide any required testing accommodations for all candidates who provide the above required documentation for.

6. The Student Accessibility Resource Center will keep copies of all documentation supporting the need for testing accommodation for accreditation and KBN audit reports.

IV. Related Policies

SON Core Performance Standards

Testing Accommodations Procedure

This procedure applies to students who are taking proctored or monitored exams and/or quizzes and does not apply to quizzes or tests given online in a non-proctored setting. Any student who is admitted into the WKU Nursing Program and has a letter of accommodation form from the Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC) requesting testing accommodations will be required to take all exams requiring accommodations at the Student Accessibility Resource Center or other pre-approved testing center. This standardized procedure will provide the proper testing environment and promote student success.

What you need to know before taking a proctored exam in the SARC Testing Center

I. Appointments

Your instructor will tell you what dates s/he wants you to take your exams. It is your responsibility to work with your instructor to schedule your proctored exam with the SARC Testing Center.

II. Parking for the SARC Testing Center

- Parking at WKU is a challenge. If you do not have a student parking pass you will need to give yourself plenty of time to get a visitor parking pass and find a parking spot.
- To obtain detailed information about parking passes and parking locations, please visit the Parking and Transportation website at wku.edu/transportation.
- If you have any questions or concerns about parking on the WKU campus you may contact the Parking and Transportation Office at (270) 745-2361.
- Testers requiring parking accommodations due to accessibility issues, please contact Parking and Transportation or click here: http://www.wku.edu/transportation/disability/

SARC Downing Student Union (DSU) Room 1074, Monday-Friday 8-4:30, 270-745-5004, sarc.testing@wku.edu, www.wku.edu/sarc

SARC testing procedures can be found at the following link:
http://www.wku.edu/sarc/testing_guidelines_and_forms.php

III. Check-in

You will need to go through a check-in procedure so please plan to arrive five to ten minutes before your scheduled exam to complete the necessary paperwork. (During peak testing times plan on arriving 15 – 20 minutes prior to the exam).

IV. Identification

You must show a current photo ID before you will be allowed to take an exam at either testing location. Valid forms of ID are: WKU Student ID, state-issued driver's license, passport, or other government issued photo ID. (You will also be requested to provide your WKU 800#).

V. Testing Times

The time you reserve for your exam is the time that your exam starts. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late for your exam and testing center is full, you will not be allowed to take the test and will have to reschedule. You will not be given an extension of time if you start your test late.

VI. Personal Items

All personal items, purses, hats, cell phones, PDAs, books, papers, etc. must be stored in storage bins. Individual storage for personal items is available inside the SARC office. All cell phones must be turned off inside the testing center.

VII. Books, calculators, etc.

You may not use books, notes, calculators, or other aids when taking your exam unless your instructor has given permission to the Testing Pro-staff that such items are allowed during your exam. Instructors supply this information in advance of your testing dates.

VIII. Food and drink

No food or drink of any kind will be allowed inside the testing room.

IX. Cheating on exams

Proctors in the testing centers will monitor you during your exam. Monitoring includes watching from a seated position in the room, walking through the room, and viewing a computer screen showing a video feed from the cameras that are in use inside the testing room.

If you are caught cheating on an exam, the proctor will report the incident to the Testing Pro- staff member on duty and will write an incident report which will be given to the faculty member for whose class you were taking the exam. The faculty member will then take appropriate action which may include a failing grade "F" on the exam or a failing grade "F" in the course.
Additional actions which may be taken involve probation, suspension or expulsion from the university as deemed by the Offices of Student Life and Judicial Affairs.

Approved May 8, 2015
WKU School of Nursing Faculty

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

NOTE: Students are responsible for all costs associated with meeting these requirements:

Health and Safety Records

All students will be required to submit the following prior to the start of clinical and practicum courses:

- **Liability Insurance**: All students in the School of Nursing must purchase the appropriate Individual Nursing Student Professional Liability Insurance in the amount of $1,000,000/$3,000,000. The policy must be in effect the first day of class in a clinical nursing course and must be kept current throughout the program of studies.
- Criminal background check
- Negative drug screen performed at WKU Student Health Services
- Medical History
- Medical Exam
- Immunization certificate including documentation of a Td (tetanus/diphtheria) within the last ten (10) years. Students will be required to receive an annual influenza immunization as soon as the vaccine is available each fall.
- Titers for each of the following: Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella. If a student is found to be non-immune, then the student must be re-immunized unless contraindicated by health care provider.
- Documentation of a two-step TB skin test or T-Spot results prior to beginning courses and an annual TB skin test. If the student has a positive skin test, they are required to follow the guidelines for follow-up and/or treatment as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.
- All students must be vaccinated against Hepatitis B or sign a declination statement.
- Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) from the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI) for the health professional is required of all nursing students as a prerequisite for entrance. This certification must be maintained throughout the program.
- You must have personal health insurance prior to entry into any clinical nursing course. This insurance is required by some of our clinical agencies and is needed to defray the cost of hospital and medical care for any illness or injury that might be sustained while in this program and the substantial monetary liability that you, as a student, might incur as a result of failure to have such insurance. If you are not currently covered, you may want to consider affordable student policies. Information regarding WKU's student health insurance can be found at https://www.wku.edu/healthservices/top-menu/students-page.php but you are not required to purchase through WKU.
- Students will also be responsible for providing any additional information that may be required by a health care agency in order to complete clinical rotations at that agency.

Bloodborne Pathogens Policy

Faculty and students of the School of Nursing at Western Kentucky University must seek appropriate treatment, follow-up, and counseling after exposure to blood or body fluids.

An exposure is defined as:

- A needle or other puncture wound from a source contaminated with body fluids.
- Direct contact of non-intact skin (open lesion, chapped, or abraded skin) with large amounts of blood or prolonged contact with blood.
- Mucous membrane contact from a known source of blood or body fluids (a splash in the eye, mouth, or any other mucous membrane lining.)

1. In the event that a student or faculty member is exposed to a bloodborne pathogen during a scheduled clinical experience the agency's exposure policy should be followed. The student/faculty will:
   - Notify the appropriate agency representative.
   - Initiate immediate treatment by:
     - Cleaning the wound/skin area with soap and water.
     - Flushing mucous membranes with tap water or saline.
     - Serious injuries requiring suturing or physician intervention should be promptly evaluated according to agency's direction or according to insurance requirement of the faculty/student.
   - Faculty will report the exposure to the appropriate supervisors and assist the student in completing any required agency documentation.
   - **The exposed individual is responsible for any costs related to testing and treatment of self and testing of the source.**
2. In the event that a student or faculty member is exposed to a bloodborne pathogen during a scheduled clinical experience while **NOT** in a traditional clinical setting (i.e. community-based experiences such as school health or community screening) the following procedure should be followed:
   - Provide immediate first aid treatment as described above.
   - Proceed to the closest emergency facility to initiate post-exposure screening, treatment, and counseling.
   - The faculty/student is encouraged to seek post-exposure treatment within 2 hours of the exposure. If travel distance does not allow, the follow-up should be completed as soon as possible.
   - The exposed individual is responsible for costs related to testing and treatment of self and testing of the source.
3. Following the exposure, the nursing faculty should complete the Exposure to Body Substance Form and submit it to the director for review or follow-up.
4. While it is an individual decision whether to comply with the recommended post-exposure screening, treatment, counseling, or follow-up, the student/faculty should be offered available resources such as the Barren River District Health Department.
5. The exposed student/faculty should obtain a copy of "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens" from the OSHA website.

Latex Sensitivity Policy

1. It is the student's responsibility to inform faculty if they have a known allergy to latex, or if they suspect symptoms of latex sensitivity. Symptoms may include but are not limited to the following: runny nose, itching eyes, asthma, eczema, contact dermatitis, and rarely shock.
2. In the event of a known latex allergy, continued enrollment in the program will be dependent upon the recommendations of an appropriate health care provider and the student's ability to meet core standard requirements.
3. If there is a known allergy to latex, the student should avoid contact with latex gloves and other products containing latex, avoid inhaling the powder from latex gloves worn by other students or workers in the clinical setting or laboratory, and carefully follow the student's health care provider's instructions for dealing with allergic reactions.
4. In campus laboratory experiences, the lab coordinator will make appropriate accommodations for students with latex allergy.

5. In order to decrease the chances of developing a latex sensitivity, students should use non-latex gloves when available, avoid oil-based hand cream or lotion under gloves, and wash hands with a mild soap and dry thoroughly after removing latex gloves.
6. If you suspect that you are having symptoms of latex sensitivity, immediately report those symptoms to faculty, avoid direct contact with all latex containing products, and see a health care provider experienced in treating a latex allergy.

Drug and Alcohol Use Policy

Purpose and Scope

In order to protect patient safety and to comply with clinical agency requirements and Kentucky Board of Nursing recommendations, the following policy will apply to all students who are accepted into any WKU School of Nursing Program.

In order to uphold the highest standards of the nursing profession, the WKU School of Nursing has adopted a drug-free environment. The Supreme Court policy also applies to use of prescription drugs in an illegal manner, and any use of marijuana or marijuana products, even when visiting parts of the US where such products may be legal. Students are required to submit to drug testing prior to the start of the program and at random intervals throughout the program. Students seeking an exception to the drug free policy must complete the Student Medication Exception Form at the time they START use of any controlled substance medication (form is available on the School of Nursing website, under student forms). This form must be completed by the health care provider who prescribes the medication. Students who test positive for controlled substances at any point in time who do not have a current exception form on file with the WKU School of Nursing verifying their approved use of the substance will be dismissed from the nursing program.

To avoid any possibility of a false positive drug screen, students will not ingest any product that is related to an illegal substance. This includes poppy seeds, hemp food products such as hemp seeds and hemp oils, or other products that may be developed from plants or chemicals that are related to illegal drugs. The student bears full responsibility for what they take into or apply to their bodies, so a positive drug test for any reason will be viewed as cause for dismissal.

Acting in any nursing student role, including attending class or clinical or acting as a nursing student in the community setting, or driving to and from these activities, including student organization activities, while under the influence of illegal drugs and/or while publicly intoxicated violates the drug free policy and will result in dismissal from the nursing program.

All students are required to have a negative drug screen prior to entering their first clinical experience and the results of the drug/alcohol screen must be submitted to the program directly from WKU Health Services. As a further condition of admission and continuance in the program, random drug/alcohol screening will be required at the discretion of the nursing faculty and/or clinical facility, and the costs of such random screening will be covered using student fees. If a random drug/alcohol screen is positive, it will be confirmed by secondary testing. If confirmed it will result in the student being dismissed from the nursing program. Students attending class or clinical who smell of alcohol or engage in behavior indicating impairment or who have other signs of drug or alcohol use will undergo for cause screening and the student will be required to obtain transportation to the student health center for drug/alcohol screening. The student will be responsible for payment of all costs related to transportation and for cause drug screening. WKU faculty, staff and/or students will not be responsible for transportation of students who demonstrate signs of impairment.

Drug Screen Procedures - Pre-Admission to the Nursing Program

1. All students entering the nursing program will be required to have a negative drug screen prior to their admission to the nursing program.
2. This preadmission drug screen will be at the student's expense and must be completed at Western Kentucky University's Health Services.
3. Students taking legally prescribed medications which may show up on a drug screen are required to report this medication **at the time the medication is prescribed** using the School of Nursing Medication Exception Form, located on the School of Nursing Website, under Policies, Handbooks and Forms.
4. In the event of a positive test result, confirmatory testing using a gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) screening will be completed before the results are given to the student. This confirmation test will be performed at the student's expense.
5. The Medical Review Officer (MRO) at the WKU Health Services or her designee will review all positive drug screens. The MRO will contact all students with positive tests to determine if there is a valid reason for the results (e.g. OTC drugs, herb preparations, and/or prescription drugs currently being taken). The MRO will also consult with the School

of Nursing to determine if a prior Medication Exemption form was filed.

6. The MRO makes the final decision on all drug test results and the decision of the MRO will be accepted by the School of Nursing as the final results. Any concerns about the validity of the test results or additional information concerning how a test might have registered as positive must be addressed through the MRO.
7. The MRO will notify the program administrator of all positive results. The program administrator may also notify other appropriate administrators or committee members who are involved in the decision-making process concerning student admissions or dismissals.
8. The School of Nursing and /or the University reserves the right to refer the student to the Dean of Student Life for university disciplinary investigation and/or action.

Drug Screen Procedures - Post-Admission to the Nursing Program

1. Random Screening: Random screening of students may be required at the discretion of the Director of the School of Nursing.
2. Screening for Cause: In the event a student is suspected of being under the influence of any substance that would impair judgment or performance while performing ANY activity which is related to your nursing student role (class, clinical or community settings, while driving to and from nursing activities and activities related to nursing student professional groups), the suspected individual will be asked to have a blood alcohol level and drug screen done immediately. The suspected individual will be instructed to call someone for transportation. The suspected individual will be suspended from all clinical nursing activities until the issue is resolved. The cost of the tests will be the responsibility of the student. Breathalyzer tests done by licensed police officers for suspected DUI or public intoxication which indicate impairment will also count as a positive screen. The Director of the School of Nursing or program coordinator must also be notified of any behavior which triggers for cause screening.
3. Students taking legally prescribed medications: If students test positive on drug screen or if it impairs student judgment and/or behavior are required to report this medication **at the time the medication is prescribed** using School of Nursing Medication Exception Form, located on the School of Nursing Website, under Policies, Handbooks and Forms. The prescribing health care provider must agree that the student is safe to take the medication while driving and practicing in a clinical setting before the student will be allowed to attend clinical functions while on medications that may impair judgment.
4. In the event of a positive urine drug test result: Confirmatory testing using a gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) screening will be completed before the results are given to the student. This confirmation test will be performed at the student's expense.
5. Medical Review Officer (MRO): WKU Health Services or her designee will review all positive drug screens. The MRO will contact all students with positive tests to determine if there is a valid reason for the results (e.g. OTC drugs, herb preparations, and/or prescription drugs currently being taken). The MRO will also consult with the School of Nursing to determine if a prior Medication Exemption form was filed.
6. MRO makes the final decision: All drug test results, and the decision of the MRO will be accepted by the School of Nursing as the final results. Any concerns about the validity of the test results or additional information concerning how a test might have registered as positive must be addressed through the MRO.
7. Program administrator notified: The MRO will notify the program administrator of all positive results. The program administrator may also notify other appropriate administrators or committee members who are involved in the decision-making process concerning student dismissals. All students testing positive on drug screens will be dismissed from the program.
8. School of Nursing and/or the University reserves the right: SON and/or University reserves the right to refer the student to the Dean of Student Life for university disciplinary investigation and/or action. Test results for properly prescribed prescription medications which are covered under the Medication Exemption form (see above) will be treated as medical information and held confidential per HIPAA rules. There is no assumption of privacy for tests results indicating illegal drug use and the School of Nursing reserves the right to report illegal drug use to university and legal authorities for follow up. A positive drug screen in a licensed individual (RN or LPN) will be reported to the Kentucky Board of Nursing or the licensing board of whatever state/s the individual holds a license.
9. Students who are dismissed: Students dismissed for drug or alcohol use may petition to be re- admitted to the School of Nursing, to re-enter the program after at least one year of drug/alcohol evaluation and treatment. In order to be considered for re-admission to the WKU School of Nursing, the student must submit a written petition to the program coordinator along with a letter from a treatment agency verifying completion of a drug evaluation/treatment program. Documentation must include a statement by the therapist that the applicant will be able to function effectively and provide safe, therapeutic care for clients in the clinical setting. **Readmission is not guaranteed.**

10. Student with positive drug test is readmitted: If student is readmitted to the nursing program, increased random drug screening will be performed at the student's expense throughout the program of studies. A second positive drug test will render the student ineligible to continue or be re-enrolled in the program.

Criminal Background Check

Various clinical healthcare agencies utilized by the WKU Nursing Programs require a criminal background check of current nursing students therefore clinical agencies have the right to deny a student clinical placement at their facility if the student has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor. If a clinical agency refuses a student clinical access due to a criminal conviction, the student may be unable to meet the clinical objectives of the nursing course and may be dismissed from the Nursing Program. Students will have a criminal background check on admission to the nursing program. In addition, students are required to notify the program coordinator immediately of any criminal charges that occur once they are in the program. A student's failure to notify the nursing program of any change in their criminal record since initial admission will also result in the student's immediate dismissal from the program.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR POLICIES

Student Engagement in the Curriculum and Policy Process

Students have an opportunity for input into the curriculum, to voice their concerns to faculty, and to provide input into policies and decisions that impact student welfare, policies, and privileges.

Students will be selected/elected to represent student concerns at the program committee meetings. Student representatives will be notified of faculty committee meetings via e-mail.

Student Appeals

Students who feel they have cause for an appeal of a faculty or program decision have the right to appeal the decision as described in the WKU Student Handbook.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in the School of Nursing or any university building. Smoking is currently permitted in marked areas outside of buildings, away from doorways and other high traffic areas. In addition, smoking policies of clinical facilities must be upheld when students are off campus. Students will be expected to abide by the smoking policies at the university and all clinical facilities. Infractions of smoking policies, like other policies, are cause for written misconduct statements and repeat offenses can lead to dismissal from the clinical agency or the nursing program (see Professional Conduct Policy for more information).

Acceptance of Gifts

Occasionally clients or family members may wish to thank students or staff for a job well done by giving them a small gift. While the School of Nursing does not encourage this practice, it is essential that faculty and students abide by the policy of the clinical institution regarding gift acceptance. Students must discuss the situation with the faculty before accepting any gift.

Academic Honesty

Western Kentucky University nursing students are expected to demonstrate a high standard of academic honesty in all aspects of their academic work and college life. Without intellectual integrity there cannot be genuine learning. Academic dishonesty represents a direct attack on this integrity. In taking tests and examinations, completing homework, laboratory, and clinical work, writing papers, and using information technology, students are expected to demonstrate honesty. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will lead to a failing grade on the assignment/exam and/or a failing grade in the course. Repeat occurrences of this type of behavior can result in dismissal from the program.

Cheating

Cheating is defined, but not limited to, the wrongful giving, taking, or presenting of any information or material by a student with the intent of aiding himself/herself or another in any academic work. Such behavior is not acceptable. Any behavior of

academic dishonesty will be addressed in a conference with the student and a panel of faculty. A score of zero will be applied to an examination or assignment for academic dishonesty.

It is understood that because of the nature of the nursing curriculum at Western Kentucky University, a certain amount of teamwork and sharing of information is necessary for completion of assignment; however, these situations will be clearly identified by the course instructor. Cheating on an examination can take a variety of forms including:

- Discussing the examination during the examination with anyone except the instructor or the instructor's substitute unless specifically authorized to do so by the instructor.
- Giving, receiving, or soliciting unauthorized aid during any examination, take-home examination, or make-up examination before or after the regular scheduled examination has been administered.
- Using materials in any examination except those that are specifically authorized by the instructor.
- Exchanging materials with another student during the examination unless authorized to do so by the written examination instructions.
- Violating any rules that the instructor has established for an examination period.

Plagiarism

A nursing student must not plagiarize materials of others. Students' work is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. Plagiarism is the act of presenting the information, ideas, organization, or phrase of another source without appropriate acknowledgment or credit given, either intentionally or because of gross negligence. Any act of plagiarism by a nursing student is not acceptable.

Confidentiality Policy (HIPAA)

Information obtained by students through their activities and experiences in nursing clinical/laboratory/classroom settings related to patients/clients, personnel, and facilities are considered confidential. Such matters are discussed for the purposes of learning in nursing conferences and classes only.

WKU policy prohibits the recording of any personally identifiable client information in any format. This includes written information, photocopies, audio or digital recordings, video, or pictures of clients or client records. Papers related to clinical/laboratory experiences will not identify any person, agency, or agency personnel by name. Student papers may contain the student and clinical instructor names only. Web sites that contain online personal journaling with reflections, comments, and/or hyperlinks provided by the writer have legal implications with regards to HIPAA, even if they are password protected or shared with a limited audience. Sharing protected health care related information (including pictures) obtained during classroom, laboratory, or clinical experiences or from patients/clients in this or any other manner is a violation of federal regulations and as such may result in dismissal from the program (see professional misconduct).

Committee Approval: Approved by WKU School of Nursing Faculty 12/14/2007

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT & STUDENT EXPECTATIONS POLICY

Professional Conduct of Nursing Students

Western Kentucky University nursing students are expected to demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct in all aspects of their academic work and college life. Professional nursing behavior is guided and shaped by adherence to the American Nurses Association Scope and Standards of Practice, and the Code for Ethics (http://www.nursingworld.org/) and other agencies code of ethics, such as the NSNA Code of Conduct for prelicensure students, the National League for Nursing Code of Conduct and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Education Programs (https://www.aacnnursing.org/CCNE-Accreditation/Accreditation-Resources/Standards-Procedures-Guidelines). The professional behavior of nursing students is thus directed by these standards and guidelines, as well as by clinical agency policies, Federal regulations and laws such as HIPAA and University policy. Professional misconduct may result in a student's dismissal from the nursing program.

Disrespectful or Inappropriate Behavior

As members of the nursing profession, it is imperative that nursing students recognize their responsibility to society and their patients and exhibit behavior representing high standards, polite etiquette, compassion, and respect for human dignity.

Disrespectful or inappropriate behaviors include, *but are not limited to*: non-preparedness for a class or clinical, failure to notify faculty members in advance if they are not able to attend clinical for any reason, refusing a class or clinical assignment, not following the prescribed school or clinical agency policy for dress, smoking, and hygiene standards, use of profanity with patients/ancillary staff, degrading comments or actions, disrespectful nonverbal communications, fraudulent behavior, deception, and/or neglect of patients. Students who engage in disrespectful or inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the class or clinical setting and may be given an unsatisfactory performance or a failing grade for that particular class or clinical day. Students who repeat such behaviors may receive a failing grade for the course or be dismissed from the program.

Dismissal for Non-Academic Reasons - Professional Misconduct

A student who engages in unsafe, unethical, or inappropriate conduct in a clinical or non-clinical setting may be dismissed from the nursing program. Students who engage in behavior that places patients, staff members, other students, faculty, or themselves at risk will be asked to leave the class or clinical area immediately. This policy includes *but is not limited to* verbally or physical threatening patients, staff, students or faculty, violation of federal or state regulations, being under the influence of alcohol or other mind-altering drugs, and/or performing actions outside of the nursing student scope of practice.

When a faculty member determines that a student may need to be removed from the nursing major because of unsafe, unethical, or grossly inappropriate conduct, the faculty member will inform the Director and Program Coordinator of the problems identified and the rational for a recommendation to dismiss the student from the Program. The faculty, Program Coordinator and Director will meet with the student. Students dismissed from the program have the right to appeal the dismissal as described in the WKU Student Handbook.

In the event that the student is retained within the program following professional misconduct, the student will have a written misconduct statement placed in their student record. The student will be given guidelines to follow concerning remediation and will be dismissed if the guidelines for remediation are not followed or if additional instances of professional misconduct are committed.

This policy serves as a written warning to students of the professional misconduct policy.

The WKU Nursing Programs reserve the right to impose discipline against a student without additional warnings if circumstances justify such action at the discretion of the WKU Nursing Programs. Nothing herein shall be interpreted to require the WKU Nursing Programs to provide additional warnings to a student prior to any disciplinary action being taken, and the WKU Nursing Programs reserve the right to dismiss a student at any time for violation of School, Agency, or University Policies, professional conduct codes, or federal regulations.

Approved by School of Nursing Faculty 12/14/2007

Social Media Policy

Often students do not realize that items posted in various electronic media can be accessed even if they have been deleted and even if the student uses various privacy settings. These documents are discoverable in a court of law. Privacy settings are not sufficient to ensure privacy and will not keep a student from being legally responsible for the information that they post. Nurses and nursing students are held to a higher standard than the general public due to their positions of public trust and their potential ability to damage the reputation of a clinical facility with irresponsible postings. Therefore, the following policy for appropriate Social Media use will apply to all nursing students at WKU School of Nursing.

Policy

The School of Nursing (SON) ascribes to the recommendations for social media use published by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (Spector, 2012).

Procedure

Students enrolled within the School of Nursing will follow the policy for use of social media. Students found in violation of this policy will be subject to dismissal from the WKU School of Nursing.

1. Recognize that you have an ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient, faculty and other students' privacy and confidentiality at all times.
2. You must not transmit by way of any electronic media any patient-related information or image that is reasonability anticipated to violate patient rights to confidentially or privacy.
3. You must not transmit any electronic media, message or image that is reasonably anticipated to degrade or embarrass a patient, co-worker, fellow student, faculty member, WKU or any clinical facility while enrolled in a WKU nursing program.

4. You must not disseminate any information (including images, lab data, x-rays etc.) about a patient or information gained while in a student patient relationship with anyone; unless there is a care-related need to disclose the information or other legal obligation to do so.
5. You must not identify patients by name, ID number, birthdate or post or publish information that may lead to the identification of a patient. Limiting access to postings through privacy settings is not sufficient to ensure privacy.
6. You must not refer to patients in a disparaging manner, even if they are not identified by name, number, or other means.
7. You must not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including mobile devices, even if the patient says it is ok.
8. You must maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media.
9. You must consult employer and school's policies or an appropriate leader within the organization for guidance regarding work or school related postings.
10. You must promptly report any breach of this policy by others to the appropriate authority within the clinical agency and/or the School of Nursing.
11. You must be aware of and comply with SON and clinical agency policies regarding the use of agency or school owned computers, cameras, and other electronic devices and the use of personal devices in the workplace.
12. You must not transmit or post disparaging remarks about classmates, faculty, clinical agencies, staff nurses or other co-workers.
13. You must not transmit any test questions, quiz questions, case studies, or answers to such nor post such items in any format, electronic or otherwise, outside of the context of your class. You may answer electronic quiz questions for a grade, you may not share the questions nor the answers with anyone. This is for exam security.
14. You may not purchase or otherwise obtain test questions or test banks from nursing textbooks, which are to be available to faculty only. This is in violation of the textbook copyright and will be subject to legal repercussions as well as dismissal from the nursing program. You may not represent yourself online or otherwise as a nursing faculty member to obtain access to materials that are for faculty use only. You may purchase and use nursing review books, which have sample NCLEX questions and are not part of the test database used for the development of nursing exams given in School of Nursing.

Related Policies

School of Nursing Confidentiality (HIPAA) policy and Clinical Agency policies on patient privacy
School of Nursing Academic Honesty Policy
Spector, N. (2012, September/October). What nurse educators should consider when developing social media policies. *Dean's Notes*, pp. 1-2.

Selection and Evaluation of Clinical Sites for WKU School of Nursing

Policy

The Course Coordinator shall use the criteria listed below along with program specific criteria (if applicable) in the selection and evaluation of clinical sites for use by WKU School of Nursing.

Each clinical site will be evaluated for these criteria before being added to the list of available clinical sites. The program or course coordinator will work with the SON Clinical Agency Coordinators to get new sites under contract before they are placed on the active list. Students will not be placed in clinical sites which are not on the active list. Clinical sites will be re-evaluated annually by faculty and students who use the site. Clinical sites which do not continue to meet the criteria will be dropped from the active clinical site list but may be re-evaluated for use at a later time if circumstances change at that facility.

Basic Criteria for WKU SON Clinical Sites

- Sufficient numbers of qualified nursing staff or preceptors
- Clinical Agency Contract in place or can be obtained
- Offers students opportunities to meet course outcomes
- Realistic distance for student/faculty travel
- Level of care appropriate for level of Student
- Appropriate patient census
- Welcoming to students

DIVISION: School of Nursing
TITLE: Delegation of Pre-Licensure Clinical Learning Activities to Nursing Staff
DATE: January 2016
AUTHORIZED: Mary Bennett, Director WKU School of Nursing

Purpose and Scope
In order to protect patient safety and to comply with clinical agency requirements and Kentucky Board of Nursing recommendations, the following policy will apply to all students who are accepted into any Pre-licensure WKU School of Nursing Program.

Policy
Faculty teaching in the clinical setting are ultimately responsible for student learning activities. Faculty who send students to distant units or off-site locations to perform advanced nursing skills are responsible for delegating oversight of students to appropriately qualified staff members.

Definitions
Basic Nursing Skills: When a student nurse is assigned to a hospital unit or to a community site away from the clinical instructor, the student may perform basic nursing skills at the request of the clinical agency. For example, students may perform vital signs, assist with patient hygiene, feeding and patient positioning. Students at the distant location may engage in basic nursing skills if the staff on the unit allow the student to do so. Participating in basic skills does not require a signed learning agreement form.

Advanced Nursing Skills: Student nurses assigned to distant clinical sites or units (such as surgery, endoscopy, emergency room, community health sites and other sites where a nursing faculty member is not immediately available) may not perform advanced nursing skills (invasive procedures or medication administration) UNLESS there is an experienced Registered Nurse who is willing and able to oversee the student.

Appropriately Qualified Staff Member: For the purpose of this policy, an appropriately qualified staff member will be a Registered Nurse with at least 2 year's experience who agrees to assist the student with the learning activity.

Procedure
1. Clinical faculty members will make arrangements in advance for students to be present at distant units or community sites.
2. Clinical faculty members will communicate with staff members concerning student's learning needs and abilities.
3. Participation in medication administration or invasive procedures at the distant location requires a **Learning Agreement Form for Advanced Nursing Skills**. Clinical faculty will distribute learning agreement forms to students as needed. The form is also available from the SON website.
4. Students will be responsible for obtaining signatures from the staff nurse who observes the student performance at the distant site. Students are also responsible for returning the signed agreement to the clinical faculty.
5. Faculty will return the forms to the program office staff, who will scan and file the forms by course and semester on the shared drive.

Learning Agreement Form for Advanced Nursing Skills

WKU nursing students assigned to your unit may perform basic nursing skills (vital signs, assist with patient hygiene, feeding and patient positioning) if the staff on the unit allow the student to do so. Basic Nursing Skills do not require a signed learning agreement form.

Advanced (Invasive and Medication) Nursing Skills

Student nurses assigned to distant clinical sites or units (such as surgery, endoscopy, emergency room, community health sites and other sites where a nursing faculty member is not immediately available) may not perform invasive skills nor administer medications UNLESS there is an experienced Registered Nurse who is willing and able to oversee the student. For this policy an appropriately qualified staff member will be a registered nurse with at least 2 year's experience in the clinical area who agrees to assist the student with the learning activity.

To be completed by Student

Student Name_____

Level_____
(i.e. ASN 3rd semester, or BSN 2nd semester, etc.)

Date _____

To be completed by Unit Nurse

Agreement for Advanced Nursing Skills:

I will review the student skills checklist for the skill in question.

I have at least 2 year's experience as an RN.

I will be present with the student during the skill and assist them as needed.

Signature and Title_____

Clinical Area_____

Skills performed _____

Comments:

Approved 1/19/2016

WKU Nursing Students | Clinical Release Form

Restrictions for students in Clinical settings, to be completed by primary care provider (MD/PA/APRN)

☐ **No Restrictions**

☐ **Temporary Restrictions -** if this has been checked, please provide specifications below by checking all that apply

- ☐ **Restricted lifting (maximum weight in pounds**) 10_____ 25_____ 50_____ Other___
- ☐ **No (circle all that apply)**

  crawling kneeling squatting climbing bending stooping

  twisting
- ☐ **Restricted pushing/pulling of_____lbs.**
- ☐ **Restricted reaching (circle all that apply):** *above chest overhead away from body*
- ☐ **Restricted to one-handed duty. No use of (please circle):** *right hand left hand*
- ☐ **Restricted to (circle all that apply, describe in detail below):** *walking standing sitting*
- ☐ **Partial weight bearing (describe in detail below)**
- ☐ **No/Limited bending or twisting**
- ☐ **Wear splint at (please circle):**

  At all times while in Clinical setting
- ☐ **Do not: Operate Machinery/Drive any Vehicle**

DESCRIBE RESTRICTIONS in detail (i.e. duration, nature of limitation, etc.). Supplement with extra pages if needed:

Student Name_____

Provider Signature _____

Date _____

MASTER OF SCIENCE OF NURSING (MSN) EDUCATION

The faculty believes that the purpose of graduate education is to prepare the nurse for leadership roles in nursing. The program further develops expertise that increases accountability, proficiency, and leadership. The MSN degree builds upon baccalaureate education, further developing intellectual skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and ethical decision-making. Students are engaged in the application of theory, research, and evidenced-based nursing practice.

Master Entry to Professional Nurses are prepared as entry level nurses that have additional education in evidence-based practice and leadership in a variety of health care settings.

- Proper allocation of available resources to provide efficient and effective nursing care.
- Assuming leadership roles in planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling programs and activities that affect patient quality outcomes, and research.

MSN PROGRAM OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate proficiency in the utilization of research and quality improvement, including problem identification, awareness of outcomes, evaluation, and dissemination of research.
2. Analyze emerging organizational, financial, political, and technological issues confronting nursing and society as a basis for enacting change.
3. Practice from an ethical perspective that acknowledges conflicting values and rights.
4. Assume and develop practice and professional roles to meet societal needs to promote high quality, safe, patient care.
5. Integrate theory and research from nursing and related disciplines as a foundation for advanced practice.
6. Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of person-centered care and social determinants of health.
7. Integrate theoretical knowledge of health promotion and maintenance and illness/disease prevention to achieve optimal health.

ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK

The BSN and Graduate curricula are based on the philosophical beliefs of faculty regarding client, health, environment, and professional nursing.

The baccalaureate nursing curricula integrates knowledge from the biological, behavioral, and social sciences and liberal arts to provide a foundation for professional nursing practice. Learning experiences occur in a variety of health care settings and progress from basic to complex activities. The curricula content is based on *The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2026), *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretation Statements* (American Nurses Association [ANA], 2025), *Nursing*: *Scope and Standards of Practice* (ANA, 2026), *Guide to Nursing's Social Policy Statement: Understanding the Profession from Social Contract to Social Covenant* (ANA, 2015), and *Quality and Safety Education for* Nurses (QSEN) (AACN, 2026).

Concurrently building the foundation of baccalaureate education, the MSN program prepares the professional nurse for leadership roles in nursing. The core curriculum is based on *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (AACN, 2026).

The purposes of the MEPN program in Nursing at WKU are to:

1. Prepare entry level nurses who can provide high quality, safe nursing care.
2. Prepare graduates who can apply and communicate knowledge for the advancement of nursing.
3. Provide the knowledge base for doctoral study in nursing.

MSN education is a process that provides opportunities to expand and extend knowledge for continued growth and competency of the individual and the profession. It requires *intensive study* and *lifelong professional development* and draws on multiple disciplines and involves organized learning experiences that augment basic nursing

knowledge and skills in preparation for advanced practice nursing roles. Nursing education is a *collegial* process which fosters creativity, and *independent and critical thinking*. We value self-directed learners, continual learning, and active engagement in a teaching/learning partnership. The educational process supports personal, social, and intellectual development while assisting students to attain academic and professional goals. Through the provision of meaningful learning experiences, nursing education seeks to assist the learner to formulate and structure nursing knowledge, while distinguishing relevant from non-relevant information and developing safe and effective nursing practice. The educational program seeks to evoke honesty, excitement of discovery, encourage self-expression while *requiring demonstration of competencies, knowledge (synthesis/analysis), oral and written communication.*

The Graduate SONAH faculty believes that students are active, self-directed adult learners who are committed to and are accountable for integrity of academic accomplishments, professional practice, and self-assessment. Learning is a personal responsibility.

POLICIES

Criteria for Admission

Minimum admission requirements:

1. Earned bachelor's from a regionally accredited institution in any discipline other than nursing and is NOT a licensed Registered Nurse.
2. Cumulative undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 on 4.0 scale
3. Human Anatomy & Physiology (minimum of 6 credit hours with grade(s) of B or above).
4. Human Nutrition (3 credit hours with a grade of B or above).
5. HESI pre-entrance exam completion with a cumulative score of 80 or above.
6. To be considered for admission to the MEPN Program, English as a second language (ESL) applicants must achieve minimum scores on the TOEFL internet-based test (TOEFL iBT) of: Minimum Cumulative Score of: 86 combined AND Minimum Individual Scores of: 26 in Speaking 20 in Writing 20 in Reading 20 in Listening.
7. Admission to the Combined MSN-MEPN.

Additional Required Application Materials:

1. A written goal statement (500-700 words in length, 12 pt. font, in Microsoft Word or RTF) describing your personal and professional career goals; your academic strengths and weaknesses; life modifications you will make to help you be successful in the program; and your understanding of online or independent learning.
2. Three professional references (on form provided).
3. Professional resume
4. All program admission materials must be received prior to the due date noted on the program web page. An interview may be offered following a review of admission materials. Completion of an interview and acceptance by the Graduate School does not assure acceptance into the MSN program. Incomplete applications will not be considered for admission. Applicants must reapply to be considered for the next admission cycle by updating the Graduate School application and submitting all required program materials.

*The Graduate Faculty may schedule a personal interview after all required forms have been received.

Required Coursework

Suggested course curriculum plans for the MEPN program can be found at https://www.wku.edu/nursing/mepn/index.php

Note: If a student requests and receives an incomplete grade in a course, the student must complete the requirements and have the incomplete grade removed and changed to a required letter grade in order to progress in the MEPN program.

MSN Degree Requirements

The MSN program follows progression policies and degree requirements as published in the *Graduate Catalog* found on the Graduate School website https://www.wku.edu/graduate/. Additionally, the following admission and progression policies apply to all students officially accepted in the MSN program in the SONAH.

1. ***Research Tool:*** NURS 510 is the designated research tool. If the student earns a grade less than a B, they must retake NURS 510 understanding that this will delay their progress in the program. NURS 510 may only be repeated one time. A second failure in this course will result in dismissal from the program. Students repeating NURS 510 may not progress to a clinical course until a satisfactory grade of at least a B is earned.
2. ***Writing/Research Proficiency:*** It is the expectation that all students completing the MSN program will demonstrate proficiency and scholarship in writing and research. To facilitate students in accomplishing this competency selected courses include a written paper that includes an aspect of integration/application of research and nursing theory. Writing and evaluation criteria will be provided for the assignment specific of the course requirements.
3. ***Required Grade in Specialty Courses:*** A grade of at least a B (80%) is required in each specialty course. Specialty courses require that the student earn a minimum grade of 80% on tests and quizzes prior to adding any additional points earned on papers, projects, assignments, etc. to the final grade. Review the course syllabus for specific course requirements related to student grades and evaluation criteria. A minimum of a B must be earned in a specialty course to progress to the next course in the sequence or another clinical or specialty course. **A student who receives less than a "B" in two specialty courses will be dismissed from the program.**

   The following courses are considered specialty courses for each specialty concentration:
   MEPN: NURS 512, 528, 755

   Reenrollment in the class, to be repeated, is not automatic but is dependent upon available space. If the grade earned results in the student's overall GPA dropping below 3.0, MEPN students will not be eligible to proceed in the MEPN concentration of the MSN. MEPN students must make a C or higher to continue MEPN progression. If a grade less than a C is made in either BSN or MSN courses, the MEPN student will not be eligible to progress in MEPN. A student who is dismissed from the MEPN concentration may be considered for continued progression in the BSN program, contingent upon the student's academic standing, cumulative GPA, and seat availability.

   Dismissal from the Program
   Students will be dismissed from the program due to the following circumstances:
   1. Failure to earn a grade of B on a second attempt of a specialty course (identified above).
   2. Failure to earn a B on a second specialty course after successful completion of a repeated specialty course.
   3. A student may only repeat one course one time. A second incidence of a failure to earn the required grade of a "B" will result in dismissal from the program.
   4. Failure to earn a "B" on a second attempt in NURS 510.
   5. A grade less than a C in any undergraduate or graduate nursing course.
   6. Failure to remove a grade of Incomplete in the agreed upon time or prior to final semester of MEPN coursework.
   7. Failure to meet professional standards and SONAH policies such as the following but not all comprehensive:
      a. Academic dishonesty
      b. Incivility to patients, preceptors, staff, peers, or faculty
      c. Violation of agency policies
      d. Failure to follow HIPAA policies, etc.
      e. Failure to follow professional Scope and Standards
      f. Any violation of the social media policy (see pages 20-22)
      g. Failure to notify faculty of actual or potential legal actions that could result in actions on their license

4. ***MSN Comprehensive Examination/Capstone Policy:*** The MSN program requires completion of an evidence-based project during the capstone course for each specialty. This course is NURS 621for MEPN students. Specific requirements for the project are provided in writing in the specialty capstone clinical course. Prior to completion of the course the faculty will notify the MSN-MEPN Coordinator of successful completion of the project and a Comprehensive Exam/Capstone Completion form will be submitted to the Graduate School via Topnet. Failure to pass the evidence-based project and paper will result in a delay in graduation form the program and/or dismissal from the program. One rewrite attempt is allowed with faculty permission. Failure may occur due to violation of the program's writing policy and/or failure to demonstrate proficiency in the program outcomes through completion of the project/paper.

Preceptor Qualifications, Evaluation, and Orientation

Preceptor Qualifications

Nurse Preceptors:

Primary preceptors for the MSN – MEPN students must meet the RN licensing and/or certification requirements in the state in which they are practicing and be:

1. Master's prepared in nursing.
2. In individual cases, exception may be made in consultation with faculty.

Selection of preceptors is a collaboration among faculty, preceptor, and student; faculty endeavor to place students with appropriate and qualified preceptors in or near their county of residence. Documentation of clinical faculty review of preceptor qualifications is completed through your advisor and/or course instructor.

Preceptor Evaluation

Preceptors formally evaluate the student at midterm and at the end of the semester/clinical experience. Informal evaluation of the student is maintained through direct communication between preceptor and the clinical course faculty.

Preceptor Orientation

Faculty will provide orientation to preceptors and assure orientation is completed.

Preceptor Guidelines

Accountability and Responsibility: Preceptors facilitate the integration of nursing students into their role responsibilities in the practice setting. The purpose for utilization of a preceptor is to guide and enhance the practice activities and learning experiences for students.

Ultimate responsibility and accountability for nursing education rest with Western Kentucky University's School of Nursing & Allied Health and its faculty. Faculty is responsible for the application, integration, and enhancement of the theoretical constructs of each program's curriculum as it relates to the student's clinical experiences. Faculty is responsible and accountable for the control, direction, delegation, supervision, and evaluation of these experiences.

Role expectations of faculty:

1. Contact appropriate administrator and solicit name(s) of recommended preceptor(s).
2. Provide written confirmation of selected preceptor(s) prior to beginning clinical.
3. Provide an orientation for preceptors, including course and clinical objectives, clinical experiences, and student evaluation criteria.
4. Be available to preceptors and students via telephone, e-mail and/or paper.
5. Make on-site visits to coordinate, supervise, and evaluate student performance and learning experience.
6. Make on-site visits within 24-48 hours if warranted.

Role expectations of preceptors:

1. Provide a copy of resume including documentation of current licensure/certification.
2. Be willing to serve as a preceptor, recognizing the time commitment required.
3. Participate in an orientation to the preceptor role.
4. Collaborate with nursing faculty on student learning experiences.
5. Orient student to the clinical agency or institution and its policies and procedures.

6. Provide guidance for student achievement of learning objectives.
7. Supervise student performance as it relates to learning objectives.
8. Provide ongoing evaluation of student's progress and performance.
9. Meet with faculty to provide feedback regarding student performance and progress.
10. Inform faculty of unacceptable or problematic student behavior in a timely manner after behavior.
11. Complete and discuss with the student an evaluation at the end of the rotation.

Role expectations of students:

1. Meet with preceptors to share expectations, learning needs, and plan dates and time for clinical experiences.
2. Be prepared/punctual for clinical and schedule make-up with preceptors.
3. Seek-feedback regarding clinical performance from preceptors and faculty.
4. Coordinate site visits with faculty and preceptors, including date and time.
5. Conduct themselves in a professional manner and dress appropriately (business professional attire unless otherwise directed).
6. Document achievement of clinical objectives by keeping a log or journal.
7. Evaluate effectiveness of preceptor at the end of the clinical experiences.
8. Adhere to the policies of the WKU SONAH and the clinical agency.

Use of Mailing List

All students are required to subscribe to the Graduate program's e-mail mailing list, primary care. The primary-care mailing list is used extensively to facilitate communication among faculty, staff, and graduate students. Announcements related to scholarships, grants and seminars are examples of announcements regularly posted on the primary-care mailing list. It is the student's responsibility to check TopperMail (WKU's student e-mail) frequently and notify appropriate persons if the student is not receiving primary-care mailing list information. To subscribe to the mailing list the student must send an email from TopperMail account to primary-care-subscribe@lists.wku.edu

If a student changes the company from whom they obtain e-mail services, the student MUST unsubscribe to the mailing list from the previous company and re-subscribe using the new e-mail address. Otherwise, an error message is received for each message sent. (Graduates may also wish to have their name deleted from the list and should follow the procedure outlined below.) To unsubscribe go to https://www.wku.edu/its/mailing-lists/utilities/my-lists.php and follow the directions.

Awards and Graduation

Award for Excellence and Achievement in Graduate Studies

The outstanding Graduate Student Awards program is held each year during the spring semester. The aim of the program is to recognize outstanding graduate students in each of the degree programs offered at WKU. Nursing faculty in the MSN program shall identify the recipient (previous August, December, or May graduates) of the award based on the following criteria:

1. Excellence in coursework reflected in an outstanding grade point average.
2. Excellence in commitment to degree work beyond participation in coursework that might be reflected in original research for papers, thesis, etc.
3. Creative products, projects, papers, or theses; participation in professional activities having to do with the student's commitment to the area of the degree or the teaching in the discipline; and/or papers presented, or awards earned during the time of the degree program.
4. Other areas of excellence as deemed appropriate.
5. Potential for accomplishment in the profession.

Graduation

The WKU Commencement Ceremony recognizes the accomplishments of each graduating student. There is a ceremony each fall and spring semester for all students completing degrees. In order to participate in the graduation ceremony, graduate students must complete the application for graduation in Topnet no later than the dates communicated by email or posted on the Registrar's website. Early submission is strongly recommended. The gown, hat and hood are provided to each student submitting a graduation application at no charge.