



**Austin Peay State University
School of Nursing
GRADUATE NURSING
STUDENT GUIDELINES (Handbook)**

Revised November 2025

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INTRODUCTION and PURPOSE of the STUDENT GUIDELINES

These guidelines are a companion to the APSU Graduate Bulletin and the APSU Student Handbook. They are intended to serve as an orientation to the Graduate Nursing Program and a resource to be utilized throughout a student's course of study. These guidelines are designed to inform the student of their rights as a student and, equally important, their obligations and responsibilities as a student in the Graduate Nursing Program.

The APSU Graduate Nursing Program reserves the right to amend, alter, change, or modify the provisions of these guidelines at any time and in any manner that it deems to be in the best interest of the APSU School of Nursing and its students. Updates take effect immediately upon publication. Students may not refer to or rely on previous versions of the Guidelines.

The most current version of the Graduate Nursing Student Guidelines (Handbook) is always available in the "Guides & Resources" module within every Graduate Nursing (NURS) course. Students are responsible for accessing and reviewing the most current version at the start of each NURS course. Students are required to complete an Acknowledgement Quiz within each course; however, failure to complete the quiz does not exempt the student from adherence. Initiating any course content in a NURS course will be considered acknowledgment of the current version of the Guidelines and agreement to comply with all stated policies. Students must direct any questions about the Guidelines to faculty prior to beginning course content.

In addition to these Guidelines, students are expected to become acquainted with and abide by the contents of the APSU Graduate Bulletin and APSU Student Handbook. Questions concerning these Guidelines or the information contained may be addressed in the Office of the School of Nursing and thereby routed to the appropriate faculty member, Graduate Program Coordinator, or Director of the School of Nursing.

GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Graduate Nursing program at APSU prepares graduates to contribute significantly to improving health and meet essential professional practice standards in various settings. The purpose of the Graduate Nursing program is to build upon a student's BSN generalist preparation with a curriculum of evidence-based practice, theory, and research, leading to specialization as Family Nurse Practitioners (FNPs), Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMHNPs), and Nurse Educators (NEs).

The Graduate Nursing programs offer three concentrations: FNP, PMHNP, and NE. All concentrations are designed to meet Registered Nurses' needs in various stages of their careers. All courses are in an online format. A student's course sequence and program of study are determined by the bulletin year in which they enter the program. Therefore, the most current version of the Student Guidelines may not reflect a student's particular course of study.

The APSU Graduate Nursing program offers students access to a collaborative academic community with low student-to-faculty ratios, direct and frequent access to faculty, personal advising, and an interactive approach to learning. Graduate Nursing students attend required on-campus intensives to practice hands-on skills, participate in simulation, and interact with peers, faculty, and experts in the field. At the end of the program, students in all concentrations design and plan an outcome-driven research project that requires integrating the knowledge gained in their concentrations.

Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)

The FNP concentration prepares nurses to deliver care and improve health outcomes in the outpatient primary care setting. Graduates of this program can assess, diagnose, prescribe medications, and evaluate care for patients throughout the lifespan. Graduates are eligible and prepared to sit for the FNP specialty certification exam through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), and to apply for licensure to practice as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). A list of concentration courses can be found on the SON [Graduate Nursing website](#) and in the APSU Graduate Bulletin.

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)

The Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) concentration prepares nurses to deliver care and improve mental health outcomes for individuals and families across the lifespan. Graduates of this program will be able to assess, diagnose, prescribe medications, and evaluate care for the mental health needs of individuals and families. Graduates are eligible and prepared to sit for the PMHNP specialty certification exam through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and to apply for licensure to practice as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). A list of concentration courses can be found on the SON [Graduate Nursing website](#) and in the APSU Graduate Bulletin.

Nurse Educator (NE)

The NE concentration prepares graduates for faculty positions at colleges and universities and also for planning and delivering staff and patient education in health-related settings. A list of concentration courses can be found on the SON [Graduate Nursing website](#) and in the APSU Graduate Bulletin.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS

- Graduate Nursing Coordinator: Dr. Michelle Robertson
 - Telephone: 931-221-7489
 - graduatenursing@apsu.edu
- MSN Clinical Coordinator: Elizabeth Eversole
 - Telephone: 931-221-6281
 - graduatenursing@apsu.edu
- APSU School of Nursing (SON)
 - Telephone: 931-221-6490 Fax: 931-221-6490
 - <http://www.apsu.edu/nursing/>
- College of Graduate Studies (CoGS)
 - <http://www.apsu.edu/grad-studies/>

OneStop & D2L

OneStop is the gateway for student information, including registration, financial aid, transcript information, etc. If a student moves or changes their name or contact information, they should change it online on OneStop.

D2L is an integrated learning platform designed to create a single place online for faculty and students to interact. On D2L, students can access course materials, see announcements about the course, check the syllabus, including assignments and due dates, readings, etc., participate in the discussion board, post and read messages from the faculty and other students, and turn in assignments.

APSU Student Email

Email is the standard of communication at APSU. Many communication items will only be via email, so students should activate and frequently check their APSU email. Students should use APSU email to communicate with their advisors and general program information. For questions within courses, students should use the email system in D2L to communicate with faculty unless otherwise specified by the faculty.

Student's Rights and Responsibilities

Students should refer to these guidelines, the Graduate Bulletin, and the APSU Student Handbook for departmental, college, and university policies. The APSU Student Handbook provides a complete list of APSU Student Rights and Responsibilities.

MISSION, VISION, VALUES, and STRATEGIC GOALS (PILLARS)

School of Nursing

APSU SON STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

The Mission of Austin Peay State University School of Nursing is to prepare an inclusive community of learners at the undergraduate and graduate levels in a manner that meets the patient-centered healthcare needs of our society.

VISION

The vision of APSU School of Nursing is to be the regional school of choice for students seeking baccalaureate and graduate nursing degrees. Graduates will provide quality, patient-centered care to their communities.

VALUES

- Student Success
- Professionalism
- Community
- Caring
- Safety
- Integrity
- Civility
- Collaboration
- Life-Long Engagement
- Innovation

PILLARS

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3	PILLAR 4
The Academic Experience	The Student Experience	The Employee Experience	The Community Experience
Goal 1:	Goal 1:	Goal 1:	Goal 1:
The School of Nursing (SON) will be a premier regional program known for high-quality, student-centered teaching.	The SON will cultivate a civil, inclusive community.	The SON will cultivate a civil, inclusive community.	The SON will develop and enhance mutually beneficial community partnerships.
Goal 2:	Goal 2:	Goal 2:	Goal 2:
The SON will evolve academic pathways to strengthen our emphasis on delivering quality programs that address community and regional needs.	The SON will offer each student the opportunity to have diverse interactions and experiences.	The SON will empower employees to meet their own learning and development objectives.	The SON will increase community involvement by offering a robust and unique program.
Goal 3:	Goal 3:	Goal 3:	Goal 3:
The School of Nursing will optimize our institutional infrastructure to meet the academic needs of our students.	The SON will ensure that all students are equipped to pursue their educational and nursing career goals in an empowering environment.	The SON will support an environment where all employees can grow and flourish.	The SON will create an atmosphere that promotes sustained faculty, student, and alumni engagement.
		Goal 4:	
		The SON will cultivate a culture of connectedness in which employees intentionally engage with students to enrich the campus experience and influence student success.	

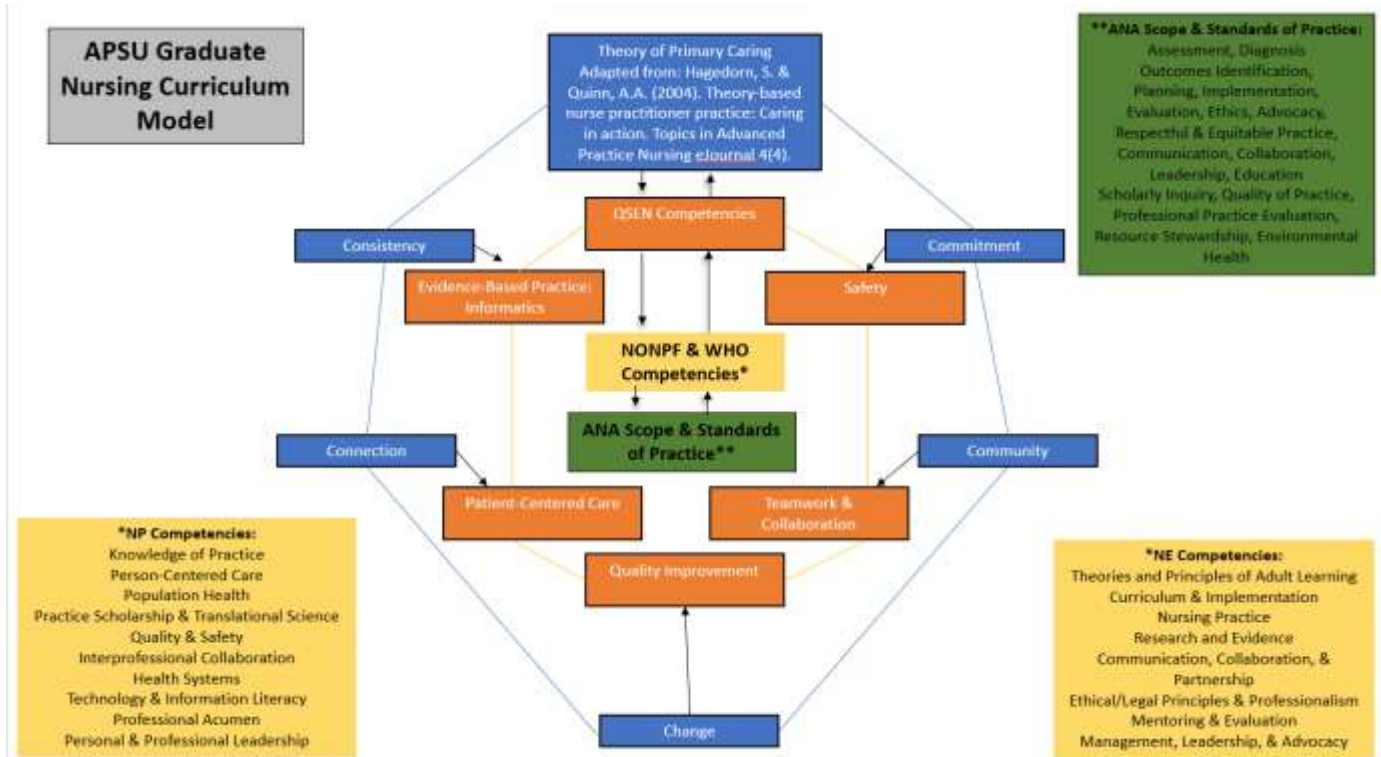
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The following contemporary professional standards are the basis for the end-of-program student learning outcomes and guide the curricular content for the Graduate Nursing program:

- The American Nurses Association Scope and Standards of Practice 4th Edition
- NONPF Nurse Practitioner (NP) Role Core Competencies (2022)
- The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties *Population-Focused Nurse Practitioner Competencies: Family/Across the Lifespan* (NONPF, 2013)
- The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties *Population-Focused Nurse Practitioner Competencies: Psychiatric Mental Health* (NONPF, 2013)
- The Quality and Safety Education for Nursing *Graduate-Level QSEN Competencies Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes* (QSEN, 2012)
- World Health Organization Nurse Educator Core Competencies (WHO, 2016)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for the APSU MSN curriculum depicts how Hagedorn's Theory of Primary Care, NONPF competencies, WHO Nurse Educator Core Competencies, QSEN competencies, and the ANA Scope and Standards of Practice (4th ed.) are linked within the APSU MSN curriculum.



ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES, GRADUATE BULLETIN, ACADEMIC CALENDAR & GRADUATION DEADLINES

Academic Policies and Procedures

Students are part of APSU's academic community and, as such, are subject to the college and university's policies, rules, and regulations as a whole. Additionally, as deemed necessary, the School of Nursing and its respective programs may develop their own policies and procedures to augment those of the college and university. The following guidelines include information from and addenda to the APSU Graduate Bulletin and the APSU Student Handbook.

Graduate Degree Bulletin

The [Graduate Degree Bulletin](#) contains a wealth of information about APSU and the University's rules, regulations, and policies.

Students need to know graduate academic policies and procedures in the Graduate Bulletin. There are different levels of policies and procedures, University policies and procedures, and School of Nursing Graduate Nursing Program Policies and Procedures. Please note, in some cases, the School of Nursing Graduate Nursing program has specific guidelines that are more rigorous than those that exist for other Graduate Programs.

Academic Calendar

Please refer to the [APSU Student Academic Calendar](#) for students' information, including dates for university closings, the start and end of courses, priority advising dates, and registration and withdrawal deadlines.

Graduation Deadlines & Requirements

It is the student's responsibility to notify the University of their intent to graduate. Students who will complete all degree requirements must apply for graduation by the deadline for the semester they intend to graduate. Students apply for graduation through OneStop. More information about applying for graduation and all graduation requirements can be found on the APSU Office of the Registrar's [website](#).

GRADING, PROGRESSION, and RETENTION POLICY

Grading Scale

The faculty of the School of Nursing for Graduate Nursing students has adopted the following grading scale:

A= 90-100
B= 80-89
C= 70-79
D= 60-69
F= Below 60

Rounding of Final Grades

In all graduate nursing courses, the final course grade will be rounded once to a whole number (0.01-0.49 will be rounded down to the next whole number; 0.50-0.99 will be rounded up to the next whole number).

Graduate Nursing Program Sequencing

Several Graduate Nursing courses must be taken in a specific sequence. The required prerequisites and co-requisites for each class are listed in the Graduate Bulletin. Students should be aware that graduate courses are not taught every semester. Should a student get out of sequence for any reason, they may have to sit out until the semester the course is taught. This could delay a student's graduation.

Progression Guidelines

Once accepted into the Graduate Nursing program, a student must enroll every semester and make satisfactory progress toward the degree. Students are expected to progress according to their Graduate Nursing course sequence. Any exceptions must be discussed with the advisor and approved by the Graduate Nursing Coordinator.

A student not enrolling for a semester must submit a readmission request to the Graduate Nursing Curriculum, Admission, and Retention Committee. Students not enrolling for two consecutive semesters (including summer) must reapply to the graduate school and the Graduate Nursing program. Readmitted students must follow the rules, prerequisites, and degree requirements in the most current Graduate Nursing Student Guidelines and APSU Graduate Bulletin.

Course Grades—"B" or Better

Graduate nursing students must complete all required courses with a "B" or better grade. If a student's grade is lower than a "B," s/he may request to repeat the course. No more than one required course can be repeated. In repeating a class, the previous grade and the grade earned from the repeated course will be included in calculating the GPA unless the student implements the College of Graduate Studies Repeat/Grade Replacement request. This may only be executed once through the Graduate Nursing program. Information on grade

replacement can be found on the College of Graduate Studies [website](#). The overall criteria for progression are as follows:

- Graduate Nursing Students must maintain a 3.0 Cumulative GPA in graduate school per the [CoGS policy](#).
- According to the Graduate Nursing grading scale, successful completion of required Graduate Nursing courses is defined as a grade of "B" (80%) or better.
- No more than one Graduate Nursing course can be repeated.
- A student who earns a "C" or lower in any two required Graduate Nursing courses will be dismissed from the Graduate Nursing program.
- Students should know that not all graduate courses are taught every semester. This may impact progression.
- Even if the student implements the grade replacement request through the university, this will only impact the student's GPA. It will not remove the class from counting toward the remainder of the Graduate Nursing Progression Policy. Students may not repeat more than one graduate nursing course, and they will be dismissed following two grades of "C" or below, despite any use of the university grade replacement.

Readmission Process Following Receiving a Grade of "C" or Below

Upon earning a "C" or below or withdrawing failing in any Graduate Nursing course, the student must receive approval from the Graduate Nursing Curriculum, Admissions, and Retention Committee to re-enroll and progress within the graduate nursing curriculum.

The process by which the student may request such approval will require the student to submit a letter to the Chairperson of the Graduate Curriculum, Admissions, and Retention Committee within two weeks following failure (C, D, or F) or withdraw failing from a course. The letter should be sent via email to graduatenuresing@apsu.edu and must include:

- A request to enroll within a specific course and the target semester of enrollment.
- An explanation as to why the student should be approved to return.
- An explanation as to why the student thinks they were unsuccessful in the course.
- An explanation of what the student has done to remedy the initial unsuccessful cause.

No student is guaranteed re-enrollment.

Length of Program

The start date for students is counted from enrollment in the first NURS course. Students have 12 semesters, including the mini-semester for NURS 5100, to complete the MSN degree.

Withdrawals

Students may withdraw from a course prior to the *"Last day to drop or withdraw from a class with a "W" grade"* as specified in the APSU academic calendar. Re-enrollment in a Graduate Nursing course is not guaranteed and is subject to faculty review and space

availability. Students are encouraged to explore all possible alternatives before withdrawing.

Graduate Nursing students cannot have more than three course withdrawals while enrolled in the Graduate Nursing Program. The student will be dismissed from the Graduate Nursing program if a fourth course withdrawal occurs.

Students who withdraw from a course after the *“Last Day to Drop or Withdraw from a Class with a ‘W’ Grade”* will only be awarded a "W" by the course faculty if their current course average is 80% or higher at the time of withdrawal. After this point, the student would receive a failing grade. Any failing grade at the time of the withdrawal will be applied under the program's 'B or Better' policy (see above).

Students are strongly encouraged to contact their advisor and the APSU Office of Student Financial Aid before dropping any courses. Please note that graduate nursing courses are not offered every semester, and withdrawing could significantly extend the length of the program and delay the student's graduation date.

Financial Aid & Summer Semesters

The Graduate Nursing Program runs year-round (fall, spring, summer, and mini- semesters). Students must matriculate with their cohort, and summer enrollment is expected. Financial aid for the summer semesters works differently from the standard fall and spring semesters. Eligibility is partly based on the remaining aid from the Fall and Spring semesters. For instance, if a student has borrowed maximum loan eligibility for the aid year, they are typically not eligible for a summer loan disbursement. Students should PLAN for summer semester financial aid/loan disbursement and work with their financial aid counselor to appropriately allocate monies/loan allocations for summer.

Incomplete Grades

Required coursework must be completed by the last day of final examinations. The grade "I" (Incomplete) may only be assigned by the faculty member in any course when a student cannot complete the work due to *rare and extraordinary* events that were not reasonably foreseeable at the start of the semester and are beyond the student's control. **All "I" grades must be pre-approved by the Graduate Nursing Coordinator.**

- The "I" may not be used to extend the term for students who complete the course with an unsatisfactory grade.
- Students must complete all "I" grades before registering and enrolling for the next semester.
- Unless the student meets the requirements for removal of the "I" within 60 days from the end of the semester in which it was received (see University Calendar), the "I" will change to an "F," whether or not the student is enrolled.
- The Graduate Nursing Coordinator may grant up to a 30-day extension if sufficient extenuating circumstances exist. The "I" grade will automatically revert to "F" if the student has not completed the requirements at the end of the extension period.

- The student is certified for graduation only when all requirements are met, including removing "I" grades. If a student has an "I" in a course necessary to fulfill degree requirements in the semester s/he expects to graduate, the certification process and graduation will automatically be deferred to the next term.
- Students must have completed at least 80% of the clinical hours before an "Incomplete" grade is considered in a clinical course. If the student has not completed at least 80% of the hours and cannot complete them by the last day of clinical hours (as posted on the course calendar), they will receive an "F" in the course. None of the hours will carry over to subsequent semesters.

Pass/Fail Grades

Certain assignments in the Graduate Nursing Program are designated as pass/fail within individual courses. These assignments are clearly identified in the course syllabus or assignment instructions. Completion of all designated pass/fail assignments is mandatory. Failure to submit a required pass/fail assignment or to achieve a passing grade on it will result in a failing grade ("F") for the course, regardless of performance on other course requirements.

Clinical Performance

Clinical evaluation includes the satisfactory achievement of the established clinical evaluation criteria. Critical elements of clinical performance are indicated on the clinical evaluation form in each clinical course. Failure to pass clinical will result in a grade of "F" for the clinical course. Clinical performance is further described in the *Graduate Nursing Clinical Practicum Manuals* (by concentration).

Extra Credit

Extra Credit will not be awarded in any Graduate Nursing course.

Zoom Grading

Each class will have an expectation for how many Zoom conferences must be attended for credit. Zoom sessions will not be recorded unless announced in the specific course syllabi. The Zoom rubric and Zoom expectations posted in the course is followed for grading.

Leave of Absence

Any student requesting a Leave of Absence from the Graduate Nursing program must submit a written request to the Graduate Nursing Program Coordinator. This letter must include a reason for requesting the leave and the student's plans for return. Each Leave of Absence is handled individually according to the student's needs, academic standing, and clinical performance. No Leave of Absence will be granted for unsatisfactory academic performance or a period more extended than two semesters. Before returning to the Graduate Nursing Program, the student must notify the Graduate Nursing Program Coordinator of their intent the semester before returning to register for the appropriate courses.

Modification of Program of Study

If a student wishes to change their current Program of Study (i.e., switch from FNP to

NE concentration), they must request this with their faculty and/or academic advisor. Once approved, the student and advisor will complete a Program of Study change.

Dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program

A student may be dismissed from the Graduate Nursing program for any of the following reasons:

- Academic honesty is the expected behavior of all students. Academic dishonesty may include but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, use of generative artificial intelligence, fabrication, collusion, copying or printing of online exams, and knowingly assisting others in an act of academic dishonesty. Students who engage in academic dishonesty in any form, even as a first offense, place themselves in jeopardy of receiving a failing grade for the assignment or course and dismissal from the Graduate Nursing program.
- Commission of any offense classified as a felony by Tennessee's criminal statutes or by federal criminal laws.
- Unlawful use, possession, or sale of drugs or narcotics, whether or not felonious.
- Fails to disclose a felony conviction or fails to disclose disciplinary action or diversion by the State Board of Nursing.
- Fails to meet enrollment requirements (e.g., unencumbered licensure, CPR, professional liability insurance, clearances, and site-specific requirements) for clinical practicum experiences.
- A documented pattern of unprofessional behavior in the course room or clinical setting.
- Unsafe practice during clinical/practicum experiences.
- Violating client and/or agency confidential information (HIPAA violation) may result in dismissal from the program.
- Students considered by the faculty to be unsafe practitioners or whose progress in meeting program objectives is judged unsatisfactory will be dismissed from the program.
- Misrepresents patient data or clinical practice.
- Places any patient in physical or emotional jeopardy.
- Fails to complete all degree requirements within four years of entering Graduate Nursing coursework.
- Fails to earn a "B" (3.0) grade or better when repeating a course.
- Falsification of records and reports, including clinical documents, cheating on an examination, quiz, or any other assignment, is the basis for program dismissal.
- Withdrawal from four Graduate Nursing courses.
- Other unprofessional or unethical conduct that would disrepute or disgrace the student or profession.
- Failure to pass the comprehensive exam.
- A student who earns a "C" or lower in any two required Graduate Nursing courses will be dismissed from the Graduate Nursing program.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Comprehensive Exam

Every Graduate Nursing Student is required to take a final comprehensive examination. The examination measures role competency, emphasizes the student's area of concentration, and is conducted during the term the student expects to graduate. The candidate must be registered for the semester the comprehensive exam is taken. The Graduate Nursing Faculty will set the benchmark for success.

- **FNP and PMHNP students:** Take an online proctored pre-test and comprehensive exam. The content follows the FNP and PMHNP Certification content blueprints. The pre-test and comprehensive examination are proctored, and instructions for enrollment and proctoring will be provided to the student at the start of the final semester.
 - *Pre-Exam*
 - The pre-exam is a low-stakes version of the comprehensive exam that measures students' knowledge of exam topics. It follows the exact blueprint and has equivalent rigor as the comprehensive exam.
 - Should the student meet the designated comprehensive exam benchmark on the pre-exam, they will be deemed to have "Passed" the comprehensive exam, and no further testing will be required.
 - If a student does not meet the benchmark on the pre-exam, they should use the pre-exam results to remediate and study for the Comprehensive Exam.
 - *Comprehensive Exam*
 - Comprehensive Exam #1
 - Students who do not meet the benchmark on the pre-exam will automatically take the comprehensive exam on the posted date.
 - Comprehensive Exam #2
 - Students who do not meet the benchmark on the comprehensive exam #1 will automatically register for a repeat second exam. The student is responsible for any costs associated with retaking the exam.
 - Comprehensive Exam #3
 - Students who do not meet the benchmark on comprehensive exam #2 will automatically register for a repeat third exam if time allows within the semester. The student is responsible for any costs associated with retaking the exam.
 - Following Three Attempts
 - Students who do not meet the benchmark after the pre-exam and three comprehensive exam attempts must enroll and pay tuition the following semester in NURS 5992. This course supports and allows the student time for intensive remediation, and students have the entire semester to meet program requirements.

- **NE students:** complete a written exam with essay questions following the WHO Nurse Educator Competencies.
 - *Comprehensive Exam*
 - Students receive an email with the assigned essay questions. They are provided a timeframe for completion (not more than five business days). The written comprehensive exam is graded by the NURS 5719 faculty using a standardized rubric.
 - Should the comprehensive exam be rated by the NURS 5719 faculty as not meeting the benchmark, a second faculty is appointed by the Graduate Nursing Program Coordinator to review the submission.
 - Students who do not meet the benchmark based on the two faculty reviews may repeat the exam (up to three times) within the same semester, should time allow.
 - Students who do not meet the benchmark within three attempts must enroll and pay tuition the following semester in NURS 5992. This course supports and allows the student time for intensive remediation, and students have the entire semester to meet program requirements.

Proctored Quizzes/Examinations

Students will have proctored quizzes and exams throughout the graduate nursing program. Students may not collaborate with others or use references (unless instructed in a specific course) during quizzes/examinations unless otherwise stated. This means that during a proctored quiz/exam, a student may not:

- Open another browser window or use any other method to find an answer.
- Communicate with anyone via online chat, telephone, email, text message, in-person, or other forms.
- Use a phone or video camera.
- Ask someone to take the exam for you.
- Copy or photograph exam questions for personal use or to share with others.
- Speak aloud or whisper.

For more information about academic misconduct, as described above, students should refer to the section on cheating, dismissal from the program, and the Honor Code in this Handbook.

For identified examinations, the Graduate Nursing program uses a proctoring service. For this virtual proctoring service, students must have a webcam enabled on their computer while taking the exam. Students must remain on camera at all times. If a student's face leaves the camera's view or they cover their face, they may risk receiving a score of zero on the exam. Students may not have any other electronic devices (tablets, phones, smart devices) near their testing desk unless noted/approved by the course faculty. Students should ensure they are in a quiet environment and remain silent throughout the test.

Students should not discuss the exam with other students who have not yet taken it. The student's responsibility is to ensure they have the proper technology (e.g., computer, webcam) and reliable internet access before synchronous sessions and exams to complete coursework. Exam retakes and alternate assignments are not allowed. There are no adjustments to exam scores due to concerns about computer or internet access. Students should contact the APSU Helpdesk immediately if there is a D2L technology issue during an exam. Students should use the online chat for the proctoring site if they experience problems with proctoring. The program faculty will review all of these situations. Exams must be taken within the timeframe outlined on the course calendar. If a student misses an exam for any reason without a reasonable explanation (e.g., medical emergency) and fails to notify the faculty, they will receive a zero and will not be eligible for a make-up. Planned travel or lack of internet access during travel does not constitute an acceptable reason for missing an exam or requesting an extension.

Technology Expectation

The graduate nursing program requires competency in using the computer to access information, communicate by E-mail, and use Excel, Microsoft Word, and PowerPoint. Having a computer, modem, and access to a reliable internet connection is the student's advantage. Students should not rely solely on mobile devices like tablets and smartphones to complete coursework. Many Graduate Nursing courses require a webcam, speakers, and microphone. Specific information regarding minimum system requirements and equipment can be accessed through the APSU Distance Education's [website](#).

Expectations for Writing

All written work is graded based on assignment content criteria. However, all writing assignments are expected to demonstrate graduate-level writing, including writing free of typographical errors, misspellings, and punctuation errors. Graduate nursing writing assignments must be completed without generative artificial intelligence (AI) assistance. Graduate-level writing also contains proper grammar and correct formatting using the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) when applicable. Writing should be concise, include relevant content and support, and meet assignment requirements in a well-presented, easy-to-read format.

APA Formatting

The School of Nursing expects graduate nursing students to use the APA style in their written work. APA style is not only for citations but also required for the formatting/style of written work.

Statistics Proficiency

Graduate nursing students must read and analyze nursing research and scholarly literature and interpret the statistical data. All students are encouraged to refine their statistical knowledge before taking Nursing 5107, Scientific Inquiry.

Originality and Student Assignments

Sharing assignments, exam information, and graded work is considered academic dishonesty. Students may not submit the same or significantly similar assignments for

different classes or the same class that a student is retaking. This is known as assignment recycling or self-plagiarism and is not acceptable. Each assignment should be original work created by the student to meet that particular assignment's objectives.

Turnitin is a text-matching software tool integrated into D2L and available to faculty for educational purposes (e.g., improving student writing and citation practices) and for reviewing student work in case of suspicion of plagiarism or other breaches of APSU's academic integrity policies. Turnitin indicates whether the text in a submitted document matches its database. It has three components: the Internet, journal article databases, and papers previously submitted to Turnitin by participating universities.

All required papers and assignments in the MSN program may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (directly or via D2L assignment/dropbox submission) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

All graduate nursing students have obligations under the APSU Code of Student Conduct to complete academic and scholarly activities honestly and with proper attribution. Graduate Nursing students are also responsible for upholding the professional and ethical standards in the ANA Code of Ethics and the Graduate Nursing Honor Code (see the "Honor Code" in this Handbook).

To uphold a culture of integrity and respect, the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools- including but not limited to ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, DALL-E, and others- is prohibited for completing course assignments in the Graduate Nursing Program unless explicitly directed within the instructions of a NURS course. Students should refer to their course syllabi for additional guidance and course policies.

AI may be used to brainstorm, generate ideas, or better understand complex concepts. However, AI tools must not be used to write or complete assignments, projects, or exams unless specified in the course. When AI assistance is utilized for any reason, students are required to disclose the extent of its use and provide proper citations. Unauthorized or undisclosed use of AI will be treated as a violation of academic integrity.

Capstone Project

Every Master's student in the Graduate Nursing program must complete an outcome-driven quality improvement research project. This is achieved with the advice and consultation of the Capstone Faculty. Details on procedures related to the Capstone project are posted in the MSN Capstone course.

REMEDIATION

The purpose of remediation is to identify, remediate, and counsel students who demonstrate behaviors or evidence of difficulties in the Graduate Nursing Program as early as possible. Remediation is a support system for the student and is not a disciplinary action. Remediation may be implemented for any significant areas of weakness. The NP and NE Clinical Practicum Manuals describe the clinical remediation process. The following are examples of when the remediation process may be initiated for non-clinical reasons:

- Severe academic jeopardy (i.e., low quiz/exam scores, deficient writing skills).
- Lapses in professional judgment (i.e., not completing assignments, absenteeism, unprofessional behaviors).

The faculty initiates the remediation process as soon as an at-risk student is identified. The faculty member is responsible for speaking with the student (via telephone or Zoom) to discuss the identified concerns and develop an individualized remediation plan. The remediation plan must be documented on the form "Nursing Student Remediation Agreement" (see *Clinical Practicum Manual*)

Once the remediation plan is signed, the student has until the established deadline for completion to meet the remediation outcomes. Faculty are available to support the student during this time, but the student must contact the faculty to request additional assistance if/when needed.

When the deadline for completion has passed, the faculty member is responsible for communicating with the student to determine whether the remediation plans have been met. If the evidence supports the successful attainment of remediation plans, they are considered complete once they are signed by faculty, student, and the graduate nursing coordinator. If the evidence does not support the successful attainment of remediation plans, the remediation is considered unsuccessful. Unsuccessful remediation signifies that the student cannot master a critical course outcome or requirement; therefore, the student will receive a failing grade.

ATTENDANCE

Online Course Attendance

Success in nursing graduate courses is dependent on active participation and engagement throughout the course. Students must complete all assignments and actively participate in course discussions by the due date.

Additionally, students are expected to:

- Participate in course activities at least four times a week – on different days to read emails, review course announcements, complete weekly assignments, review the course content, complete assessments, discussions, and other weekly deliverables as directed by the faculty and outlined in the syllabus.
 - Participation does not mean students are merely logging into D2L. The student must actively open course content, participate in the discussion, etc.
- Participate in course threaded discussions (see the discussion board rubric on D2L).
- Meet all due dates for graded course items per the course calendar.
 - Participate in Zoom sessions as required in each course (see the Zoom participation rubric on D2L)
 - Submit course assignments by the posted deadline.
 - Take course quizzes/examinations by the posted deadline.

If a student cannot meet the course's minimum participation or discussion requirements, they should contact the course faculty as soon as possible.

Scheduled Breaks/Holidays & Weekends

The Graduate Nursing program follows the APSU academic calendar. Unless the student is enrolled in a mini-semester that runs over typical holiday breaks, the university does not have classes on a scheduled holiday break (e.g., Thanksgiving Break, Memorial Day, Spring Break), and students are not expected to log into class or turn in course assignments. Of course, a student may still participate in the online components of a course during the break. Policies regarding holidays/scheduled breaks and clinical rotations are outlined in the *Graduate Nursing NP and NE Clinical Practicum Manuals*.

Unless otherwise identified on the course calendar, students are expected to participate in online courses on weekend days that are not included in scheduled break time. Students may have assignments, tests, discussions, and other assignments due on weekends. Please see the course calendar for specific due dates.

Scheduled Travel

Students are expected to meet all course and program requirements regardless of personal travel plans. Travel, including lack of internet access, is not an acceptable excuse for missing class sessions, assignment due dates, quizzes, or exams. Students should review course calendars before scheduling any travel that may interfere with

academic responsibilities. Failure to meet deadlines or attendance requirements due to planned travel will not be excused, and students will not be granted extensions or make-ups for exams or assignment deadlines missed during travel.

Inclement Weather & Campus Closings/Delays

Online courses are not affected by university schedule changes due to inclement weather or campus closings/delays. The instructor in an online course is responsible for any modifications in course deadlines, assignments, or other requirements in an online course. Students who are directly impacted by inclement weather and feel that they need leniency for attendance and/or an extension for course requirements should contact their faculty for individual guidance in these situations.

Weather and travel conditions near clinical sites may be different than conditions on the APSU campus in Clarksville. Graduate Nursing students who are planning to be at their clinical sites when classes are canceled due to inclement weather should use good judgment related to conditions in their home communities and the community where their clinical site is located. If the site is open and students feel they can safely get there or stay there (if they are already at the site when the university is canceled), they should do so. If conditions are such that the student feels that he or she cannot get there safely, s/he must notify his clinical preceptor and adjust clinical times accordingly, to get the number of hours needed for that clinical course.

If there is inclement weather or a university closing during the required on-campus intensive (OCI) days, the intensive may need to be canceled. Faculty will work with university personnel to decide on cancellation. Every effort by the faculty is made to notify students of the cancellation/delay of the OCI as early as possible. These changes are posted to D2L. Missed OCIs due to inclement weather will be made up by altering the original scheduled day and time.

Clinical Attendance

The student is expected to participate responsibly in clinical experiences at the scheduled times. If the student is absent for unavoidable reasons, it is the student's responsibility to notify the preceptor immediately and make arrangements to make up the hours. Changes to a student's clinical schedule must be communicated to the clinical course faculty.

Clinical sites may still be fully operational when courses are canceled due to inclement weather. Students who feel unsafe traveling to a clinical site for the clinical experience should prioritize personal safety and contact their preceptor and/or clinical faculty before starting the scheduled clinical experience to discuss plans.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

The APSU School of Nursing values student feedback and believes that students should express concerns free from duress or retaliation. It is hoped that minor differences and concerns can be resolved without having to resort to the formal grievance process listed below.

If a student has an issue with another student, faculty, staff, or any other party, the student should first attempt to resolve the conflict or complaint directly with the individual involved. If no resolution is reached, the student should seek to address the issue by following the graduate nursing chain of command (described under "Professional Communication" in these Student Guidelines).

A complaint concerns an action, practice, or decision within the program's control or responsibility that the student believes should be changed to enhance the overall quality of education and/or student experience. Complaints are typically managed informally and are meant to address minor issues that can be resolved at an early stage.

If a student has a complaint or a problem with a program-wide issue, they should email their concern to the appropriate chairperson of the SON graduate nursing committee or the Graduate Nursing Coordinator. For the list of graduate nursing committees and how students can contact the appropriate chairperson, please reference the "Graduate Nursing Involvement" section of these Student Guidelines.

This complaint procedure is informal and is not intended to replace other policies and procedures for handling a student's complaint. For instance, a complaint about a grade should still be managed through the APSU academic grievance policy; a financial aid-related complaint should still be directed to the Financial Aid Office, etc.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

A *grievance* is a formal written complaint alleging a violation of program or university policies, as outlined in the Student Guidelines/Handbooks or other official documents. Grievances do **not** include general complaints or concerns about other students, faculty, or the program. For such issues, please refer to the **Student Complaints** section above.

The APSU School of Nursing is committed to addressing all formal grievances fairly and consistently. The policy covers both academic and non-academic matters:

- **Academic grievances:** Concerns related to course grades or evaluation methods.
- **Non-academic grievances:** Concerns regarding the actions or conduct of university personnel outside of academic matters.

Students may follow the formal grievance procedures outlined in the APSU Student Handbook/Calendar or on the APSU website:

- APSU Academic Grievance Procedure (Policy #2:040)
- APSU Non-Academic Grievance Procedure (Policy #3:002)

Students should contact the APSU Office of Student Affairs for grievances involving university-specific issues (e.g., residency or traffic appeals) for appropriate resources and guidance.

HONOR CODE

Plagiarism, cheating, use of generative artificial intelligence, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct, directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the course's faculty. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to unauthorized access or possession of exams or exam questions, unauthorized taking of written or taped notes during exam review sessions, or plagiarism. Plagiarism is interpreted as quoting or paraphrasing another individual's work (published or unpublished) without proper credit citation. (For further information, refer to the APA Manual).

The US Department of Health and Human Service Office of Research Integrity defines Self-Plagiarism as follows: "redundant publication has a direct counterpart in the area of academic dishonesty-it is referred to as 'double' dipping.' It occurs when a student submits a whole paper or a substantial portion of a paper to fulfill a course requirement, even though that paper had earlier been submitted to satisfy the requirements for another course taught by a different professor. Many college undergraduates and even some graduate students are not aware that this type of practice is a serious offense and constitutes plagiarism."

Reference: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health Office of Research Integrity. (2013). Academic self-plagiarism (double-dipping). Retrieved from <http://ori.hhs.gov/plagiarism-15>.

In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed through the regular University procedures as a result of academic misconduct, the faculty has the authority to assign an "F" or a zero (0) for the exercise or examination or to assign an "F" in the course.

CORE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Because the School of Nursing seeks to provide a reasonably safe environment for its nursing students and patients, a student may be required to demonstrate their physical and/or emotional fitness to meet the program's essential requirements. Such requirements may include performing specific physical tasks and suitable emotional fitness. A qualified student with a disability is one who, with or without reasonable accommodations or modification, meets the program's essential eligibility requirements known as the *Core Performance Standards*. The School of Nursing has established core performance standards that were promulgated by the Southern Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing (www.sreb.org). The standards set cognitive, sensory, affective, and psychomotor performance requirements. They are as follows:

Requirements	Standard	Examples
Critical thinking	Critical thinking ability for effective clinical reasoning and clinical judgment consistent with the level of educational preparation.	<i>Not limited to</i> identification of cause/effect relationships in clinical situations. Use of scientific method in the development of patient care plans—evaluation of the effectiveness of nursing interventions.
Professional Relationships	Interpersonal skills are sufficient for professional interactions with a diverse population of individuals, families, and groups.	<i>Not limited to</i> the establishment of rapport with patients/patients, groups, and colleagues of a variety of social, emotional and cultural backgrounds. Capacity to engage in successful conflict resolution. Peer accountability.
Communication	Communication adeptness is sufficient for verbal and written professional interactions.	<i>Not limited to</i> the explanation of treatments, procedures, initiation of health teaching. Documentation in written form and interpretation of nursing actions and patient responses.
Mobility	Physical abilities sufficient for movement from room to room and in small spaces.	<i>Not limited to</i> movement about the clinic, a patient's room, workspaces, and treatment areas that may include confined spaces. Administration of rescue procedures-cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Lifting up to fifty pounds of weight.
Motor Skills	Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient for providing safe, effective nursing care.	<i>Not limited to</i> calibration and use of equipment. Operate computers and other equipment in clinical, laboratory, and

		courseroom settings—therapeutic positioning of patients.
Hearing	Auditory ability sufficient for monitoring and assessing health needs.	<i>Not limited to</i> auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs, and to learn from audio aided instruction in courseroom settings. Ability to hear monitoring devices, alarms, and emergency signals. Ability to discern auscultatory sounds and cries for help.
Visual	Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in patient care.	<i>Not limited to</i> visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in nursing care, and to learn from visual-aided instruction and demonstration in the courseroom. Ability to observe the patient's condition and responses to treatments.
Tactile Sense	Tactile ability is sufficient for physical assessment.	<i>Not limited to</i> the ability to palpate in physical examinations and various therapeutic interventions (e.g., insertion of a catheter or intravenous line).

If a student believes that he/she cannot meet one or more of the core performance standards without accommodations or modifications, it is appropriate for the student to take the responsibility of identifying her or his need for accommodation to the APSU Office of Disability Services. If an applicant or student self-reports that he or she cannot meet one or more of the core performance standards without accommodations, the Graduate Nursing program, in conjunction with the Office of Disability Services must determine whether accommodations can reasonably be made.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Nursing is a profession that attempts to care for the whole person in sickness and health. Because of this austere charge, the nurse must become very well acquainted with the patient and sometimes be the person who knows the most about the patient in almost every way. This privileged relationship is based on trust, empathy, and rapport. Therefore, information given to the nurse in the nurse-patient or collegial relationships with other professionals must be held in the strictest confidence. This is not something that automatically happens because the nurse or the nursing student is a friendly, honest person. It is developed through conscientious commitment and becomes a hard and fast habit. The integrity of the profession is dependent on this habit.

In nursing schools, nursing students must integrate this habit immediately and begin in the first clinical course to respect the patient's rights, one of which is confidentiality. The faculty expects professional behavior at the student level. The faculty cannot offer effective learning situations if the student cannot respect the patient's confidentiality and humanity. A student who violates the patient's rights in any way, particularly and most noticeably in the area of privacy, is in danger of failing the course and being dismissed from the program.

HIPAA

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was passed in 1996 to make health insurance more efficient and portable. Additionally, the Act addresses information protection because of public concerns about confidentiality. All Graduate Nursing students must complete HIPAA training as described in the Graduate Nursing NP and NE Clinical Practicum Manuals. A HIPAA violation by a Graduate Nursing student may result in the student's dismissal from the Graduate Nursing program.

FERPA & STUDENT PRIVACY

The faculty, staff, and administration of the School of Nursing follow [APSU guidelines related to the confidentiality and privacy of student records](#). FERPA is the acronym for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. FERPA requires that Austin Peay State University (APSU), with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent before disclosing personally identifiable information from your education records. However, APSU may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written permission unless you have advised APSU to the contrary in accordance with APSU's procedures.

SCHOOL OF NURSING POLICY REGARDING USE and/or ABUSE OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL

The presence or use of substances that interfere with nursing students' judgment or motor coordination in the clinical setting poses an unacceptable safety risk for patients, colleagues, the University, and the health care agency. Therefore the manufacture, possession, distribution, or dispensing of alcohol or illegal drugs, the misuse of legally prescribed or "over-the-counter" medications, or being under the influence of such substances while engaged in any portion of the clinical nursing experience is strictly prohibited by the Graduate Nursing program. For this policy's purposes, "being under the influence" is defined as: the student's judgment or motor coordination is impaired due to the presence or use of a substance.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

1. Program Testing Policy

Clinical facilities may have stringent policies and procedures requiring students to submit to a drug screen. A positive drug screen may result in denial of the student's participation in the clinical experience. The student shall incur the costs of all routine testing.

2. Reasonable Suspicion Testing

Nursing students engaged in clinical activity may be requested to undergo a blood/urine screen for drugs and alcohol if reasonable suspicion exists to believe the student is using or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol to interfere with the safe performance of duties. Reasonable suspicion requires some specific, objective basis that the student is then using or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol before requiring testing. Reasonable suspicion may include: Observable phenomena include direct observation of drug/alcohol use and/or the physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of such or abnormal conduct or erratic behavior. The student shall incur the cost of all testing done on a reasonable suspicion basis.

When a supervisor (APSU School of Nursing faculty or the agency personnel responsible for the student or patient care) has a basis to believe reasonable suspicion exists, the supervisor must contact another supervisor (faculty or staff) to corroborate his/her observations. In situations where it is believed the student may endanger the safety of patients, employees, or self, the student's supervisor will immediately remove the student from the clinical situation before taking further action. If reasonable suspicion is corroborated, the student should be confronted with the observations and be required to undergo drug and alcohol screening as soon as possible. Refusal to submit to a facility's request for reasonable suspicion will result in the student not attending clinical at that site. The student is subject to disciplinary action by the School of Nursing and/or University.

If it is determined that the student cannot safely continue assigned tasks, the student will not be allowed to return to the clinical setting that day regardless of whether reasonable suspicion is corroborated, or whether the student is tested or not. The student is required to have a responsible person arrive at the facility to transport them home. If a reliable person cannot be identified, the police will be called for disposition. If the student is violent, the facility is asked to follow its rules for controlling a violent visitor.

If a student (without a direct supervisor from APSU being present) is requested by a facility to leave due to what the facility supervisor deems behavior consistent with alcohol or drug use, the student is required to be drug/alcohol tested. Refusal to submit to a facility's request for reasonable suspicion screening will result in the student being unable to attend clinical at that site. They will be subject to disciplinary action by the School of Nursing and/or University. The facility must contact the APSU School of Nursing when the behavior occurs and report the incident and provide written documentation of the incident.

3) Positive drug/alcohol test or refusal to test

Any positive result or refusal to submit to required drug testing will affect the student's status within the program, up to and including dismissal from the Graduate Nursing program. If the positive result indicates a violation of the APSU's social disciplinary policy, the test results will be discussed with the appropriate Student Affairs official for a determination of appropriate action. The student who is required to be tested for drugs/alcohol may not return to the clinical area until all progression conditions have been met. The Graduate Nursing Admissions and Retention Committee and the School of Nursing director will decide when a student may return to the clinical setting.

Graduate Nursing Curriculum, Admission and Retention Committee SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY—Positive Drug Screen

In the event of a positive drug screening of a student currently enrolled in the Graduate Nursing program, the School of Nursing is notified, and the student must withdraw from all Graduate Nursing courses. Due to all Graduate Nursing students maintaining RN licensure, the School of Nursing must report to the appropriate State Board of Nursing.

Readmission following a positive drug screening

- 1) Students who are withdrawn from the Graduate Nursing program for reasons related to a positive drug screen must submit a letter to the Graduate Nursing Curriculum, Admission and Retention Committee requesting readmission to the Nursing. Readmission is not guaranteed.
- 2) The student must submit documentation to the Director of the School of Nursing from a licensed therapist specializing in addiction behaviors indicating the status of recovery and/ or documented rehabilitation related to the substances used or abused. Documentation must include a statement by

- the licensed therapist that the applicant is able to function effectively and provide safe, therapeutic care for patients in the clinical setting.
- a) Students residing in Tennessee and holding a Tennessee RN license should utilize the Peer Assistance Program: ***The Tennessee Professional Assistance Program*** is a voluntary program funded by nurses' licensure fees through the ***Tennessee Board of Nursing***. The program offers consultation, referral, and monitoring for nurses whose practice is impaired or potentially impaired due to drugs or alcohol, or psychological or physiological condition.
 - b) For Graduate Nursing Students, a referral can be made confidentially by the employer, EAP, co-worker, family member, friend, or the nurse her/himself. If the nurse is willing to undergo a thorough evaluation to determine the extent of the problem and any treatment needed, all information is kept confidential from the Board of Nursing, and the nurse does not face disciplinary action against his/her nursing license (TN Department of Health/Peer Assistance Program)
- 3) If the student has positive results for a drug screening after readmission to the Graduate Nursing Program, the student will be dismissed from the Graduate Nursing Program with no option for readmission to the program.
 - 4) If readmitted, the student is subjected to direct observation, random and reasonable suspicion drug screening at the student's expense for the duration of their studies in the Graduate Nursing program. Subsequent drug screenings may be direct observation screenings.
 - a) TnPAP should be used for students living and licensed in Tennessee for monitoring and subsequent follow-up.
 - 5) If readmitted, the student is required to submit a monitoring agreement between the student and a licensed therapist specializing in addiction behaviors, at the student's expense, for the duration of their studies in the Graduate Nursing Program.
 - a) TnPAP should be used by students living and licensed in Tennessee for monitoring and subsequent follow-up.

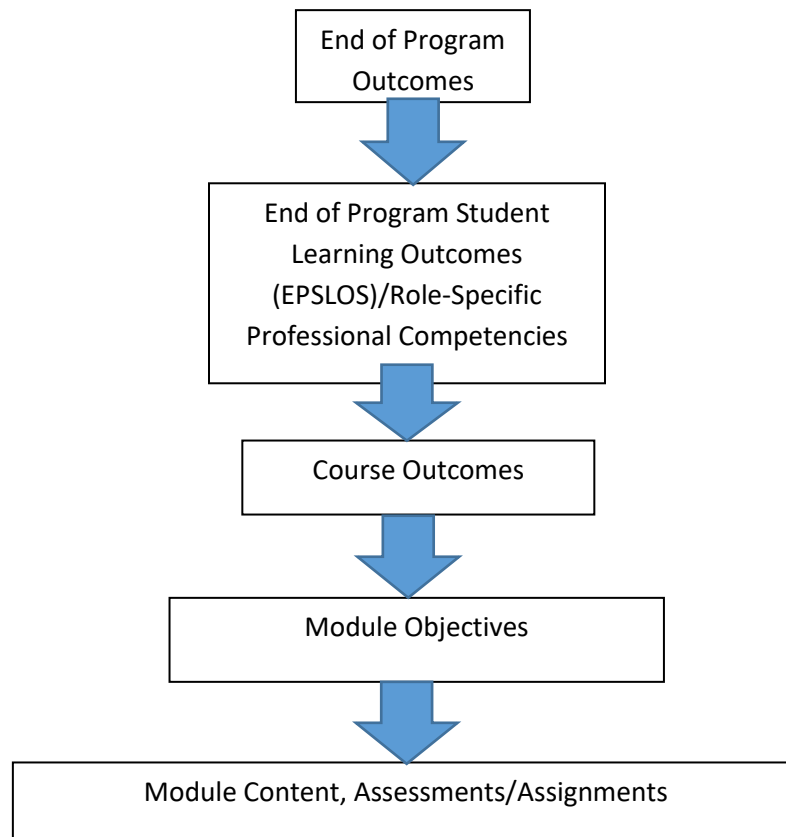
The Graduate Nursing Admissions and Retention Committee will make a written report of their decision and distribute it to the student, involved faculty, Director of the SON, and the Dean of the College. All records relating to the event will be retained by the Graduate Nursing Curriculum, Admission and Retention Committee. Decisions are final, and may not be contested within the SON. Any student grievance related to Graduate Nursing Curriculum, Admission and Retention Committee decisions will be addressed through the University student grievance policy and procedure.

END OF PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (EPSLOs)

End of Program Student Learning Outcomes (EPSLOs) are measurable statements that express the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that the student should be able to demonstrate upon program completion. The following EPSLOs are consistent with standards of professional practice, professional standards, the Graduate Nursing Program Outcomes (POs), and professional standards and competencies.

Role-specific Professional Competencies (RCs) are expected, measurable levels of graduate performance that integrate knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

The following diagram depicts how the End of Program Outcomes (POs) guide the End of Program Student Learning Outcomes (EPSLOs). Student Learning Outcomes then drive the desired outcomes for each course. Within each course module, objectives are identified that support the course outcomes. Each assignment or assessment is then linked to the module objectives. The numbering designation that is seen at the end of outcomes, objectives, assignments, or assessments substantiates this relationship.



MSN EPSLOs:

Graduates of the MSN program will be able to:

1. Exhibit advanced professional acumen by applying critical thinking and reflective practice, alongside leadership skills that foster accountability, stewardship, and integrity.
2. Integrate communication, coordination, and collaboration with individuals, families, and interprofessional teams to promote safe, high-quality care.
3. Critically evaluate nursing knowledge and evidence, including information technology, to guide advanced nursing practice.
4. Synthesize theoretical and evidence-based research to inform and support efficient decisions that enhance quality improvement in the advanced nursing role.
5. Demonstrate ethical decision-making in the advanced nursing role.
6. Analyze data related to the determinants of health, to promote outcomes for diverse individuals and populations.
7. Integrate advocacy principles to influence nursing practice and policies at the systems level.

Additional Role-Specific Professional Competencies:

Graduates of the FNP Concentration will also be able to:

1. Demonstrate independence and accountability in managing primary healthcare needs, applying comprehensive knowledge and clinical judgement to assess, diagnose, prioritize, manage, and evaluate person-centered care.
2. Utilize evidence-based practice guidelines and healthcare technologies to provide safe, compassionate, quality, and personalized care to diverse patients.
3. Promote health and prevent disease across the lifespan through education, screening, and interventions.

Graduates of the NE Concentration will also be able to:

1. Evaluate the process of implementing, monitoring, and managing curricula using relevant theories, teaching and learning strategies, and technological innovation.
2. Appraise various strategies to monitor and evaluate programs, curricula, and mastery of student learning.
3. Integrate professional values and evidence-based teaching strategies in educational practice.
4. Practice advanced, evidence-based, contemporary, and person-centered nursing care.

Graduates of the PMHNP Concentration will also be able to:

1. Demonstrate independence and accountability in managing mental health care needs, applying comprehensive knowledge and clinical judgement to assess, diagnose, prioritize, manage, and evaluate person-centered care.

2. Utilize evidence-based practice guidelines and healthcare technologies to provide safe, compassionate, quality, and personalized care to diverse patients.
3. Promote mental health and reduce risk for psychiatric disorders across the lifespan through education, screening, and interventions.

GRADUATE NURSING ADVISING & ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Advising

Graduate Nursing students benefit from a dual advising structure. All students are assigned a nursing faculty advisor and a professional academic advisor. Both advisors can address questions about program and graduation requirements; however, students can think of the difference between these advisors as a difference in perspective and scope.

- **Professional Academic Advisor:** The Graduate Nursing program has a Professional Academic Advisor who assists students through the admission and initial enrollment process through program completion. Under the guidance of faculty, this advisor helps students address questions and concerns about university policies and procedures, degree evaluation, registration, and scheduling issues. Each semester, this advisor approves the student to register for their outlined course sequence within the university academic calendar's advising dates. The Professional Academic advisor is best reached by emailing graduatenursing@apsu.edu.
- **Faculty Advisors:** All incoming graduate nursing students are assigned a faculty nursing advisor who mentors them with all questions regarding academic and program progression and career goals. Faculty members are experts in the field who teach courses and assist students in navigating the curriculum, plan of study, academic systems, and program policies/procedures.

Advising for Graduate Nursing students is primarily completed via email. Students are encouraged to communicate with their advisors and email them as often as needed throughout the semester.

Academic Success

The following are a few tips for the successful completion of the Graduate Nursing degree:

- *Review the Course Syllabus:* The syllabus is the guide for each course. At the beginning of each semester, carefully read the syllabus taking note of course outcomes, assignments, exams, and important dates. If you have questions about the syllabus, ask the course faculty.
- *Listen to the course lectures:* The faculty in most courses have provided video lectures to facilitate learning the content. You must listen to these and review the course readings and resources.
- *Time Management:* Online courses certainly give you a lot of flexibility regarding when you study, but that doesn't mean you don't have to study! Just as you might attend a face-to-face lecture regularly each week, you need to schedule time (and enough of it) in your calendar to study the materials in your online course and complete assignments. Treat those blocks of time as seriously as you would a face-to-face course by sticking to them and letting your friends and family know you are unavailable during those times. The most common reason for course failure is not able to balance outside employment and study time. Place all

assignment due dates on your calendar and try to log in to the courseroom every day.

- *Stay Organized:* Students enrolled in traditional courses usually have a consistent schedule to follow each week. Students may have to find ways to stay on top of their work for online classes. Organize all of your files in a way that makes sense to you. It's also wise to keep a copy of anything you submit if a technology problem requires you to resubmit it—even your discussion forum posts. Don't forget to take good notes while doing your readings or watching online lectures, just as you would in any other course.
- *Establish a Good Workspace:* You must have an excellent place to do your work. Find a quiet place with a good internet connection, access to power, and freedom from distraction.
- *Don't wait until it's too late:* Often, graduate students do not reach out to faculty or resources until it's too late. Contact your faculty member at the first sign of academic jeopardy or when life interrupts your ability to be successful. The faculty are here to support you.
- *Utilize Your Resources:* APSU provides many resources to assist graduate students. These include writing coaches, disability support services, test-taking strategies, career services, counseling, and more. You should seek assistance when needed and access and utilize the resources available.
- *Seek Help When Needed:* The online space need not isolate. Your instructor indeed lacks seeing your body language in class to understand whether you might be struggling. Your faculty is still there to help you, even if you do not see them daily in class.

Open Clinical Laboratories and Campus Computer Labs

Graduate nursing students may use the clinical laboratories during active semesters (may not be available during semester breaks or holidays) to practice their advanced nursing skills using simulation models, otoscopes, and other equipment. Students can schedule time in the labs by emailing the Graduate Program Coordinator at graduatenuising@apsu.edu.

Austin Peay State University runs several [open-access computer labs](#) around the campus that APSU students can use.

REQUIRED INTENSIVES

Intensives take place throughout the program to enhance learning. On-Campus-Intensives (OCIs) are required visits to the Clarksville, Tennessee, campus. Students will receive dates and times well in advance for planning purposes. The Clinical Intensive is a "Virtual" experience.

The Intensives allow students to learn and practice advanced skills, test classroom education, and socialize under the guidance of the graduate nursing faculty.

- The FNP & PMHNP Concentrations require three intensives: Assessment, Clinical, and Final.
- The NE Concentration does not require any on-campus intensives.

ASSESSMENT: The Assessment OCI occurs at the end of the Advanced Health Assessment (NURS 5008) clinical/lab course. Students are required to come to campus. The Assessment OCI allows students to meet classmates and Graduate Nursing faculty in person and strengthen existing professional relationships. In small groups led by the Graduate Nursing faculty, students practice assessment skills acquired in class and participate in open labs, lab practice, and lab check-offs.

CLINICAL: The Clinical Intensive for NP students occurs during the NURS 5801 or 5811 course. This Intensive is held virtually, allowing students to practice advanced clinical skills. It has both synchronous and asynchronous components.

FINAL: The Final OCI occurs towards the end of the final semester before graduation. It also involves celebrating the students' accomplishments while completing their last Graduate Nursing courses.

- The Final OCI for the FNP and PMHNP concentration students assesses students' readiness to practice and consists of an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

Intensive Grading/Scoring

Students must complete the entirety of each Intensive to receive full points. Each Intensive will have a scoring rubric to measure the individual expectations and for students to receive summative feedback. Students will receive a copy of the rubric with a summary of expectations at the start of each term, where an Intensive will take place.

Missing a Required Intensive

All Intensives are mandatory. Should a student miss the Intensive due to an emergency, the student should submit documentation (in writing) to the Graduate Nursing Program Coordinator. The documentation should include a letter of explanation and a medical certificate or other supporting evidence to validate the absence. Students with approved (emergency only) absences will receive a grade of incomplete for the course associated with the Intensive (see policy regarding Incomplete grades in these guidelines). Non-excused absences will receive zero credit for the related course assignments. Intensive hours may have to be completed the next time the Intensive is offered (it may not be the following semester). A student may not progress in the curriculum until all incomplete grades are satisfied. This may delay a student's graduation date.

ACCREDITATION

University Regional Accreditation

Austin Peay State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, and doctorate degrees. Questions about the accreditation of Austin Peay State University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's [website](#).

Program Accreditation

Austin Peay has numerous programs accredited through specialized program accreditation agencies. These accreditations are earned after rigorous evaluation and proof of excellence within the field of study and degree level. These program accrediting agencies are on the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's list of approved accreditors.



The master's nursing program at Austin Peay State University, located in Clarksville, Tennessee, is accredited by the:

Accreditation Commission for Education of Nursing (ACEN)
3390 Peachtree Road NE
Suite 1400
Atlanta, GA 30326

The most recent accreditation decision made by the ACEN Board of Commissioners for the master's nursing program is initial accreditation. View the public information disclosed by ACEN regarding this program [herephi](#).

The APSU School of Nursing is fully approved by the TN Board of Nursing:
TN Board of Nursing, 665 Mainstream Drive, 2nd Floor, Nashville, TN 37243
<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/health-professional-boards/nursing-board/nursing-board/about.html>

STUDENT EVALUATIONS & SURVEYS

Student Evaluations

Students evaluate nursing faculty at the end of every course in compliance with the APSU policy and procedure. Students may use these opportunities to provide constructive criticism. The evaluations intend to give valuable feedback to the planning and revising of the curriculum, teaching strategies, and other factors to enhance the learning experience. These evaluations are completed anonymously and are made available to students online. Faculty will receive copies of the students' evaluations, including written comments according to the university timeline. APSU may not administer student evaluations during summer terms, and/or technical issues may limit the university from sending electronic evaluations in any given semester. Students who do not have the opportunity to complete a university-initiated course evaluation (for any reason) may provide feedback by emailing the course faculty or the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Graduate Nursing Surveys

Completed surveys aid in program evaluation and curriculum revision. The information requested is necessary for ongoing program improvement and accreditation.

- **Graduate Nursing Exit Survey**—Graduate Nursing students complete an Exit Survey before graduation.
- **Graduate Nursing Alumni Survey**—Each graduating cohort is asked to complete a Graduate Survey 12 months post-graduation. Graduates need to inform the APSU Alumni Office and School of any changes in contact information. Please email any changes in contact information to graduatenursing@apsu.edu

GRADUATE NURSING CLINICAL INFORMATION

A complete set of guidelines for clinical practicum experiences can be found in the *GRADUATE NURSING NP Clinical Practicum Manual*, *NE Clinical Practicum Manual*, and the *Preceptor Orientation/Guidelines Manual*. Please refer to these *Manuals* for any questions about clinical and required documentation. The following guidelines are a general overview of clinical policies and procedures.

Preceptor Supervised Clinical/Practicum Experiences

Clinical experiences in the graduate program are supervised by qualified preceptors working with the Graduate Nursing faculty. Students in the program are located throughout the U.S.; however, students may not be able to complete clinical in all fifty states. For this reason, students are asked to identify a clinical site and preceptor in their geographic area. If a student wants to complete clinical in another state (other than TN), they should email graduatenuresing@apsu as soon as possible. Graduate Nursing students must have approved, fully executed preceptor agreements before entering any clinical practicum site as part of the Graduate Nursing program. It is never too early for a student to begin the identification of potential clinical preceptors. Please review the *Graduate Nursing NP Clinical Practicum Manual*, *NE Clinical Practicum Manual*, and *Preceptor Orientation/Guidelines Manual* for preceptor requirements. Information regarding preceptor qualifications, identification of clinical preceptors, and criteria for preceptor-supervised clinical experiences can be found in the *Graduate Nursing NP Clinical Practicum Manual*, *NE Clinical Practicum Manual*, and *Preceptor Orientation/Guidelines Manual*.

Clinical Clearance and Enrollment Policy

Students are responsible for adhering to all published clinical and preceptor approval deadlines. The Graduate Nursing Program reserves the right to administratively withdraw any students from courses and/or the program if they fail to complete pre-clinical or clinical requirements by the posted deadlines; do not complete required prerequisite courses or courses in the prescribed sequence; demonstrate unsatisfactory clinical performance or behavior, or are academically dismissed or suspended for not meeting the program's academic, retention, and progression policies.

Clinical Supplies & Transportation

Students are required to purchase their stethoscopes and clinical supplies. These and other supplies may be purchased at any vendor or through the University Book and Supply Store. The School of Nursing requires that students assume responsibility for transportation to and from the clinical site and OCIs.

Clinical Dress Code

Students must wear appropriate professional attire, including a white lab coat and a name badge for all clinical rotations. Please see the *Graduate Nursing Clinical Practicum Manual* (by concentration) for detailed information on dress code requirements.

Medatrax Electronic Clinical Log System

Students must use the Medatrax system to submit the required clinical documentation and health regulations. Students will purchase access to Medatrax and receive training. Once activated, students MUST maintain Medatrax access throughout the program. Student health and regulatory files are maintained in the Medatrax system. Students may not start clinical until all documentation has been uploaded to Medatrax and approved by the MSN Clinical Coordinator and course faculty. All documents must be kept up-to-date to continue clinical throughout the academic year – this is the students' responsibility. Students should keep copies of these documents in a personal file to be available, if needed, during their clinical experiences. For more information, please see the Graduate Nursing Clinical Practicum Manual (by concentration). Please see the "Clinical Clearance and Enrollment Policy" above for details about due dates and being administratively removed from courses if published due dates are not met.

Health Clearance/Clinical Requirements

ALL graduate nursing students must have current and up-to-date documentation to meet the clinical site's and APSU's health and safety requirements. Please see the *Graduate Nursing Clinical Practicum Manual* (by concentration) for detailed information on requirements. Clinical sites have a list of health requirements students must meet to attend clinical at that site. If a student does not comply with the health and regulatory requirements of the individual clinical site, they will not be allowed to attend clinical at that site. This includes any required vaccinations, drug testing, etc. Please see the "Clinical Clearance and Enrollment Policy" above for details about due dates and dropping the course if not cleared on time to start clinical.

Mandatory Clinical Orientation and Agency-Specific Pre-Clinical Requirements

Depending on specific agency regulations, students may be required to complete additional orientation and/or training online or on-site at the agency. Students must complete facility-specific paperwork before deadlines set by the APSU Graduate Nursing program and Clinical Site. If a clinical site denies a student permission to continue in clinical at any point, whether before or during the semester, the student will not be permitted to continue clinical activities at that site. Alternative clinical placement is not guaranteed, and the student may be unable to complete the course requirements for the semester. Please see the "Clinical Clearance and Enrollment Policy" above for details about due dates and dropping the course if not cleared on time to start clinical.

RN Licensure

Graduate nursing students must be licensed as registered nurses. Students must provide a copy of their current unencumbered license upon entry and documentation of renewal before the expiration of the current licensure. Students must be licensed in their state of residence and in the state where clinical takes place. Please see the "Clinical Clearance and Enrollment Policy" above for details about due dates and dropping the course if not cleared on time to start clinical.

Personal Health Insurance

Personal Health Insurance is a requirement for each Graduate Nursing student. This is required upon enrollment and must be maintained throughout the program. Plans

are available for preview and purchase through the Health Exchange [website](#). Please see the “Clinical Clearance and Enrollment Policy” above for details about due dates and dropping the course if not cleared on time to start clinical.

Professional Liability Insurance

Graduate nursing students practice under their RN license and must maintain current advanced practice student liability insurance. The Graduate Nursing Program arranges and pays for liability insurance. Students do not need to purchase their own individual policies. Specific requirements are in the *Graduate Nursing NP and NE Clinical Practicum Manuals*.

CPR Requirement

Students must be trained in CPR before enrolling in degree programs or postmaster certificate programs. CPR training must be obtained through the American Heart Association Health Care Provider (BLS) course, including CPR/AED. Students must provide renewal documentation before the expiration of their current CPR card. If a student has Red Cross BLS, they must get approval in writing from their clinical site that Red Cross is approved at the individual site. Please see the “Clinical Clearance and Enrollment Policy” above for details about due dates and dropping the course if not cleared on time to start clinical.

Criminal Background Check

All nursing students must undergo required criminal background checks to enhance patient safety and protect the public. The School of Nursing uses an outside vendor that all students must use. Should students not enroll in courses once they start clinical, they will have to repeat the background check. Instructions for completing the background check can be found in the *Graduate Nursing NP and NE Clinical Practicum Manuals*. Please see the “Clinical Clearance and Enrollment Policy” above for details about due dates and dropping the course if not cleared on time to start clinical.

HIPAA & OSHA Training

Before starting the first clinical/practicum experience, and on an annual basis, students must complete and verify completion of the HIPAA and OSHA/Infection Control/Hazardous Materials training. Instructions for completing this requirement can be found in the *Graduate Nursing NP and NE Clinical Practicum Manuals*. Please see the “Clinical Clearance and Enrollment Policy” above for details about due dates and dropping the course if not cleared on time to start clinical.

Credit Hour to Clinical Hour Requirements

Each clinical or lab course student credit hour equals sixty (60) clock hours. For example, NURS 5008- Advanced Health Assessment and Clinical Reasoning across the Lifespan is a (1) credit hour course and requires 60 hours of lab-related activities (i.e., $1 \times 60 = 60$). Another example is NURS 5801-Primary Care Practicum I. NURS 5801 is a (3) credit hour course and requires students to attend 180 clinical hours (i.e. $3 \times 60 = 180$).

The only exception to this is NURS 5809 and 5819. NURS 5809 and 5819 have an additional credit hour added to the course due to the large number of end-of-program NP competency assessments that occur in the course. For example, 5809 is a (5) credit hour course; however, only (4) are utilized for direct care clinical hours (i.e., 4 x 60 = 240); the remaining credit hour allows for time to learn, reflect, and complete end-of-program NP competency assessments.

Clinical or Lab Course Credit Hour to Clock Hour Ratio

Course Number	Course Type	Credit Hour	Clock Hour Requirements
NURS 5008	Lab	1	60
NURS 5801	Clinical	3	180
NURS 5802	Clinical	3	180
NURS 5809*	Clinical	5	240
NURS 5811	Clinical	2	120
NURS 5812	Clinical	3	180
NURS 5819*	Clinical	5	240
NURS 5719	Clinical	4	240

* NP Residency courses include one credit hour designated for instruction and assessments, not associated with clinical or lab clock hour requirements.

INJURY and EXPOSURE OCCURRENCE

In the case of a student injury and/or exposure during a School of Nursing clinical or class, the student's safety and well-being are the priority. The student must IMMEDIATELY notify the faculty member responsible for the course or clinical. If the faculty member is unavailable, the nurse preceptor must be notified. The policies of the institution's occupational or employee health department of the institution will be followed. If the student has sustained a serious injury or has been exposed to blood, body fluids, or hazardous materials, then time is of the utmost importance, and the student should receive prompt treatment through the qualified healthcare provider of their choice or the emergency department of their choice. All students are required to carry personal health and medical insurance. Students are responsible for any medical fees incurred.

The student, faculty member, and witness (if applicable) must complete a School of Nursing incident/injury/exposure report as soon as possible after the incident. The faculty member will notify the Office of the Director of the School of Nursing immediately. The incident/injury/exposure report is in the *Graduate NP and NE Clinical Practicum Manuals*.

PATIENT SAFETY, CARE, and ETHICS

The APSU School of Nursing adheres to the ANA Code of Ethics regarding the care of all persons. The Code of Ethics for Nurses is a dynamic document that is an integral part of nursing's foundation. It is a concise statement of the ethical obligations and duties of every individual who enters the nursing profession, a non-negotiable ethical standard, and an expression of nursing's understanding of its commitment to society. Nursing encompasses the prevention of illness, alleviating suffering, and protecting, promoting, and restoring health in the care of individuals, families, groups, and communities. Individuals who become nurses are expected not only to adhere to the ideals and moral norms of the profession but also to embrace them as part of what it means to be a nurse. The ethical tradition of nursing is self-reflective, enduring, and distinctive. A code of ethics clarifies the profession's primary goals, values, and obligations.

Patients have the right to expect competent and safe professional nursing care. Any student who, in the faculty's professional judgment, places or may place a patient in physical or emotional jeopardy in any clinical Graduate Nursing course may be immediately removed from the course by clinical faculty, and a clinical failure (grade of "F") may be assigned. Any issue of integrity or honesty in clinical practice will receive an automatic failing grade (F) in clinical. Issues of grave concern may result in disqualification from the nursing major.

The Tennessee Nursing Practice Act allows students to provide only care safely delegated to them by faculty. Students who practice beyond this level of care are in violation of the Nurse Practice Act.

All patients' confidentiality must be maintained per legal and professional regulations. Breaches in confidentiality may result in failure of the clinical course and dismissal from the program. Patients must never be discussed by name or with identifying information or in places where professional discussions may be overheard by others (elevator, dining room, etc.).

Any student removed or barred from clinical practice by a clinical agency may earn an immediate failing grade (F) in clinical and possibly be dismissed from the program.

CHANGE IN RN LICENSE STATUS & RELOCATION

RN License Status

Admission to the Graduate Nursing program and continued enrollment requires proof of an unencumbered, current license to practice as a Registered Nurse in Tennessee or the state where the clinical assignments are completed.

Students with past or pending disciplinary actions against a professional license are advised that such actions may impact their participation in the program. These actions include, but are not limited to, suspension, probation, or revocation by the licensing body. A previous or pending disciplinary action against a professional license will not automatically disqualify a nursing student. Instead, the School of Nursing Director and Graduate Nursing Program Coordinator will assess suitability based on licensure status. Students in the MSN nursing program are required to immediately notify the program coordinator at graduatenuresing@apsu.edu of any changes to their RN license status, including, but not limited to, new complaints, incidents, reprimands, revocations, or suspensions issued by the Board of Nursing. Failure to report a change in licensure status is considered a serious violation and may result in dismissal from the Program.

Out-of-State Information

Any student who falls into any of the below categories must consider both Academic and Board of Nursing considerations:

- Students who reside in Tennessee and who plan to go to clinical out of state.
 - Students who reside outside of Tennessee and plan to go to clinical outside of Tennessee.
 - Students who reside outside of Tennessee and who plan to go to clinical in Tennessee.
- 1) **Academic** (Out of State Education)
 - a. The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) provides the nation with a state-wide process to expand the opportunities for people's educational achievement by aligning standards and practices across states and creating strategies to effectively address quality online distance education programs while reducing costs to states, institutions, and consumers.
 - 2) **Board of Nursing** (Out of State Clinical & Out of State Licensure Post-Graduation)
 - a. Some states' Boards of Nursing restrict clinical placements or have state-specific APRN licensure requirements. As a result, APSU cannot guarantee clinical placements or that graduates will be approved for APRN licensure in all 50 states.
 - b. Any student living outside of Tennessee or who lives in Tennessee who plans to complete clinical or get licensed outside of Tennessee **MUST** contact that state's Board of Nursing to find out the requirements for an out-of-state, online program. This includes the rules for conducting nursing clinical and getting licensed as an APRN in that state.

If any of the above apply to you, please email graduatenuising@apsu.edu as soon as possible.

Relocation

All students must attend on-campus intensives (OCIs) no matter where they reside. Students changing residence should review the "Out of State Information" above.

Each state's higher education and nursing governance boards may set unique requirements for online clinical Graduate Nursing programs that lead to licensure in their state. Due to this, in some cases, students who change their state of primary residency may not continue in the Graduate Nursing program. Students changing their state of residence must notify the Graduate Nursing Clinical Coordinator as soon as possible. The Clinical Coordinator will work with the Graduate Nursing Coordinator to verify eligibility and inform the student. Students may be required to travel to Tennessee to complete clinical rotations, testing, or program requirements as necessary.

Clinical Placements for Students Residing Outside of the United States

Students residing or moving outside the United States will not be eligible to participate in clinicals in the Graduate Nursing Program, except for those participating in clinical learning experiences on U.S. military installations classified as U.S. territories.

U.S. military installations have additional, more stringent clinical requirements. The Graduate Nursing Program does not guarantee that military treatment facilities (MTFs) will (1) offer clinical opportunities that fulfill program requirements, (2) accept student placements, or (3) enter into clinical affiliation agreements with the University.

Students who relocate or intend to relocate outside of the United States must notify the Graduate Nursing Program immediately by contacting graduatenuising@apsu.edu. The professional academic advisor will consult with the Graduate Nursing Coordinator to verify the student's eligibility for clinical placement and notify the student.

Students may be required to travel to Tennessee to complete clinical rotations, testing, or other program requirements as deemed necessary by the Graduate Nursing Program.

Note on Licensure

The nurse practitioner concentrations are designed to prepare graduates to practice as APRNs academically. However, each state Board of Nursing has its own requirements for a Registered Nurse to practice as APRNs in that state. The APSU Graduate Nursing Program meets all requirements for APRN licensure in Tennessee. The APSU Graduate Nursing Program cannot guarantee licensure eligibility outside Tennessee. It is the student's responsibility to contact the applicable licensure board(s) in their state of residence or in the state where they intend to obtain a license before beginning an academic program that results in licensure and before beginning any clinical practicum. The APSU School of Nursing cannot guarantee that students meet state board of APRN licensure requirements in all 50 states and jurisdictions. For more information, visit the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (www.ncsbn.org).

CIVILITY

In the APSU Graduate Program, we want to hold ourselves to the highest academic and personal integrity standards and maintain a safe and conducive learning environment for all. We want to cultivate a safe and civil environment free from distractions and disturbances that may interfere with instruction or learning and free from individual or group degradation.

Civility Pledge

Provision 1.5 of the Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements (2015) requires all nurses to create “an ethical environment and culture of civility and kindness, treating colleagues, coworkers, employees, students, and patients with dignity and respect; any form of bullying, harassment, intimidation, manipulation, threats, or violence are always morally unacceptable and will not be tolerated.” (p. 4)

To honor this commitment, all members of the Austin Peay State University School of Nursing pledge to abide by our co-created goals and ground rules and to communicate and interact in a respectful, civil manner and with the utmost integrity. When we disagree, we will restrict our differences to the issue itself while respecting the person with whom we disagree. We pledge to create and sustain a workplace that encourages inclusion, collaboration, professionalism, emotional and physical safety, ethical conduct, and productive discourse by all members of the SON. All of our discussions and interactions are conducted in a respectful, civil, and dignified manner as we move toward positive innovation throughout our nursing community.

To accomplish our commitment, we agree to abide by and be accountable for the following ground rules:

- Assume goodwill
- Collaborate with others
- Build trust: Nothing about me without me
- Follow the graduate nursing chain of command
- Respect one another
- Use open, active, direct, effective communication
- Offer solutions when presenting a problem or disagreeing – start with a goal in mind
- Be responsible and accountable for our actions and inactions
- Let the past go—don’t hold grudges – today is a new day – hold others accountable when they bring up old issues
- Do not listen to or participate in gossip. Redirect inappropriate comments
- Promote and celebrate each other’s successes—everyone needs and deserves recognition no matter how small

Source: American Nurses Association. (2015). Code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements.

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Professional communication between students, faculty, and administration is essential in facilitating students' academic success and effectively meeting the School of Nursing's desired outcomes. Just as within professional nursing practice, nursing students are expected to follow appropriate lines of communication. Concerns between students and students or students and faculty are expected to be appropriately addressed by the individuals involved. If unresolved or a third party is needed to facilitate communication, the following is the graduate nursing chain of command if required:

1. Faculty
2. Graduate Nursing Coordinator
3. School of Nursing Director
4. Enter the University Grievance Procedure (see section "Grievance Policy" in these guidelines)

SOCIAL NETWORKING & NETIQUETTE

Social Media Guidelines

Graduate Nursing students are expected to uphold the communication standards of Austin Peay State University (APSU) and the School of Nursing (SON). This includes adherence to all APSU and SON social media and computing policies, as outlined in official handbooks and guidelines.

Expectations for Use

1. **Cohort-Run or Student-Led Groups:** Participation in student-led social media groups or messaging platforms (e.g., Facebook groups, GroupMe, WhatsApp, etc.) should foster support, encouragement, and connection. These spaces must remain respectful and must not promote incivility or bullying toward fellow students or faculty.
2. **Confidentiality:** Patient information or clinical scenarios are protected under federal law (HIPAA) and must never be shared on social media or in group chats.
3. **Permission Required:** Posting photos, logos, videos, or materials related to APSU or the School of Nursing without express permission is prohibited.
4. **Professional Conduct:** Do not use digital platforms to threaten, harass, discriminate, or embarrass others. This includes texts, images, emails, or videos that could be perceived as belittling or insulting—even without naming individuals. If a person can be identified, the content may still constitute defamation or invasion of privacy.
5. **Understand Legal Risk:** Students are expected to be familiar with key legal concepts such as defamation, invasion of privacy, HIPAA, and FERPA. Defamation includes:
 - Sharing a factual-sounding statement (even if it's an opinion like "I think Suzy cheats on tests").
 - Sharing that statement with someone other than the subject.
 - Making the subject identifiable.
 - Causing harm to the subject's reputation.
6. **Personal Opinions Disclaimer:** If identifying as a student of the APSU SON on social media, students must clearly state that their opinions do not reflect those of the School or University.
7. **Faculty Communication:** Social media and group messaging must not be used to contact or communicate with faculty. Use official methods such as D2L email.
8. **Technology Use:** APSU computers and Wi-Fi must not be used for illegal activity.
9. **Logo Use:** APSU logos may not be used on social media without written approval from the APSU Public Relations department.
10. **Enforcement:** Violation of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program. SON faculty may review student social media profiles when concerns arise and take action as necessary.

Social Networking Guidelines

1. Think Before You Post: Privacy doesn't exist online. Posts may resurface years later. If you wouldn't say it publicly, don't post it.
2. No Anonymity: Always assume your identity can be linked to any content you post.
3. Know Your Audience: Content can be viewed by peers, faculty, employers, patients, and the public. Avoid content that could damage relationships or professional reputation.
4. Be Accurate: Double-check facts and review grammar before posting, especially if posting in any way on behalf of the School.
5. Use Privacy Settings: Even with privacy controls, consider all content public. Share personal information cautiously.
6. Maintain a Professional Image: Share only what you'd be comfortable with your supervisor or patients seeing. Seemingly harmless content can impact trust and professionalism.
7. Avoid Patient Relationships Online: Do not "friend" patients, their families, or legal decision-makers online. This includes social interaction with subordinates or students if you are in a leadership role.
8. Respect Copyright: Only share content you have the right to use. APSU library resources are available for guidance.
9. When in Doubt, Don't Post: If uncertain, seek advice from a faculty member, director, or administrator.

Netiquette Guidelines

Email Communication

- Use a clear subject line, and include your full name, course number, and section.
- Be respectful and avoid accusatory or emotional language.
- Do not send messages when angry or upset.
- Be mindful—tone is harder to interpret without facial expressions or vocal inflection.
- Always sign your name.
- Never assume privacy; emails can be forwarded. Write professionally.

General Online Etiquette

- Don't say anything online you wouldn't say in person or publicly.
- Be clear—others can't see your expressions or hear your tone.
- Allow at least **24 business hours** for faculty or peer responses.
- Use ALL CAPS only to emphasize key words or titles—otherwise, it may be seen as shouting.
- Never share your username or password with others.

GRADUATE NURSING INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Governance Structure of the School of Nursing

The School of Nursing by-laws adopted by the faculty guide the governance structure.

Student Governance in the Graduate Nursing Program and School of Nursing

Graduate students are needed on the School of Nursing Graduate Nursing committees to represent graduate student concerns. Any student interested in participating should contact the Graduate Program Coordinator. Students are initially invited to join committees in the Transition (NURS 5100) course to represent their cohort and peers. If vacancies for student representatives open, the Graduate Nursing FDR Committee sends an open call for volunteers.

Graduate Nursing student representatives serve on the following School of Nursing committees:

- Graduate Faculty Organization (GFO)
- Graduate Nursing Academic Program Evaluation and Academic Policy (PEAP) Committee
- Graduate Nursing Curriculum, Admission, and Retention (CAR) Committee
- Graduate Nursing Faculty Development and Resources (FDR) Committee

Faculty value student input and hope students take advantage of the opportunities to participate and/or provide feedback to the committee chairs or student representative(s). A current list of committee chairs and members and their email addresses are available in every graduate nursing course under the “Guides & Resources” module. Students with program-level suggestions or concerns should email the appropriate Faculty Committee Chair as described below:

- Contact the Graduate Nursing Curriculum, Admission, and Retention (CAR) Committee Chair for program-level admission and curricular topics, suggestions, or concerns.
- Contact the Program Evaluation and Academic Policy (PEAP) Committee Chair for policy-related topics, suggestions, or concerns.
- Contact the Faculty Development and Resources (FDR) Committee Chair for resource-related topics, suggestions, or concerns.

STUDENT & ALUMNI ORGANIZATIONS

Students in the School of Nursing are eligible to participate in all School of Nursing and university campus activities. They are encouraged to participate in the School of Nursing and campus life actively.

APSU School of Nursing Organization for Graduate Nursing Students

- ***Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing (Nu Phi Chapter)***
Membership in the Nu Phi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) is by invitation only and is an honor. Graduate nursing students who demonstrate excellence in scholarship and meet the STT eligibility criteria are invited and inducted each fall semester.

Graduate students are encouraged to attend events sponsored by Sigma Theta Tau, Nu Phi Chapter, and regional, national and international Research Symposia of STTI.

APSU Student Organizations for Graduate Students

Graduate students are eligible to participate in many APSU student organizations. For more information on opportunities for involvement, please visit the APSU Student Handbook/Calendar.

- ***APSU Student Government Association***
The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as APSU's student body's voice. Graduate nursing students may seek two graduate senate seats. Students can also seek membership on university standing committees. Students can complete an application or get more information on the SGA [website](#).
- ***Phi Kappa Phi***
Phi Kappa Phi is an all-discipline honor society with a chapter at APSU. Membership is by invitation only. Benefits of membership include networking and scholarship opportunities. To learn more about this organization, visit their [website](#).

APSU Alumni Organization

All APSU School of Nursing graduates are members of the APSU Alumni Association. Alumni meet periodically to plan events for students and alumni.

Graduate Nursing Student Academy (GNSA)

Austin Peay State University is an affiliate of the GNSA. This affiliation provides free webinars, resources, networking, and services to nursing students in master's and doctoral programs. Austin Peay State University Graduate Nursing Students may register online at <https://www.aacnnursing.org/GNSA/Events-and->

GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM FEES

Course Fees

Graduate Nursing students have course fees for the use of special equipment, resources, online programs/access, materials, preceptor compensation, or other necessary class, lab, or clinical resources. Fees are assessed by the credit hour, and the fees are added to the student's billing statement each semester.

Other Course Fees

Graduate Nursing students obtain all required textbooks, online resources, and supplies. Each course syllabus will include a list of required textbooks, online resources/access, and course resources/supplies. A list of any necessary equipment that the student must bring to each OCI is listed in the associated course. Memberships in professional organizations may be required as a way to access online materials used in courses.

Criminal Background Check & Drug Testing

All students entering clinical courses must complete an initial criminal background check at the student's expense. Additionally, any student who is not enrolled for a semester once they begin clinical will have to repeat the background check before they re-enroll in clinical. Criminal background checks may also need to be repeated based on a specific clinical site's timing requirements after the initial check. Students must obtain and pay for required drug testing if required by the clinical site. Please see the *Graduate Nursing Clinical Practicum Manual* (by concentration) for detailed instructions related to Background Checks and Drug Testing.

Medatrax

All students are required to purchase Medatrax for health and data management. Once initiated, students must maintain continuous access throughout the remainder of the program.

Third-Party Vendors

The graduate nursing program contracts with third-party vendors to provide additional learning experiences and expertise in content and clinical areas. These fees may be paid to the university or directly to the vendor. Instructions are provided in relevant courses.

Testing Fees

Students enrolled in Graduate Nursing courses that use a standardized achievement test may be assessed a fee for the test's cost or subsequent repeat tests. Testing fees may be paid directly to the university or the testing company. Instructions and specific costs are provided in each course where a fee-based exam is given. Any costs associated with retaking a comprehensive exam are the student's responsibility.

APSU ACADEMIC & STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

APSU Student Support Services on campus include various offices and centers.

Office	Services Provided
<u>Adult, Non-Traditional, & Transfer Student Center</u>	Provides a computer lab, printer, lounge area, study area, workshops & outreach, and programs for adult, non-traditional, and transfer students & families.
<u>APSU Bookstore</u>	The APSU bookstore offers a variety of textbooks, computers, and other course materials. The bookstore also provides a selection of general reading books, a café that serves Starbucks drinks, and an assortment of collegiate products ranging from apparel to novelty items.
<u>APSU Office of Career Services</u>	The Office of Career Services is a centralized unit providing career development, job search tools, and opportunities to help support student success. Each semester the APSU nursing department and career services collaborate to provide a Career Fair Day for nursing students for employment opportunities
<u>APSU Military and Veterans Affairs Office</u>	The <u>APSU Military and Veterans Affairs Office</u> supports transitioning from military to civilian life. It is committed to providing veterans, active-duty, National Guard, reservists, and qualified dependents with the services necessary to pursue their academic and personal interests, integrate into the campus community, and ensure a successful experience.
<u>APSU Writing Center</u>	The <u>APSU Writing Center</u> provides assistance with any writing, citation requirements, and proofreading papers. The Transition (NURS 5100) course covers details on the Writing Center and its resources.
<u>Care Coordinator</u>	The Care Coordinator is responsible for providing comprehensive care and support to students facing various challenges, including mental health, physical health, personal crises, and other barriers to academic success. The Care Coordinator works directly with students and collaboratively with university stakeholders to ensure students have the necessary resources and assistance to thrive.
<u>Community Engagement & Sustainability</u>	Supports and encourages the collaboration between APSU and the community's needs through curricular and co-curricular programming. Connects students to global environmental problems & promoting resource conservation. Provide opportunities to support their peers facing hunger and homelessness insecurity.
<u>Counseling Services</u>	Confidential psychological and personal counseling is available to all registered students in the Ard Building at the corner of University Ave. and College St. Students can contact the Counseling Center at 931-221-6162. Students needing support after hours may use the following three contact numbers:

Office	Services Provided
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 988 or go online at www.988lifeline.org • Tennessee Crisis Text Line: send text to 741741 • APSU emergency contact: (931) 221-7786
<u>Distance Education</u>	<p>The APSU Office of Distance Education supports online learning. Distance Education offers various services, including closed captioning services, distance education support, multimedia resources, student assistance, online proctoring services, and technology integration into courses. The Office of Distance Education is located in the McReynolds building.</p> <p>Technology Help: For technical issues within the course, please call 931-221-6625 or email at online@apsu.edu Contact APSU Help Desk: For Austin Peay email and OneStop login issues please call (931) 221-HELP (4357) or helpdesk@apsu.edu.</p>
<u>Felix G. Woodward Library</u>	<p>The APSU Library fully utilizes online and information technologies to provide information resources and services that support the University's curricular and research activities. The online catalog includes e-books, journals, government publications, audio-visual and multimedia materials, World Wide Web sites, and other library resources. Students can contact Ross Bowron, Liaison Librarian for Nursing, at 931-221-7381 or bowronc@apsu.edu. Students can also call the general library line at 931-221-7346.</p>
<u>Latino Community Resource Center</u>	<p>Provides a support network for the Latino community to succeed at APSU.</p>
<u>Learning Resource Center</u>	<p>Provides academic support resources to help students achieve their academic goals.</p>
<u>Little Goves Child Learning Center</u>	<p>Provides childcare for the children of APSU community members (students, faculty, alumni, and staff). Ages served are children 3 - 4 years.</p>
<u>Newton Military Family Resource Center</u>	<p>The Newton Military Family Resource Center assists veterans, active duty, reservist, national guardsmen, retirees, ROTC students and family members that attend the university with transition from the military to college life. The center provides a computer center, a lounge and dining area, and an environment that provides assistance in resolving some of the academic and personal issues for military-related students. Among some of the services provided for students include the Texts for Vets program, Tech for Vets program, Student/Peer Tutoring, and educational</p>

Office	Services Provided
	programming and services held in conjunction with some of the other cultural centers on campus.
<u>Office of Student Affairs</u>	Assists in the creation of a positive campus environment for students. Offers extracurricular experiences to enhance and support learning
<u>Office of Student Financial Aid</u>	If a student is receiving financial aid, it is essential to contact a Financial Aid Counselor. Please contact sfao@apsu.edu or 931-221-7907 to get in touch with a representative from the APSU Financial Aid Office.
<u>Office of Study Abroad and International Exchange</u>	Encourages domestic and study abroad opportunities for APSU students. The SON offers a bi-yearly study abroad experience in London. Graduate students have the opportunity to enroll in the experience/course as an elective.
<u>Research Support</u>	Research conducted by graduate students is encouraged and supported at APSU. Resources to support graduate research is available to students through nursing faculty, library support, and the APSU Office of Research and Innovation. The APSU Office of Research and Innovation is open to connect APSU graduate students with opportunities to conduct research and participate in creative research activities. The <u>Office of Research and Sponsored Programs</u> supports Graduate Student Research Support Grants (GSRSG) and the creation of scholarly and creative works in all graduate disciplines.
<u>Resources for Software</u>	Software downloads and instructions for software
<u>S.O.S. Food Pantry</u>	The S.O.S. Food Pantry supports Austin Peay State University's students through troubling times by helping fight hunger. The campus community supports and supplies the food pantry through donations. Students who find themselves in need can stop by 322 Home Avenue (Community Engagement & Sustainability) during hours of operation. Students will need their APSU student identification card to receive food.
<u>Student Disability Resource Center</u>	Austin Peay State University abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which stipulates that no student shall be denied the benefits of an education "solely by reason of a handicap." Disabilities covered by law include, but are not limited to, learning disabilities, hearing, sight, or mobility impairments. If a student has a documented disability that may require reasonable accommodations, they should contact the APSU <u>Student Disability Resource Center</u> (SDRC).
<u>Student Health Services</u>	Boyd Health Services, located at the corner of College St. and University Ave., is available to all university students. The primary emphasis is on diagnosing and treating short-term acute, episodic medical illnesses outpatient.

Office	Services Provided
<u>Suicide Intervention</u>	The Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) encourages faculty, staff, and students to communicate and respond regarding students of concern. Whenever concerning students and their situations are brought to the attention of the intervention team, BIT members meet to gather data and plan for a coordinated response. The ultimate goal is to provide students of concern with assistance, to mitigate risk, or both. The BIT's ultimate goal is to help keep the APSU community healthy and safe through early, appropriate intervention and to promote a safe environment focused on student learning and success.
<u>University Recreation (APSU Foy Center)</u>	Provides recreation for all students (\$11 million state-of-the-art 78,000 square feet recreation center)
<u>Wilbur N. Daniel African American Cultural Center</u>	Provides calculators, laptops, netbooks, over 1600 library resources, Rosetta Stone language software, computers, and Respondus program, smart boards, special programs.