



The University of Akron  
**School of Nursing**

# **College of Health and Human Sciences**

## **School of Nursing Graduate Program Handbook 2025-2026**

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## **IMPORTANT**

**It is the *student's responsibility* to read through the handbook material carefully, and refer to it throughout the program for answers to program and academic questions.**

**Students are responsible for checking their UA email as this is the University's and the School of Nursing's form of student communication.**

**Students are responsible for meeting nursing program degree requirements, and for seeking advisement regarding their status/progress in their program of studies. Check the DPR report for degree requirements and your progress in the program.**

**Questions or clarification regarding the content of this handbook should be directed to your faculty advisor or the assistant director graduate programs.**

**Some policies/classes may be changed after printing. If there is a question, please contact your faculty advisor or the assistant director graduate programs.**

**The University of Akron Graduate School identifies policies and requirements for all graduate students. However, policies and requirements may be more stringent as identified by the School of Nursing.**

## SCHOOL OF NURSING ACCREDITATION/APPROVALS/PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

### SCHOOL OF NURSING ACCREDITATIONS

- *The baccalaureate degree in nursing/master's degree program in nursing/Doctor of Nursing Practice program/ and post-graduate APRN certificate program at The University of Akron is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<http://www.ccneaccreditation.org>).*
- *Continued Accreditation from the Council on Certification of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs for 8 years for the Graduate Anesthesia Program (2024)*

Accreditation is a nongovernmental process conducted by representatives of postsecondary institutions and professional groups. As conducted in the United States, accreditation focuses on the quality of institutions of higher and professional education and on the quality of educational programs within institutions. Two forms of accreditation are recognized: one is institutional accreditation, and the other is professional or specialized accreditation. Institutional accreditation concerns itself with the quality and integrity of the total institution, assessing the achievement of the institution in meeting its own stated mission, goals, and expected outcomes. **The University of Akron has full accreditation from Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.**

Professional or specialized accreditation is concerned with programs of study in professional or occupational fields. Professional accrediting agencies assess the extent to which programs achieve their stated mission, goals, and expected outcomes. In addition, consideration of the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes is of importance to the accrediting agency in determining the quality of the program and the educational preparation of members of the profession or occupation. Accreditation organizations make regularly scheduled evaluation visits to programs to document that programs continue to meet criteria. **The University of Akron School of Nursing has maintained full professional accreditation since its inception in 1967. The National League of Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC) visited the College in July 1998 and extended maximum accreditation of 8 years thus granting continuing accreditation to the baccalaureate and master's programs in nursing. The School of Nursing Received a 10 year professional accreditation from the Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) in 2006 and 2016.**

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) is an autonomous accrediting agency, contributing to the improvement of the public's health. A specialized/professional accrediting agency, CCNE ensures the quality and integrity of baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs. CCNE serves the public interest by assessing and identifying programs that engage in effective educational practices. As a voluntary self-regulatory process, CCNE accreditation supports and encourages continuing self-assessment by nursing programs and supports continuing growth and improvement of collegiate professional education. Because the accreditation process is a voluntary enterprise, institutions that seek CCNE accreditation of their baccalaureate and/or graduate nursing programs are viewed to have a cooperative relationship with CCNE in seeking ways to improve and enhance the educational programs for professional nursing students.

In addition to CCNE accreditation, the nursing anesthesia program undergoes a similar evaluation process from the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA). This Council has consistently acknowledged the excellence of the School of Nursing's anesthesia program by granting full accreditation.

## **COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES ADMINISTRATION**

Daniel Friesner, PhD	Dean, College of Health & Human Sciences
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Marlene Huff, PhD, APRN-CNS	Associate Dean
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Tim Meyers, PhD, RN, CNE	Associate Dean
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## **SCHOOL OF NURSING ADMINISTRATION**

Tim Meyers, PhD, RN	Executive Director of Nursing and Associate Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences
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Linda Shanks, PhD, RN	Assistant Director Graduate Programs and Research
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Brian Radesic, DNP, CRNA	Director Nurse Anesthesia Program
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## **SCHOOL OF NURSING MISSION STATEMENT**

The school offers diverse and comprehensive nursing education programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The programs of study, based on professional standards, prepare individuals to provide nursing care in a variety of settings. The School of Nursing supports nursing research that contributes to the health and well-being of society. The School is committed to serving culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse populations. Through academic and community collaboration, the school promotes excellence in nursing education, research, practice, and service.

## **GOALS**

1. Prepare generalist and advanced practice nurses who are eligible for initial licensure and for certification.
2. Provide a foundation for lifelong commitment to professional development and scholarship through continuing education and advanced study at the master's and doctoral levels.
3. Prepare nurses who are sensitive in caring for diverse populations in a variety of settings.
4. Prepare professional practitioners who integrate leadership roles and ethical standards in a continuously changing health care arena and society.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING**

The School of Nursing faculty believes that the foci of professional nursing are individuals, families and communities.

**The Individual** is seen as a complex whole whose existence involves patterns, dynamic change, transformation, and interdependence. The individual interrelates within the environment in biological, psychological, social, spiritual, cultural and other dimensions. The individual is unique and universal. The individual is a thinking, feeling, interacting, evolving, creating and valuing being.

**Families** are individuals dynamically connected with each other over time in traditional and non-traditional configurations.

**Communities** are groups of people with one or more common characteristics who are in relationship to one another and may or may not interact.

**Health** is comparative, dynamic, multidimensional and has personal meaning. It includes disease, non-disease and quality of life. People have the right to participate in decisions affecting and effecting personal health.

**Environment** includes all living and nonliving dimensions with which the individual, family and community have interrelationships. The dynamic environmental interrelations define and establish rules for health and modes of action.

**Nursing** is an art and a science. The discipline of nursing is concerned with the individual, family and community and their responses to health within the context of the changing health care environment. Professional nursing includes the appraisal and the enhancement of health. Personal meanings of health are understood in the nursing situation within the context of familial, societal and cultural meanings. The professional nurse uses knowledge from theories and research in nursing and other disciplines in providing nursing care. The role of the nurse involves the exercise of social, cultural and political responsibilities, including accountability for professional actions and provision of quality nursing care, and community involvement.

**Education** is an individualized, life-long process. Learning includes the individual's interrelations with the environment, knowledge and skill acquisition, development of critical thinking and self-awareness. Self-expression enables the student to respond to clients who have unique human values and cultural heritage. Each nursing student brings attitudes, beliefs, values, feelings, knowledge and experiences into the learning environment. These variables influence learning that occurs through continual construction and reconstruction of experiences in relation to environmental influences.

Nursing education at the baccalaureate level synthesizes knowledge from nursing, humanities, social, cultural, physical and natural sciences to operationalize clinical decision making. The student is prepared to function as a nurse generalist in a variety of settings. Faculty and students continually seek to reaffirm the commitment to and understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. Students are encouraged to become self-directed, collaborative, interdependent and independent. These variables are the foundation for life-long learning and professional development.

Nursing education at the master's level builds upon baccalaureate nursing education and provides a foundation for doctoral study. Graduate education prepares advanced practice nurses with expertise in critical thinking and decision-making, effective communication, the therapeutic interventions through a variety of learning experiences. Master of Science in Nursing students analyze and use theoretical formulations and research findings in advanced practice.

Reviewed 8/30/19, 10/15/2020

Reviewed/Revised 10/15/2020, 6/10/2021, 5/15/2023, 8/19/24,  
3/11/25

## **PURPOSES OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM**

### **All Curricula**

The purposes of the Graduate Program in Nursing are to provide preparation for advanced practice as a nurse practitioner or nurse anesthetist; preparation in research methods and skills; and to provide a foundation for doctoral study.

Areas of advanced practice specialization include adult/gerontological health nursing, child and adolescent health nursing, family psychiatric mental health nursing, and nurse anesthesia.

### **MSN LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Synthesize nursing history and interdisciplinary knowledge to inform education, practice, and research.  
Apply ethical decision-making, nursing theories, advanced specialty knowledge, and decision models to enhance clinical judgement and improve the delivery of quality care in diverse healthcare settings.
2. Coordinate person-centered care in partnership with the person and their connection to others (family, important others, community) and the healthcare team, creating care plans that integrate personal preference, advanced nursing specialty-knowledge, evidence-based models, and emerging evidence to provide high-quality care across the health continuum.
3. Manage population health, using evolving methods to collect health data and identify priorities, and consider the impact of social determinants of health on care delivery, as well as advancing equitable population health policies, advocacy strategies, and effective partnerships.
4. Advance the scholarship of nursing by integrating best evidence into practice and demonstrating ethical conduct in all scholarly activities.
5. Lead quality improvement and safety initiatives by incorporating national standards and guidelines, data-driven benchmarks, and risk mitigating strategies to enhance quality and promote a just and safe environment.
6. Coordinate interprofessional activities by applying principles of team dynamics fostering mutual respect, utilizing effective communication strategies, personal expertise, and nursing's unique knowledge to achieve optimal person and organizational outcomes.
7. Create safe, cost-effective, equitable, and accessible care solutions for diverse populations across the continuum of care.
8. Use best evidence and practice to select healthcare technologies and informatics tools to gather, analyze, and evaluate individual and population data, supporting decision-making to enhance care.
9. Model ethical behavior in practice and leadership, integrating the values of professional nursing responsibility and accountability, integrity, collaboration, and advocacy for all persons.
10. Demonstrate leadership and commitment to professional growth through self-reflection, continuous development, mentoring, and advocacy.

## **SCHOOL OF NURSING CODE OF ETHICS**

All students are expected to comply with standards deemed appropriate to the profession in the School of Nursing Code of Ethics as well as in The University of Akron's Student Code of Conduct as found in the Graduate Bulletin, and in alignment with the American Nurses Association's "Code of Ethics for Nurses."

### **I. Academic Integrity**

Academic misconduct policies are found in the [Graduate Bulletin](#). Academic misconduct is "any activity that compromises the academic integrity of the student and university, and undermines the educational process" ([Code of Student Conduct of The University of Akron, rule 3359-41-01](#)).

### **II. Student Professional Demeanor**

#### **A. Professional appearance**

In order to comply with infection control policies and enhance the comfort of patients, the student must be clean, neat and in compliance with the agency's dress code when reporting for clinical laboratory experience.



## **GRADUATE ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

(Revised November 2014)

As part of and prior to admission to the program, an interview with the coordinator of the graduate program and/or the lead faculty in the intended specialty track should be completed.

Full Admission. Students admitted to the MSN Program in the School of Nursing are granted full admission with an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale for BSN and all previous nursing degrees. No admission test is required for students who are granted full admission (EXCEPTION: applicants for the Nurse Anesthesia track are required to hold CCRN).

Provisional Admission. Applicants with a GPA below 3.0 on a 4.0 point scale may be admitted to the MSN Program in the School of Nursing under provisional status when the GPA is between 2.75 and 2.99 on a 4.0 scale. To move from provisional admission status to full admission requires that the student receive a B or higher in 15 semester credit hours of graduate level course work. After successful completion of these courses, the student must request a change of admission status and the record will be changed to full admission status.

Denial of Admission. Applicants applying for admission to the Graduate Program in the School of Nursing with a GPA of 2.74 or below and results of admission application process may be denied admission.

RN to MSN Sequence: Applicants to the RN to MSN sequence must meet the same criteria as those applying directly to the track.

Note: Individual tracks may have additional admission criteria.

## ADMINISTRATORS AND TRACK LEAD FACULTY

### MSN and Post MSN Advanced Practice Options

<u>Graduate Program</u>	Linda Shanks, PhD, DNP, APRN-CNS Assistant Director Graduate Programs 330-972-6699 <a href="mailto:shanks@uakron.edu">shanks@uakron.edu</a>
<u>Nurse Anesthesia</u>	Brian Radesic, DNP, MSN, CRNA Director Nurse Anesthesia Program 330-972-5406 <a href="mailto:radesic@uakron.edu">radesic@uakron.edu</a>
<u>Adult/Gerontological NP</u>	Carolyn Sutter, DNP, APRN, CNP NP Coordinator Professor of Instruction 330-972-2437 <a href="mailto:csutter@uakron.edu">csutter@uakron.edu</a>
<u>Child &amp; Adolescent Health</u>	Jenny Michel, DNP, APRN, PNP, AC/PC <a href="mailto:jmichel2@uakron.edu">jmichel2@uakron.edu</a>
<u>Family Psychiatric Mental Health</u>	Mary Canonico, DNP, PMHNP-BC <a href="mailto:mcanonico@uakron.edu">mcanonico@uakron.edu</a>

### DNP Program

Linda Shanks, PhD, DNP, APRN-CNS  
Assistant Director Graduate Programs  
330-972-6699  
[shanks@uakron.edu](mailto:shanks@uakron.edu)

**Website Links**

The University of Akron Graduate School

<http://www.uakron.edu/gradsch/>

The University of Akron Graduate School Bulletin

<http://www.uakron.edu/gradsch/prospective-students/>

The University of Akron School of Nursing

<http://www.uakron.edu/nursing/>

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/accreditation/>

## **GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENT CONTACT WITH FACULTY ADVISOR**

A student will be assigned to an advisor upon acceptance into the School of Nursing Graduate Program. This advisor will remain with the student throughout the program of graduate study in nursing. If a graduate student decides to change the clinical track that was selected initially, the student will be assigned to an appropriate advisor in the selected track.

The advisory process includes the following:

- Initial contact with the faculty advisor. This is the responsibility of the student.
- Continued contact with advisor on a regular semester basis until graduation.

Program plans of study, class scheduling, and procedures for registration are available from the faculty advisor. In the absence of the advisor, Susan Bradford, Student Services Counselor [sb14@uakron.edu](mailto:sb14@uakron.edu) will assist students with these procedures.

Additional appointments are encouraged and may be made by the student as arranged with the faculty advisor.

## **CLINICAL PRECEPTOR INFORMATION**

Student expectations for finding preceptors:

- Students may assist in (but are not responsible for) choosing their preceptor. Students should discuss with the faculty their preferences based on location, and specialty hours. Preceptor assignments are designed to accommodate as much as possible, but students are expected to be flexible to meet the preceptor's schedule.
- All preceptors must be pre-approved by the lead faculty.
- Students will work with the lead faculty to ensure that the school has an affiliation agreement.
- All preceptors must have an unencumbered APRN Ohio license, and at least 1 year of experience as a nurse practitioner in the appropriate specialty area for the course.
- All clinical courses require 150 patient hours. To graduate, students must have a minimum of 600 patient hours. To achieve the required patient hours, students may have more than one preceptor. A maximum of 250 hours with physician preceptors is allowed.

Preceptor expectations:

- Orientation is available via NONPF video scenarios and access is provided in the Preceptor letter at the beginning of the semester.
- The preceptor/clinical contract will need to be signed at the beginning of the semester. The contract will include the course objectives and the signatures from faculty, student, and preceptor.
- Preceptors need to complete the Preceptor Information Sheet.
- Preceptors are to contact the faculty for any concerns with their student's performance, attendance, or professionalism.
- The preceptor will accommodate clinical visits from faculty to observe students in a patient interaction and observe the student and preceptor communication.
- The preceptor must complete an evaluation form at the end of the semester stating that the student demonstrates safe practice and meets the course objectives.

## **SCHOOL OF NURSING GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY**

Independent Study (8200:672) is for the purpose of permitting a student to concentrate on an individually selected topic of interest in nursing. Independent Study is not intended for purposes of:

- Obtaining remedial assistance
- Duplicating content already in the curriculum
- Raising the GPA in nursing

Students must have completed the courses in which basic content relative to the Independent Study topic is presented prior to enrolling in Independent Study.

Students requesting Independent Study must be progressing satisfactorily through the graduate nursing program without difficulty, both in theory and practice. The graduate student must have a minimum nursing GPA of 2.75.

The student enrolling in Independent Study must select a graduate faculty advisor to guide the study project. Selection of faculty should be based on faculty expertise. The student must determine whether the faculty member is interested in, and able to, work with him/her.

In consultation with the faculty advisor, the student must develop independent study objectives, plan of activities, and method of evaluation. The advising faculty member will verify that the objectives, plan for activities, and evaluation methods meet the number of credits selected by the student. Independent study projects may involve clinical learning experiences where direct care is provided when appropriate. If observational experiences are desired, the student and faculty advisor will develop a description of the experience. This description (after being signed by the student and faculty member) will be submitted along with the Independent Study project objectives, plan, and evaluation to the coordinator of the graduate program for approval. The graduate faculty advisor will obtain written authorization from the agency for the observational experience. Students are to submit a completed contract to the faculty preceptor for the independent study by the end of the second week of the semester. The contract is to include learning objectives, activities to be completed, and evaluation measures. The contract must be approved/signed by both the faculty preceptor and the student. A copy of the signed contract is to be on file with the Coordinator of Graduate Programs by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the semester.

<b>Suggestions for Elective Courses</b>
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Electives may be taken to supplement knowledge or substitute a course. The student is encouraged to select according to their interests and needs. The Faculty Graduate Advisor will assist in course selection and approval.

<b>Student Poster or Podium Presentations</b>
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When students are developing an abstract for poster or podium presentations, a faculty member must be acquired to act as a sponsor and coach to give the students the guidance they need in preparing a high quality abstract.

## **GRADUATE STUDENT POLICIES**

### **Grades**

A student admitted to graduate study under any status at The University of Akron is expected to maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 at all times. A minimum GPA of 3.00 is required for graduation. Graduate School policies for probation are followed. MSN tracks may specify more stringent grade requirements. Students are required to obtain a 'B-' or better in any given course in order to progress in the program while maintaining good academic standing.

Graduate Grading System: A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, D+, D, D-, F = 0.0.

### **Probation and Dismissal**

Any student whose grade point average falls below 3.00 is no longer in good standing and will be placed on probation. Students who do not return to good standing within two consecutive semesters will be dismissed from the Graduate School.

The Dean of the Graduate School, with the approval of the relevant department head, may also dismiss anyone who fails to make satisfactory progress. The accumulation of six semester credits of "F" will result in mandatory dismissal.

The student dismissed from the Graduate School for academic reasons may not be readmitted for one calendar year. Readmission will be considered only if evidence for expected satisfactory performance is submitted and found acceptable.

### **Repeating Courses**

Any graduate course may be repeated once for credit. However, the degree requirements shall be increased by the credit hour value of each course repeated. The hours and grades of both the original and the repeated section shall be used in computing the grade point average.

A student who is either repeating a course and/or on probation will not be permitted to withdraw at any point in the course they are repeating because of continued unsatisfactory performance. After the midpoint of the course the student may be permitted to withdraw from nursing courses only in the event of verifiable extenuating circumstances. The student must meet with the Assistant Director or another nursing administrator to request a withdrawal from a nursing course.

### **Dropping/Adding Courses**

A student may drop or add courses in accordance with the University Registrar's and Graduate School's policies and deadlines. Drops and/or Adds may require instructors' and/or advisors' signatures. Drops and Adds may also require the signature of the School of Nursing Director and/or Graduate School Associate Dean.

Courses dropped after the official 15<sup>th</sup> day of a term will appear as a withdrawal (WD) on the student's academic transcript. Simply ceasing to attend a course does NOT constitute a course withdrawal. A student who leaves a course without following the withdrawal procedure will be given a grade of "F".

If the dropped course is one of the specialty track courses, the student may significantly delay completion of that nursing track and will be permitted future enrollment in the course/track on a space-available basis.

**Withdrawal or Leave of Absence (LOA) from the Master's Nursing Program**

A student may withdraw from the master's nursing program of study for a variety of reasons and may later request permission to return.

An Exit Interview is recommended.

**Procedure:**

The Student Services Counselor for the Graduate Program will send an email to students who did not enroll during the semester, with a request they complete and return the MSN Withdrawal/LOA Form found in the Appendix.

Schedule an appointment with the Assistant Director of Graduate Programs.

- Discuss the reason(s) for withdrawal/LOA.
- Establish an anticipated date of return to the School of Nursing, if applicable.

**Return**

The return to the track may be granted on a space available basis. Contact the Graduate Program Office at 330-972-7555 or [sb14@uakron.edu](mailto:sb14@uakron.edu) for details.

The student's record will be reviewed by the faculty of the specialty track for appropriate placement. A student who has been away from the track may be asked to repeat prior course work.

Students are responsible for contacting the Graduate Program Office [sb14@uakron.edu](mailto:sb14@uakron.edu) regarding re-entering the nursing program.

## GRADUATE COURSE GRADING SCALE

Grades will be based on a 100% scale and will be reported according to the following scale:

A 94-100  
 A- 90-93  
 B+ 87-89  
 B 84-86  
 B- 80-83  
 C+ 77-79  
 C 74-76  
 C- 70-73  
 D+ 67-69  
 D 64-66  
 D- 60-63  
 F 59 and under  
 I Incomplete  
 WD Withdrawal

## TAKING OF EXAMINATIONS

### Policy:

ALL students are expected to take examinations at the scheduled time. Any exceptions must be approved by the faculty prior to the scheduled date of the examination.

- An examination may not be retaken by a student for the purpose of improving a grade.
- Make-ups are not routinely given except in extenuating circumstances.

### Procedure:

- Each course will determine its make-up policy on exams and quizzes.
- Course faculty must be notified prior to the scheduled date of the examination if it will be missed.
- Students must contact faculty on the day of their return to school to schedule a make-up of the exam.
- Faculty may require documentation of reason for absence.

## SECURITY OF EXAMINATIONS

All School of Nursing examinations are considered secured property of the school. No tests are to be circulating or in the possession of any student. Students possessing course examinations will be referred to the Assistant Director of Graduate Programs and the Office of Conduct and Community Standards for determining continuance in the school.

## FACULTY EVALUATIONS BY STUDENTS

Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate the lecture and/or clinical teaching of faculty. A standardized faculty evaluation is utilized and available at the end of the course at <https://learn.uakron.edu/evaluation>. Results of student evaluations are not available to the appropriate faculty member until after final course grades are submitted.



## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY IN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

The University of Akron and the School of Nursing recognize that in order for students to meet required course objectives within the School of Nursing, it is necessary for students to learn and carry out various nursing processes in a wide variety of learning environments. Some activities will be carried out on-campus in laboratory environments while other activities will be carried out at off-campus in traditional and non-traditional institutions that are part of the established health care delivery system. Selected activities may be carried out within the community at large: wherever clients live, work or attend school.

*For patient safety and clinician safety, students are not permitted to work in the eight hours prior to the beginning of a clinical shift. If this occurs, those clinical hours will not count toward the total number of hours needed.*

### **Grievance Procedure for Graduate Students**

Graduate students should follow the grievance procedure outlined in The University of Akron Graduate Bulletin.

## **HEALTH, LICENSURE, INSURANCE AND BACKGROUND CHECKS**

### **Mandatory School of Nursing and Agency Requirements for Clinical Experience**

Prior to beginning any course requiring clinical hours and in order to meet mandatory agency requirements for health, immunizations, drug screen and, CPR certification, students must be in compliance with ACEMAPP requirements (health records), any agency health requirements, and have current state and federal background checks on file by the first day of the semester or the student will not be able attend clinical. Students are responsible for the cost of this service; the cost is not covered in course fees. Evidence of yearly renewals must be submitted each year prior to beginning clinicals.

### **RN License**

Graduate nursing students are required to have and maintain a current unrestricted license to practice professional nursing in Ohio. A copy of the RN license must be uploaded to Typhon before starting a practicum course and update as needed.

### **Liability Insurance**

All students enrolled in the Master's nursing program must have nursing liability insurance which is provided by the University through a course fee added to the practicum course. The minimum amount of liability insurance is \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000.

## **GRADUATION**

Students must apply for graduation via My Akron. Students must check their DPR to verify that graduation requirements have been met. Link for commencement information:

<http://www.uakron.edu/registrar/graduation/index.dot> .

In summary, to be cleared for graduation, a candidate must have completed course work with a minimum average of 3.0, all requirements must be within the six-year time limitation, paid all applicable fees, and met any other department and university requirements.

Students must apply for graduation prior to the deadlines set by the University.

## **SCHOOL OF NURSING SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY**

### **Rationale and General Statement**

The School of Nursing requires that nursing students at all times be capable of providing safe and effective patient care. To that end, the School of Nursing is committed to a substance-free workplace and environment. This means that nursing students must not be impaired by any substance during any part of the nursing program, including classroom work, laboratory assignments, and community based clinical settings in which nursing students participate. Although the School of Nursing has no intention of intruding into the personal lives of students, it cannot ignore a situation that would jeopardize the quality of education being provided and could create an unsafe environment.

Therefore, any situation where a nursing student's ability or performance is impaired by a chemical or natural substance will be dealt with by the procedure set forth below. The School of Nursing defines such chemical or natural substances to include (but to not be limited to) alcohol, over the counter medication, controlled substances, inhalants, synthetic designed drugs, or other illegal drugs.

### **Procedures:**

Any nursing student undergoing medically prescribed treatment involving a chemical or natural substance which may limit the nursing student's ability to perform the required tasks must report that treatment to his/her professor prior to participating in activities in the classroom, laboratory, or clinical setting. Upon such disclosure, the faculty member shall accommodate the student's potential impairment in that setting. Failure to report this to the faculty may be cause for appropriate disciplinary action under these procedures. It is the nursing student's responsibility to determine from his/her physician whether a prescribed substance may impair performance. Any information provided by the nursing student shall be kept confidential.

Any nursing student whose ability or performance is impaired by a chemical or natural substance while participating in activities in the classroom, laboratory, or clinical setting shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action under these procedures.

Whenever a faculty member has reason to suspect that a nursing student is impaired, the faculty member shall discuss the situation with that nursing student and allow the student to provide a verbal explanation. The faculty member may also request the presence of another faculty member to confirm the potential impairment. If that faculty member determines that there is a reasonable suspicion of impairment, (see attached list of reasons), the faculty member will dismiss the nursing student from that setting. At that point, the faculty member shall advise the nursing student not to transport himself/herself from that setting.

Within one (1) working day of such action by the faculty, the faculty member shall advise the Assistant Dean of Academic Nursing Programs in writing of the action. The student shall be provided at the same time a copy of that advisement.

Within three (3) working days of receiving that written report, the Assistant Dean of Academic Nursing Programs shall schedule a meeting with the nursing student. Until such time as that meeting is held, the nursing student shall be temporarily suspended from the program and shall not be permitted to attend any activity in the classroom, laboratory, or clinical settings.

At the scheduled meeting with the nursing student, he/she shall be given an opportunity to explain the incident and demonstrate evidence that he or she was not impaired at the time of the incident. If the incident is explained to the satisfaction of the Assistant Dean of Academic Nursing Programs, the absences shall be marked excused and the nursing student shall be permitted to make up any missed work.

If an incident is not explained to the satisfaction of the Assistant Dean of Academic Nursing Programs because of the student's failure to demonstrate a lack of impairment, or if the nursing student does not attend the scheduled meeting, the incident shall be noted on the nursing student's record and a warning issued. All missed work must be completed. After a second incident, the nursing student shall be suspended from the School of Nursing program for one year and shall be readmitted only upon demonstration of appropriate counseling and/or medical treatment.

If a nursing student is readmitted to the School of Nursing program upon demonstration of appropriate counseling and/or medical treatment and again demonstrates that his or her ability or performance is impaired by a chemical or natural substance while participating in activities in the classroom, laboratory, or clinical setting that nursing student shall be entitled to the procedures set forth in Paragraphs 3 through 6 above. However, if that incident is not explained to the satisfaction of the Assistant Dean of Academic Nursing Programs because of the student's failure to demonstrate a lack of impairment, or if the nursing student does not attend the scheduled meeting, the nursing student shall be subject to dismissal from the program.

It shall be the responsibility of each nursing student who observes or has knowledge of another nursing student in a condition which impairs his/her abilities in the classroom, laboratory, or clinical setting to promptly report the fact to the responsible faculty member. Failure to report that observation or knowledge may subject that nursing student to discipline.

The School of Nursing earnestly solicits the understanding and cooperation of all nursing students in implementing the Policy and Procedures set forth herein. Questions regarding these Policy and Procedures should be directed to the Assistant Director Graduate Programs, with assurance that all inquiries will be kept confidential.

*Approved by Faculty Organization 11/30/13*

**Reasons to Suspect Impairment Include, but are not Limited to:**

- Alcohol on breath or odor of alcohol
- Flushed face and/or bloodshot eyes
- Tremors of the hands
- Unsteady gait and/or slurred speech
- Absenteeism
- Frequent breaks
- Repeated tardiness
- Memory lapses, difficulty concentrating, confusion
- Poor physical coordination
- Slurred or incoherent speech
- Deteriorated appearance
- Dilated pupils
- Reduced energy/reduced productivity
- Anger, hostility, irritability, secretiveness, withdrawal, mood swings, agitation

## **Alternative Program for Chemical Dependency/Substance Use Disorders Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is the Ohio Board of Nursing's Alternative Program for Chemical Dependency/Substance Use Disorders?**

The Ohio Board of Nursing's Alternative Program for Chemical Dependency/Substance Use Disorders (Alternative Program) is a non-disciplinary, non-public monitoring program for licensees or certificate holders who are chemically dependent.

The Alternative Program is established under Section 4723.35 of the Ohio Revised Code and Chapter 4723-6 of the Ohio Administrative Code. The law and rules allow the Board to abstain from taking disciplinary action against licensees and certificate holders who are found eligible for, and successfully complete, the Alternative Program.

### **2. What are some of the requirements for successful completion of the Alternative Program?**

- ☐ Application to, and being found eligible for, the Alternative Program;
- ☐ Entering into an Alternative Program Participant Agreement;
- ☐ Four years of monitoring;
- ☐ Abstaining from alcohol and drugs (unless properly prescribed);
- ☐ Substance Use Disorders treatment by a program certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services or accredited by the Joint Commission;
- ☐ Random drug and alcohol screens;
- ☐ Personal reports;
- ☐ Interviews with a Monitoring Agent;
- ☐ Reports from treating healthcare practitioners;
- ☐ Documented sobriety (including alcohol and drug screens) prior to returning to work as a nurse, dialysis technician, or community health worker;
- ☐ Approval to seek and accept employment as a nurse, dialysis technician, or community health worker;
- ☐ Overtime and controlled substance/drugs of abuse medication restrictions;
- ☐ Employer reports.

### **3. What are some of the eligibility requirements for entering the Alternative Program?**

- ☐ A current, valid license to practice nursing in Ohio, or a current, valid certificate to practice as a dialysis technician or community health worker in Ohio;
- ☐ Temporary surrender of an applicant's license or certificate within 10 days of the date the application is mailed to the applicant;
- ☐ Submission of a completed application to the Board within 60 days of the date the application is mailed to the applicant;
- ☐ As part of the application, the applicant submits:
  - A complete bio-psycho-social evaluation performed by a licensed healthcare provider with demonstrated expertise in the treatment of chemical dependency/substance use disorders

- Documentation of a diagnosis of chemical dependency/substance use disorders
- An organized treatment plan
- Signed waivers for receipt and release of information.

☐☐ Information in the application indicates that the applicant may be effectively treated for chemical dependency/substance use disorders and effectively monitored for compliance with Alternative Program requirements. (Factors that may be considered in making this determination include, but are not limited to: the applicant's nursing practice history, the applicant's criminal history, the applicant's history of drug and alcohol use, how long the applicant has been licensed/certified, whether the applicant abused a position of authority or deprived patients of medication, etc.)

#### **4. What makes an applicant ineligible for the Alternative Program?**

- ☐☐ Current prescription for a controlled substance or drug of abuse;
- ☐☐ A medical and/or psychiatric condition, diagnosis, or disorder, other than chemical dependency/substance use disorders, in which the manifest symptoms are not adequately controlled;
- ☐☐ Two or more substance use disorders treatment programs attempted or completed, not counting treatment pertaining to the current treatment plan submitted for purposes of Alternative Program eligibility;
- ☐☐ Substitution or tampering with a substance or drug of abuse;
- ☐☐ Discipline of the applicant's license or certificate in Ohio or another jurisdiction;
- ☐☐ Previous participation in the Alternative Program or a similar program in another jurisdiction;
- ☐☐ Conviction of a felony or an act in another jurisdiction that would constitute a felony in Ohio;
- ☐☐ The public may not be adequately protected from unsafe practice if the applicant enters the Alternative Program; or
- ☐☐ Failure or refusal to cooperate with a Board investigation.

#### **5. What happens if I am found eligible for the Alternative Program?**

You will receive a letter from the Alternative Program notifying you of your eligibility. You will be contacted by a Monitoring Agent to schedule a meeting to review the Alternative Program Participant Agreement.

#### **6. What happens if I am found ineligible for the Alternative Program?**

You will receive a letter from the Alternative Program notifying you of your ineligibility. Your case will be reviewed for a determination regarding disciplinary action.

#### **7. What happens if I am terminated from the Alternative Program for noncompliance?**

You will receive a letter from the Alternative Program notifying you of your termination from the Alternative Program. The Board will initiate disciplinary action based on any prior violations of the Ohio nursing law and rules, and on your termination from the Alternative Program.

#### **8. How do I apply for the Alternative Program?**

Request an Alternative Program application by sending an email to [alternative@nursing.ohio.gov](mailto:alternative@nursing.ohio.gov) or calling (614) 466-0376. Please give your name, license number, e-mail address, mailing address and phone number. Your completed application may be mailed to: Ohio Board of Nursing, Alternative Program, 17 South High Street, Suite 400, Columbus, OH 43215-7410.

**If you have questions concerning the Alternative Program, please contact the Alternative Program by email at [alternative@nursing.ohio.gov](mailto:alternative@nursing.ohio.gov)**

### **Policy for Finger Sticks and Blood Borne Pathogens**

Incidents must be reported to the faculty member as well as to the responsible person in the clinical/community agency.

#### **Needle/Fingersticks:**

Students, while participating in clinical education at clinical facilities and community agencies, usually receive the same emergency medical care or minor medical treatment as that extended to employees of that facility, while on duty. Report any incident immediately to the nurse manager and fill out an incident report. Follow the protocols outlined by that facility. Students are financially responsible for and will be billed for those services.

#### **Blood Borne Pathogens:**

**Blood borne pathogens include the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).**

Students who may have been exposed to blood borne pathogens while participating in clinical education at clinical facilities and community agencies, usually receive the same emergency medical care or minor medical treatment as that extended to employees of that facility, while on duty. Report any incident immediately to the nurse manager and fill out an incident report. Follow the protocols outlined by that facility. Students are financially responsible for and will be billed for those services.

#### **Privacy**

Standards of Individually Identifiable Health Information:

Information enacted under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 was created to address patient information privacy concerns. If you would like more information about these standards, the United States Department of Health and Human Services website, located at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/>, has a number of resources, including a publication titled "Privacy and your Health Information," located at [https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/consumer\\_summary.pdf](https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/consumer_summary.pdf)

## STUDENT ORGANIZATION, HONORS, SCHOLARSHIPS

### Sigma Theta Tau International - Honor Society of Nursing

The Honor Society of the School of Nursing, The University of Akron was accepted unanimously into Sigma Theta Tau International, National Honor Society of Nursing, at its 25th Biennial Convention, held in Seattle, Washington, November 7-9, 1979.

Established in 1922 at the University of Indiana, Sigma Theta Tau draws its membership from candidates who have:

Demonstrated superior scholastic achievement, evidence of professional leadership potential, and/or marked achievement in the field of nursing through their performance in a baccalaureate or higher degree program, or in their practice in the field of nursing after graduation from such a program.

Membership carries with it the responsibility to fulfill the **Purpose of Sigma Theta Tau International:**

- Recognize superior achievement
- Recognize the development of leadership qualities
- Foster high professional standards
- Encourage creative work
- Strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession

Guidelines for individual member eligibility for graduate students are:

- Achieve a 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale computed on existing grades
- Complete 1/4 of the program of study (e.g. complete 9 credit hours in a 36 credit program)

The Chapter will invite eligible candidates. Any individuals who believe they meet eligibility criteria should contact the Delta Omega Chapter [https://chapterdirectory.sigmanursing.org/index.html#](https://chapterdirectory.sigmanursing.org/index.html#/).



### **STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES**

A variety of health services are available to all students through Student Health Services. Student Health Services, (330-972-7808) is located in Student Recreation and Wellness Center . <https://www.uakron.edu/healthservices/>

Student health insurance is required of all students. Information on Student Health Insurance can be found on the University website at <https://www.uakron.edu/healthservices/insurance/>

### **STUDENT ACADEMIC RECORDS**

Academic records of students are maintained in the Graduate Program Office Mary Gladwin Hall room 214. The record contains information relevant and necessary for academic purposes.

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES**

There are several committees that have positions for students enrolled in the School of Nursing. Students selected/elected are expected to attend committee meetings, participate in discussions, and share the student's point of view with faculty. Students may be asked to serve on any other committees that deal with matters where student representation would be helpful.

Students may have representation on the School of Nursing and University committees.

**Appendix A**

**MSN WITHDRAWAL/ LOA FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Program \_\_\_\_\_

1. Reason(s) for Withdrawal:
  - a. Illness or injury
    - Self
    - Significant other (parent, sibling, spouse, child)
  - b. Death in family requiring assumption of increased responsibilities
  - c. Economics
  - d. Indecision about personal career goals
  - e. Academic reasons
  - f. Personal

Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Explanation pertaining to checked areas (optional):

3. Do you anticipate returning to the School of Nursing? If so, when?