

1/10/2012

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

***ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES GOVERNING
THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN NURSING***

1. These policies are consistent with and supplementary to policies in the current SCSU graduate catalog and Student Handbook.
2. The provisions of this manual are not to be regarded as an irrevocable contract between the Department of Nursing and the students. The department reserves the right to change any provision or any requirement at any time.
3. All policies within apply to all master's degree candidates and postmaster's certificate candidates.

Introduction

Graduate study is advanced education. As such, the expectations of the graduate program in the School of Nursing include an increased level of responsibility on the part of the graduate student. This increased responsibility is reflected in professional competencies (demonstrated both within and outside of the classroom and clinical practicum), the student-faculty relationship, and the student role.

Professional Competencies

Acts ethically

Delivers safe care

Accepts personal responsibility for professional development

Incorporates current technology (NONPF, 2006)

Student-Faculty/Preceptor Relationship

Mutual respect

Professional behavior

Respect for timelines and deadlines

Sufficient and advanced notification for missing class/clinical

Professional dress in the clinical setting (Hair will be well-groomed and tied up if long; clothes will be non-revealing; nails will be short; a minimum of jewelry will be worn; a lab coat with proper identification will be worn; make up will be appropriate and not excessive; tattoos will be hidden from view, etc.)

Student Role

Attend class/clinical and arrive on time

Notify faculty/preceptor if plan to be absent and present valid excuse, in writing, if requested

Participate in class

Turn in assignments on time and without excuses

Be present for all exams

I. Academic Honesty

The following excerpt on academic honesty is directly quoted from the SCSU Student Handbook 2010-2011.

- A. Academic honesty is the cornerstone of higher education. An honest approach to one's work is the only approach-in the laboratory in research, or in examinations. Cheating of any kind is, and must be, condemned by all members of a college community
- B. Behavior that falls under the heading of academic dishonesty includes the following:
 - a. The use of illicit aids during examination periods
 - b. The giving and receiving of aid on any examinations
 - c. Copying from another student's examination, term paper, laboratory report, etc.
 - d. The theft of course material
- C. Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another writer and presenting them as your own. It is a kind of academic theft, and is therefore dishonest. Once your name appears on an essay or term paper, you are stating that the ideas and language in the paper that are not attributed to another are entirely your own, and the reader assumes that these are your work. An obvious form of plagiarism is copying the exact words from your source without providing quotation marks and without giving credit to the source, usually in a footnote. A less obvious, but equally dishonest form of plagiarism is the changing of a few words (paraphrasing) or using of an author's original idea without properly introducing and documenting that change or usage. The ideas, interpretations, and words of an author belong to the author. They are the author's property. They are protected by law and they must be acknowledged whenever you borrow them.
- D. An incident of academic dishonesty may be dealt with in the following ways:
 - 1. The instructor may take direct action, including personal reprimand, re-examination, additional assignments, lowering of the grade for the paper or course, or failure in the exam or the course itself. In all cases, the instructor shall inform his/her

department chairperson and the appropriate dean in writing. Students shall have the right to appeal the decision of the instructor or the sanction imposed by utilizing the Grade Change Policy found in the Academic Information of the current SCSU Student Handbook

2. If an instance of academic misconduct is reported by a member of the university community other than the relevant instructor, the Vice President or Dean of Student Affairs or his/her designees will inform the Academic Vice President or his/her designee. The Academic Vice President or his/her designee will inform the relevant instructor. If disciplinary action seems warranted, the case will be presented to the appropriate Judicial Officer or Board or panel by the Vice President of Student and University Affairs.”

(SCSU Student Handbook)

3. Students are also not permitted to purchase (from paper mills or other sources) or share papers (or parts of a paper) and submit them for course/program written requirements in the nursing program. Students are also not allowed to submit a paper for one course that has been used in another course.

II. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The STUDENT HANDBOOK outlines procedural information for student grievances.

III. STUDENT BEHAVIORS

The following behaviors and actions are recognized as fundamental to nursing practice. The ANA Code for Nurses (2001) provides the framework for these student expectations.

A. Students Clinical and or Educational Practicum Expectations:

1. Demonstrates responsibility and accountability for practice by adhering to course expectations

2. Demonstrates responsibility and accountability by completing written assignments on time
3. Demonstrates respect for patients/students and the profession of nursing by adhering to the SCSU Department of Nursing and agency dress code policies/behavioral expectations
4. Maintains privacy and confidentiality of health and educational related information
5. Delivers care and teaches students in a non-judgmental and non-discriminatory manner sensitive to client/student diversity
6. Realistically assesses own strengths and limitations, seeks help appropriately and is responsive to constructive criticism regarding performance
7. Seeks out new opportunities for learning and professional development
8. Demonstrates adequate preparation for clinical and practicum responsibilities
9. Works in collaboration with team members, agencies and preceptors

B. Examples of student nurse behaviors which may result in clinical and/or practicum probation, dismissal, and/or failure include:

1. Falsifying a client's or student's record
2. Violation of HIPPA or FERPA regulations (i.e. breach of clients' or student confidentiality)
3. Failure to adhere to principles of safe nursing practice
4. Inadequate preparation for clinical and/or practicum responsibilities
5. Inability to recognize limitations and failure to seek appropriate help in time-sensitive situations

6. Dishonest communication with clients, families, faculty, agency staff, students or preceptors
7. Denying responsibility for one's actions
8. Participation in actions that may threaten the safety of clients, peers, faculty, students, preceptors or others in the clinical/practicum setting (i.e. being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, verbal/sexual/physical abuse)

C. Unsafe practice is a violation of any part whatsoever of the above identified areas of safe practice.

1. Unsafe practice, in any form, results in Disciplinary Action.
2. A student will be suspended from the clinical/practicum experience immediately if, in the professional judgment of a faculty member or preceptor, the student has demonstrated unsafe practice in a clinical/laboratory/or practicum area or exhibited unprofessional behavior.
3. The faculty member or, the primary clinical instructor, who suspended the student will immediately notify the Course Coordinator and Chairperson of the MSN Program Committee.
4. It is understood that the primary clinical course instructor (course faculty) is primarily responsible for evaluating the student and assigning the student grade for the clinical/practicum experience. The evaluation by the clinical preceptor (preceptor on site at clinical practicum) of student performance and the clinical visit (or its substitute) primarily form the basis for the clinical grade. In class assignments also contribute to the total course grade. The Clinical Evaluation Tool (CET) will be used to assess on site clinical performance. The MSN Program Committee serves as a forum for record keeping and notice to the student and is not responsible for grading the student (SCSU Student Handbook). The primary clinical course instructor is responsible for notifying the student of the grade for clinical or practicum
5. In the event that a student demonstrates unsafe practice in the Clinical/practicum setting the agency standards may take precedence over the Department of Nursing guidelines

6. The students have the right to appeal the final course grade (see SCSU Student Handbook)

Admission, Transfer, Matriculation, Retention, Graduation

A. Admission

1. The applicant to the graduate program (master's degree or post master's certificate programs) must be a graduate of an accredited Bachelor of Science in Nursing program or be in the process of completing Bridge course requirements and have a cumulative QPR/GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Individuals whose QPR is less than 3.0 must take the GRE or MAT and a limited number of these students will be considered for conditional admission. (Students with a QPR/GPA less than 2.8 will not be considered for admission). The MSN Program Committee or coordinator of the graduate program will make this determination on an individual basis. If students are conditionally accepted, they must meet the conditions stated in the acceptance letter to progress in the program.
 - a. RN students taking the Bridge Program become eligible to apply to the MSN program when they have successfully completed Bridge Program requirements.
 - b. Academic performance in coursework completed by applicants as non-matriculated students will be considered as part of the admission process if the applicant plans to apply the coursework to the planned program of study.
2. Applicants must have completed undergraduate prerequisite courses in Health Assessment, Research, and Statistics. Familiarity with word processing programs and computerized data base searches is necessary prior to admission for research and scholarly writing.
3. See graduate catalog for additional requirements.
4. Students who have completed a BSN but do not have a health assessment course listed on the BSN transcript may be permitted to take a comprehensive written exam and a comprehensive skills exam to qualify them to enroll in the graduate health assessment course. The student must earn at least a "C+" on the written exam and must pass the skills exam by the determination of 2 faculty raters.

B. Transfer Credit/Waiver of Courses

1. Students can normally transfer in up to nine semester hours of credit provided that the courses are graduate level courses from an accredited institution completed with a grade of “B” or better and fulfill program requirements. Courses in pharmacology, pathophysiology, and advanced health assessment will only be considered for waiver if they have been taken within the past 5 years. In accordance with graduate school policy, a maximum of 25 percent of total credits required for the graduate degree can be transferred from a baccalaureate degree program. The Graduate Program Coordinator and MSN Committee may use their discretion regarding the transfer of credits for a post-Master’s certificate.
2. If any course is waived for a student’s program of study, credits are not granted. Therefore, students must usually complete additional coursework to meet credit requirements for the degree or certificate. Requests for waiver are reviewed on an individual basis by the graduate program coordinator/MSN committee and the student must provide documentation for the request.

C. Matriculation

Students attain matriculation status when they have met all requirements for admission to the School of Graduate Studies and the academic program and have received a letter of acceptance from the Dean or Associate Dean of Graduate Studies with a copy of their planned program attached (see SCSU graduate catalog).

D. Grading

The grading system of the Department of Nursing will be in accordance with those policies set by the governance of the Connecticut State University as indicated in the Student Handbook. The numerical ranges that are used in the Department of Nursing are as follows:

A+	100 - 97	C+	79 - 77
A	96 - 94	C	76 - 74
A-	93 - 90	C-	73 - 70
B+	89 - 87	D+	69 - 67
B	86 - 84	D	66 - 64
B-	83 - 80	D-	63 - 60

“Q” code indicates that students must register to take the course again. A code of “Q” may be assigned each time a student does not complete course requirements. (see SCSU Graduate School Catalog for other grading codes that may be used in unusual situations).

E. **Academic Probation**

Students failing to meet academic standards will be reviewed by the department’s graduate committee where academic decisions are made.

*Matriculated students** will be placed on academic probation for not meeting overall QPR requirements and/or for not meeting course requirements as described below.

Students will automatically be placed on academic probation if the QPR falls below a 3.0. Students will be notified of this status by the Graduate Program Coordinator and the School of Graduate Studies. If, after attempting an additional 9 credits, the QPR is still below 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the graduate nursing program (see G. below for policies regarding suspension/ dismissal). (*Please see section F below for program progression policy*).

Students will be removed from academic probation once they achieve a QPR of 3.0.

Please note that an overall QPR of 3.0 is required for graduation.

*Please Note: Academic performance of *non matriculated students* (students who are enrolled in graduate nursing courses, but who have not yet been formally admitted to the program by the department) enrolled in graduate nursing courses will be considered when making admission decisions. Non matriculated students who have not met QPR and/or course criteria as described in this document, may be denied admission to the program.

F. **Repeating Courses/Progression**

1. A grade of “B” or above must be achieved in each course in the program of study or the course must be repeated. Only one course within the program of study may be repeated and a grade of “B” (3.0) or better must be achieved on the second attempt. The course may only be repeated once. Grades achieved for both attempts are included in the calculation of the QPR (graduate school policy). Failure to achieve a “B” or better in the repeated course will result in dismissal from the program without the possibility of

readmission. All prerequisite requirements must be strictly adhered to for all courses.

2. A student must request in writing by **April 1st** for the fall semester, or by **November 1st** for the spring semester an intention to repeat a course, so arrangements can be made for clinical/practicum placements and other course requirements.

G. Switching Tracks within MSN Program

Matriculated MSN students who desire to switch MSN tracks after having signed a Program of Study (POS) committing to an educational track must follow these guidelines for applying for approval from the MSN Committee.

- Students may be in either the core classes or in the specialty curriculum to apply for consideration.
- Students must be in good academic standing (not on Departmental or University probation)
- There must be space available in the track and classes to which the student would like to switch.
- It is understood that students must take and complete all of the core classes as well as all of the specialty classes in the specialty they switch into.

Students are required to submit a letter with supporting materials to the MSN committee for consideration. The letter should include the reasons why the student wants to switch tracks. The MSN Committee will review the application to switch tracks and will respond to the student in a timely manner. The MSN Committee will submit its recommendation to the graduate school who will have final approval over the change in the POS.

H. Academic Suspension/Dismissal

Conditions under which students are subject to academic dismissal are found in the SCSU School of Graduate Studies catalogue and the student handbook. The following occurrences result in academic suspension/dismissal from the Department of Nursing Graduate Program:

Students on academic probation who fail to raise the QPR to a 3.0 after completing the next 9 credits of course work will be dismissed from the program.

2. Students whose QPR falls below 3.0 during the last semester will be placed on probation and given one semester to raise the QPR level to 3.0.

Failure to raise the QPR to 3.0 will result in dismissal from the program and the graduate school.

3. A student who is dismissed from the program will not be considered for readmission.

I. A student cannot withdraw more than once from the same course. If a student withdraws from more than 2 courses in the program of study, the student must petition the MSN Program Committee, in writing, to request permission to be allowed to continue in the program. If a student withdraws with a failing grade, the student must petition the MSN Committee in writing to request re-enrollment. It is up to the discretion of the MSN Committee to determine whether to grant the student's requests. If a student withdraws from the entire program of study, the student must reapply to the School of Graduate Studies to request readmission.

J. **Procedure/Notification**

1. Students will be notified in writing of probation, suspension/ dismissal status by the Graduate Program Coordinator in the Department of Nursing and by the School of Graduate Studies.
2. Copies of letter notification of academic status are placed in the student's department file.

Graduation/Completion of Post Master's Certificate

1. Completion of the planned program.
2. An overall QPR of 3.0.
3. Master's Degree candidates elect to complete either a Thesis or a Special Project. The Thesis and Special Project proposals and final documents must be approved of by both the Department of Nursing and the Graduate School of the University. Specific deadlines for the Thesis and Special Project can be found on the Graduate School web site. Final theses and Special Projects are due to the Nursing Department Chairperson at least 10 days prior to the

Graduate school deadline. Post master's certificate students are not required to complete a thesis or special project.

4. Master's degree candidates must apply for graduation through the Registrar's Office in accordance with university policy, during the beginning of the last semester of course work. Specific deadlines for the graduation application are strictly enforced and can be found on the Graduate School website and in the Registrar's office.
5. All requirements for a Graduate Degree at SCSU must be completed within a 6-year period. The 6-year period begins when the first graduate course to be included in the program of study is taken. Extensions may be granted if there are compelling extenuating circumstances. A student may petition the Graduate Program Coordinator prior to the expiration of courses or the program for an extension. Extensions must be approved by the MSN Committee and by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. Revalidation of a limited number of courses may be permitted.

II. Advisement and Program Planning

A. Advisement

1. Academic

The Graduate Program Coordinator is the academic advisor for all graduate students. This arrangement is for the convenience of the students, as the coordinator is generally more available than other members of the faculty and can also be reached on a limited basis during the winter and summer vacation periods.

2. Thesis or Special Project Advisement

Students may select any doctoral-prepared member of the Department of Nursing Faculty to be their Thesis or Special Project advisor. The major advisor must be a member of the graduate faculty as per Graduate School policy. It is recommended that the Thesis or Special Project advisor have some expertise and/or interest in the topic being studied. In collaboration with the major advisor, a second reader should be obtained to assist in the development of the Thesis or Special Project. The second reader does not have to be a member of the graduate faculty but must be faculty at SCSU. Statistical and computer consultation may be

obtained by someone with expertise in this field. Students are responsible for obtaining university guidelines for the proposal, approval from the Institutional Review Board, and completed thesis and special project requirements from the Graduate School. The Nursing Department Graduate Program website also has helpful information and guidelines.

B. Program Planning

The Plan of Study identifies an expected date of graduation and the courses to be completed by that date. Candidates in the graduate program of the Department of Nursing, in conjunction with the Graduate Program Coordinator develop a preliminary plan of study. Upon acceptance by the department into a track, the planned program of study is submitted to the Graduate School so that matriculation status can be granted. Students have 6 years from the semester in which they complete the first course to meet all program requirements.

Students who are absent from classes must pay a continuous enrollment fee (See p. 40 Graduate Catalog). Students who fail to pay the fee will be unable to register for courses. Any student who fails to pay for 2 consecutive semesters of Continuous Enrollment will be automatically withdrawn from the program and the School of Graduate Studies. (See Pages 40-41 of the Graduate Catalog).

At the beginning of the final academic semester in the program, *PNP Students* should seek certification materials from the American Nurses' Credentialing Center and licensure materials from the State Department of Public Health.

It is the students' responsibility to obtain these materials and comply with deadlines. The Graduate Program Coordinator will complete forms as requested by students. The student should make such requests in a timely manner and allow at least 2 weeks for any forms that need to be filled out or signed.

III. Practicums (Applies to all students in the Graduate Program)

A. Pre-Placement Requirements

1. In order to qualify for clinical placement, the student may be required to submit to certain screening requirements, including but not limited to a background check and drug testing.

2. Students seeking to enroll in a practicum course must complete and return a Graduate Practicum Placement Form by **October 15th** for a spring semester practicum, or **March 15th** for a fall semester practicum. Forms may be obtained from the Graduate Program Coordinator or online. Students in clinical practicums may suggest/recommend clinical placements to the Graduate Program Coordinator. Students are NOT to negotiate with clinical agencies but are permitted and encouraged to obtain contact information for potential clinical sites to submit to the Graduate program Coordinator.
3. All placements must be approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator/course faculty. **Clinical placement contracts must be in place with agencies prior to students beginning the practicum. Students are expected to fulfill clinical hours in assigned placements in order to meet course objectives.**
4. Evidence of **current RN licensure in the state in which the clinical practicum will take place and current CPR certification** must be submitted with the completed Graduate Practicum Placement Form to the Graduate Program Coordinator and must remain current throughout the program.
5. All health requirements as required by agencies must be on file at the Granoff Health Center including:
 - a. Current Physical Exam
 - b. Results of PPD skin test or chest x-ray within 12 months (**submitted yearly**).
 - c. Evidence of either Rubella vaccination or antibody titer.
 - d. Evidence of Mumps/Rubella vaccination or titer.
 - e. Evidence of Measles.
 - f. Evidence of Hepatitis B series vaccinations, positive titer, or signed declination form.
6. **All documents required by the department and health requirements must be on file and up to date before students can participate in clinical practicums.**

B. Placement Requirements

1. The practicum shall be in a setting different from the place of the student's current or previous employment The Graduate

Program Coordinator may allow previous sites to be used with special permission in cases of limited availability of practicum sites. The clinical practicum shall be in a setting in which the clinical preceptor has a minimum of a Master's Degree (or MD) and appropriate credentials in the clinical area of expertise.

2. All practicum courses consist of a class and/or seminar, and twelve to sixteen (12-16) hours per week of practice for the duration of the semester. Students are expected to arrange specific days and times with the preceptor in consultation with the faculty and by mutual consent of all parties.
3. Evidence of satisfactory completion of all course objectives must be received by the course instructor prior to the grade being submitted for the course. Validation of clinical hours by clinical preceptors must be received by the course instructor in order for students to receive credit for sufficient clinical hours each semester.

IV. Capstone Requirement

All graduate nursing students are required to complete either a Thesis or Special Project in nursing to complete program requirements. The following will designate requirements for each of these capstone experiences. The Thesis (NUR 590 and NUR 591) will generally take one (1) year for 6 credits, and the Special Project (NUR 592) will take one semester for 3 credits. See the School of Graduate Studies for due dates for theses and special Projects. Theses and Special Projects are due to the Nursing Department Chairperson at least 10 days prior to the due dates specified by the School of Graduate Studies.

A. Thesis

Thesis requirements and related forms can be found on the School Of Graduate Studies web site. Specific forms required by the Nursing Department can be found on the NUR 590 and NUR 591 Blackboard Vista sites. The student registers for NUR 591 upon completion of the proposal (in N590). The student registers for NUR 591 for each semester required to complete the Thesis.

Following the required oral defense, the copy of the thesis, signed by the major advisor and second reader, is submitted to the Department Chairperson for a final reading and departmental approval. Following

approval, the thesis is submitted to the School of Graduate Studies for approval.

The thesis is graded as pass/fail. If the student is unable to complete requirements within the semester a grade of "Q" will be assigned and the student will need to register to take the course again for completion of course requirements.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain the guidelines and forms and to submit a copy of the Thesis to the Nursing Department to complete these requirements.

B. Special Project in Nursing

Special project requirements and related forms can be found on the School Of Graduate Studies web site. Specific forms required by the Nursing Department can be found on the NUR 592 Blackboard Vista site. Following the required dissemination of results, a copy of the Special Project final report, signed by the major advisor and second reader, is submitted to the Department Chairperson for a final reading and departmental approval. See the School of Graduate Studies guidelines regarding their need to approve the special project.

This capstone experience is designed to take one semester to complete with a preliminary proposal completed in the semester **prior** to taking the course (NUR 592). The proposal will indicate the subject and content of the project.

NUR 592 will be offered in either the fall or spring semester. The proposal for the project needs to be submitted on April 15th for the following fall semester or November 15th for the spring semester.

The project is graded as pass/fail. To receive a passing grade, the project must be completed by submitting a Special Project Final Report and disseminating the project findings to the department. If the student is unable to complete requirements within the semester a grade of "Q" will be assigned and the student will need to register to take the course (NUR 592) again for completion of course requirements.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain the guidelines and forms and to submit a copy of the Special Project to the department to complete these requirements.

