# UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA
## DEPARTMENT OF NURSING
### MSN STUDENT HANDBOOK

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WELCOME!

I am delighted to welcome you to the MSN program at the University of West Georgia, Department of Nursing. I am pleased that you have selected this university to pursue your education and am confident that you will find the program of study both challenging and rewarding.

This handbook has been developed to provide university and department information concerning various policies and guidelines. Please seek clarification from faculty members as necessary.

One of the strong points of this program is the cadre of committed faculty. I think you will find the faculty to be caring, competent, and empathetic individuals willing to assist you in every way possible. Please feel free to call on me at any time. My door is always open, and I welcome your input and suggestions concerning the program.

Kathryn Grams, RN, PhD
Chair and Professor, Department of Nursing
January 2005
PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the MSN program at the University of West Georgia is to offer high quality graduate education that:

- Prepares registered nurses for advanced practice roles in diverse health care settings in Georgia and the surrounding region
- Provides regional outreach related to graduate nursing education through off-campus programs
- Provides a caring, supportive, personal, environment for learning that:
  - Affirms the holistic nature of individuals
  - Reflects caring as the essence of nursing
  - Expects that nurses use critical thinking in decision making
  - Utilizes disciplinary rigor to support MSN student progress toward assuming leadership and education roles

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND ASSUMPTIONS

The faculty of the Department of Nursing believe and support the purpose of the University of West Georgia, which is to provide students with “opportunities for intellectual and personal development through quality teaching, scholarly inquiry, creative endeavor, and service for the public good” and to offer “educational experiences that foster the development of leaders and productive citizens who make a positive impact throughout an increasingly global society.” The faculty is committed to creating a milieu for learning that fosters “educational excellence in a personal environment.” In pursuit of these beliefs, the faculty declares the following statements of our beliefs and assumptions:

People are unique and dynamic as thinking, caring, feeling, and intuitive contributors to society. People are holistic, representing an integration of mind, body, and spirit. They have spiritual-social-ethical beliefs and values that influence the perception of self, others, and the world. Each person has the potential for growth and the right to make choices and take the responsibility for choices made. People value human dignity, freedom, and truth and are altruistic in their capacity to be responsible in the care of self and others. These beliefs about persons refer to patients and other health care recipients, as well as students and faculty.

People construct meaning and develop knowledge through being in the world and interacting with it. Environment is the world around us. Environment includes other persons, families, groups, communities, cultures, things, and the natural world. A concern for the environment is essential for survival and the preservation of the context of our existence.

Health is a dynamic state of being in which there is a balanced integration of relationships, choices, and human potentials: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. The individual's perception of this balanced integration, or wholeness, is unique and self-determined. People experiencing illness or disability may perceive themselves as whole or healthy, even though society may view them as unhealthy.
Nursing, an art and a science, is creative and occurs in a variety of settings. Nursing involves the creation of a safe, nurturing, and healing environment emphasizing respect for the opinions, wishes, and goals of those receiving nursing care. The environment in which nursing is practiced is constantly changing, and nurses must be responsive to consumer and other political demands. In an attempt to prepare students to practice in a rapidly changing health care environment, the faculty believes the priorities set forth in Healthy People 2010 related to health promotion, maintenance, protection, and disease prevention provide direction for the selection of curricular content. As a component of preparing the profession of nursing for the evolving health care environment, we believe it is critical to provide education at the graduate level designed to foster utilization of theoretical knowledge in the management of health systems and the development and implementation of educational programs.

The domains of nursing are helping, teaching-coaching, diagnostic and patient monitoring, managing rapidly changing situations, administering and monitoring therapeutic interventions, ensuring quality of health care, and organizational and work-role competencies (Benner, 1984). Benner’s domains provide a framework for problem solving and describe what it is that nurses do. Within the domains of nursing, the nursing process provides a theoretical framework for guiding nursing care. The nursing process includes assessment, diagnosis, planning, intervention, and evaluation in the implementation of nursing practice.

Nursing care may be provided by a variety of practitioners. The professional nurse, a graduate of a baccalaureate nursing program, fulfills three roles: provider of care, manager of care, and member of a profession. In the first role, provider of care, the professional nurse provides competent nursing care to individuals, families, groups, and communities. This competent care assists others to achieve and maintain wholeness and/or to face death with dignity and comfort. The nurse prepared at the Master of Science in Nursing level functions in advanced practice roles related to the management and quality of health systems as well as in the areas of patient education and the education of nurses through the application of theory and participation in research and research utilization.

Within the second role, manager of care, professional nurses manage people and things. Their management style, responsive to change and collaborative in nature, reflects a commitment to caring and includes behaviors that recognize the holistic nature of people. Professional nurses are concerned with issues related to quality of care and may act as change agents in the health care or education setting. The nurse prepared at the graduate level has the knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to collaborate with other health care providers to implement changes that will improve health care delivery and/or educational programs.

In their third role as members of the nursing profession, nurses assume individual accountability and responsibility. They practice within the legal and ethical boundaries of the nursing profession. Professional nurses participate as citizens in political/societal decision-making and are involved in issues related to the quality of care. Professional nurses demonstrate commitment by participating in professional organizations, life-long learning, and activities that benefit the global community. At the graduate level, the nurse is expected to assume leadership roles within professional organizations. The graduate level nurse is also expected to attain a level of scholarship congruent with preparation for doctoral study.

Caring, critical thinking, holism, and communication are inherent in all roles of the professional nurse. In addition, the characteristics of competence (clinical and cultural), confidence,
commitment, conscience, and collaboration are considered essential to the practice of nursing. The descriptions of these concepts follow:

**Caring**, a basic way of being, is the essence of nursing and means that people, interpersonal concerns, and things matter (Watson, 1979). Caring for self and others involves self-awareness and belief in personal empowerment. Caring includes maintaining academic and practice standards to ensure the quality of the profession. Caring extends beyond the limits of patients/clients, families, groups, and communities to other nurses, other members of the health care team, and to self. Caring is learned through a variety of life experiences and is enhanced by experiencing caring practices among students, teachers, clients, and members of the health care team.

**Critical thinking**, a composite of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, is purposeful mental activity that produces and evaluates ideas and is focused on deciding what to believe and do. Critical thinking involves evaluating information for professional decision making. Persons who are critical thinkers seek and evaluate information, think about other's ideas before accepting them, learn from others, reassess their own views with new information, and make their own judgments (Ruggerio, 2000). Critical thinking, for nurses, involves the use of scientific and humanistic concepts, nursing theory, and research in professional decision making.

**Holism** recognizes the interaction of mind-body-spirit within people. People are not comprised of distinct parts that can be treated separately, but are seen as “Whole.” People are energy systems who are in constant interaction with their environment. They possess the inherent ability to heal and recognize death as natural in the cycle of life. Within a holistic framework many ways of knowing are valued, and self-responsibility is regarded as the foundation of all health care.

**Communication** involves knowledge, skills, and attitudes integral to all the characteristics of professional practice. Clear, assertive, and honest communication is necessary to establish and maintain caring human relationships that form the basis of professional nursing. Effective written, oral, electronic, and nonverbal communication is required of professional nurses.

**Competence** is possessing knowledge, judgment, skills, energy, experience, and motivation to meet the demands of clinical practice. Competence includes the technical skills of nursing as well as skills related to problem solving, collaboration, and negotiation. Some of the attitudes needed to become competent are inquisitiveness, willingness to seek help, and an appreciation of lifelong learning. Cultural competence (AAN, 1992) is defined as “care that is sensitive to issues related to culture, race, gender, and sexual orientation” and is demonstrated by the ability to implement appropriate nursing care within the context of an individual or community’s values and health beliefs.

**Confidence** implies a pervading belief or trust in a person. It is a belief in one’s abilities to accomplish tasks. In this case, the trust of individual capabilities of those involved in a caring relationship—students, faculty, patients/clients, health care team members, and others. Confidence is demonstrated by an assertive demeanor, verbalized positive regard, willingness to learn new things, empowerment, and self-awareness. It involves the skills of communication, self-assessment and self-awareness, willingness to perform, speaking without hesitance as well as technical skills.
Commitment is the affective ability needed to keep one’s obligations congruent with one’s desires and to guide choices related to one’s trust, in this case, a nurse’s obligation to the profession of nursing. Commitment includes the attitudes of empowerment, advocacy, assertiveness, courage, self-responsibility and accountability, and a profound desire to “maintain and elevate the standards of the profession.” Commitment to nursing is demonstrated by employment in nursing, membership in professional organizations, participation in lifelong learning activities, pursuit of advanced degrees, and involvement in activities that benefit one’s community.

Conscience involves knowledge, skills, and attitudes constituting an awareness of one’s moral responsibility to self and other. Conscience serves as a guide to one’s personal and professional behaviors and involves right-making actions and inquiry into right and wrong. Professional nurses need knowledge of ethical theory, legal principles, moral development, and decision-making theory. Insight into personal values, as well as, the values of diverse societies supports the characteristics of conscience. Skills include ethical decision-making, value clarification, critical thinking, and conflict resolution. Conscience will be evidenced by such attitudes as open-mindedness, truth seeking, courage, examination of one’s values, and respect for cultural beliefs/values of others. Conscience involves practicing nursing within the legal prescription of the profession.

Collaboration, the ability to work with others for a common goal, typifies the move toward interdisciplinary health care. Caring nurses must be responsive to a number of constituents. The skills of collaboration include negotiation, communication, problem solving, and critical thinking. Collaborative attitudes include respect for diversity, a positive response to change, and belief in “power with” rather than “power over.”

The optimum setting of nursing education is an academic environment with critical linkages into the practical environment. This environment provides an opportunity for the acquisition of general and specific knowledge of nursing as well as the biological, physical, medical, and social sciences and the humanities. Essential to the acquisition of such knowledge are a sound theoretical base and current research findings.

Teaching and learning are reciprocal, lifelong growth processes that nurture and facilitate growth in all participants. Teacher-learners interact with learner-teachers; all teach and all learn. There are many ways to teach, learn, and to know—and all have value. Learning occurs through meaningful interaction and takes place when the whole person is involved and participative. Learning occurs when it is placed in context and involves the examination of accepted truths and cherished assumptions. Learning involves openness and the willingness to confront paradoxes.

Students are responsible for their own learning. Teachers facilitate learning and create an environment that empowers students to take responsibility for learning. Each student is unique with different learning potentials and ways of learning. The process of teaching and learning is as important as the content. (Approved Fall 2001; Revised 5/6/02)
MSN PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program is to prepare registered nurses for advanced practice in the areas of health systems leadership and nursing education. Graduates of the program will be able to:

1. Utilize theoretical models in nursing practice, the management of health systems or the implementation of educational curricula and teaching strategies (competence and critical thinking).

2. Examine influences on nursing practice and education, including social, economic, ethical, legal, and cultural diversity issues (conscience and critical thinking).

3. Participate in research and research utilization related to improving nursing practice or education (critical thinking).

4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in implementing changes in the delivery of healthcare or in nursing education (change and critical thinking).

5. Develop and implement practice, leadership, management, and teaching strategies for the improvement of healthcare or nursing education (commitment).

6. Utilize a collaborative approach to improve nursing education, the quality of professional nursing practice and the healthcare system (collaboration and communication).

7. Attain a level of scholarship congruent with preparation for doctoral study (commitment).

8. Practice nursing in leadership and education roles in a manner that reflects caring as the essence of nursing (caring).

9. Engage in advanced nursing practice that reflects a holistic view of self and others and respect for diverse cultures ((holism).

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Admission is based on the following criteria:

1. Score on the Graduate Records Examination (verbal and quantitative).

2. Completion of a basic undergraduate statistics course with a grade of C or higher prior to enrollment or during the first semester of the program.

3. Evidence of current licensure as a registered nurse (RN) in the United States and eligibility for licensure in the state of Georgia.

4. Earned Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree from an NLNAC or CCNE accredited program.

5. Official transcript from each college or university attended.

7. GPA of 3.0 (4.0 scale) for all upper division nursing courses.

8. Professional resume that provides evidence of one year of recent full-time practice as a registered nurse.

9. Three letters of recommendation from individuals who are knowledgeable of the applicant’s professional and academic abilities.

Upon receipt of all application materials by the UWG Graduate School and determination by the Department of Nursing that all admission criteria are met, including minimum GRE scores and grade point average, the Department of Nursing will notify selected applicants regarding a personal interview. At the time of the interview, an on-site writing sample will be requested.

These criteria represent minimal standards and provide no guarantee of acceptance. Admission to the Master of Science in Nursing program is competitive and granted by the Graduate Committee of the Department of Nursing and The University of West Georgia Graduate School.

GENERAL INFORMATION

In addition to this Handbook, there are other resources that will assist in a successful journey through this program and the State University of West Georgia.

GRADUATE CATALOG

The West Georgia Graduate Catalog contains a complete statement of academic policies and procedures, courses required for the MSN program, course descriptions for suggested cognates, retention and graduation requirements, and essential items of information. It is a very important book to study and follow. A free copy can be obtained through the Office of the Vice President for Student Services.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA STUDENT HANDBOOK

The University of West Georgia Student Handbook, Connection, contains information concerning academics, student services, organizations and activities, and a campus directory. It also includes very important policies about student rights and responsibilities, conduct and discipline, grievance and appeals procedures, and financial aid requirements. If you do not already own a current copy of the Handbook, you can obtain a free one at the Office of the Vice President for Student Services.

GEORGIA NURSES ASSOCIATION/AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION (GNA/ANA)

Students are encouraged to join and participate in the professional nursing organizations of ANA and GNA. Through these organizations nursing professionals deal with issues of concern such as improving standards of health care. ANA and GNA also foster high standards for nursing and promote professional development and economic welfare for nurses. For more information contact a faculty member.
PI NU CHAPTER OF SIGMA THETA TAU

The Pi Nu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau was chartered in 2000 at the University of West Georgia to recognize superior academic achievement and the development of leadership qualities, foster high professional standards, encourage creative work, and strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession. BSN and MSN students are eligible for membership.

The Pi Nu Eligibility Committee reviews student candidates and inducts new members each spring. The Department of Nursing encourages students to reach for academic excellence and participate in the advancement of nursing scholarship, leadership, and professionalism through membership in this organization. Please contact nursing faculty members for additional information.

GRADUATION CELEBRATION

The Department of Nursing hosts a reception each year to honor all graduating students and their families.

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING COMMITTEES

The Department of Nursing invites students to serve as representatives on all Standing Committees. Students serve as nonvoting members and are encouraged to participate in meetings to provide the student perspective on issues. Volunteers are sought from the student body each academic year to serve on the standing committees. The committees and minimum student membership requirements are as follows:

Caring for Students Committee
1 Generic BSN student
1 RN-BSN student
1 MSN student

Caring for Faculty Committee
1 Generic BSN student
1 RN-BSN student
1 MSN Student

Sustaining a Caring Curriculum Committee
1 Generic BSN student
1 RN-BSN student
1 MSN student

Evaluating the Caring Community Committee
1 Generic BSN student
1 RN-BSN student
1 MSN student
EXPENSES FOR THE MSN PROGRAM

Participation in the MSN program will incur expenses such as the following:

1. **Travel to clinical activities** - Students are individually responsible for obtaining transportation to and from clinical activities.
2. **Books** - The cost of textbooks is variable.
3. **Professional liability insurance** – The cost varies depending on the policy.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
http://www.westga.edu/~finaid/

See Graduate Catalog or visit the above web site for detailed information about financial aid assistance. There are limited funds available for special emergency situations. Contact the Department Chair for information. Service Cancelable loans may also be available through the Georgia Student Finance Commission for graduate students seeking employment as nursing faculty in the state of Georgia.

LIBRARY RESOURCES
http://www.westga.edu/~library/

The University of West Georgia and community health care agencies have a wide variety of nursing journals and books available for student use. In addition, the libraries at UWG, Floyd College, and Dalton State College have journals and books in education, business, science, art, and the humanities. Access to additional nursing, allied health, and academic journals are available on GALILEO, the statewide electronic library, and the World Wide Web. The following library support services are available to all UWG students:

1. Individualized research consultation by phone, fax, email or in person.
2. Assistance with connecting to online databases available through GALILEO, the statewide virtual library.
3. Borrowing of materials from other libraries (at no charge to student) if UWG does not have what is needed.
4. Free email accounts, providing access to various databases via the Internet.

WEBCT
http://webct.westga.edu/

MSN courses may be offered through or supported by WebCT, software that delivers course material online. Faculty members will advise students when WebCT is being used for a course. Visit the above website for information about WebCT.
## SAMPLE DEGREE PLANS
### NURSE EDUCATOR ROLE

#### Four Semester Plan (36 Hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<td>N6000</td>
<td>Caring and the Advanced Practice of Nursing</td>
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<td>N6501</td>
<td>Role of the Nurse as Educator</td>
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<tr>
<td>N6100</td>
<td>Theoretical Foundations of Nursing Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N6200</td>
<td>Nursing Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N6300</td>
<td>Health Care Delivery Systems</td>
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<td>N6487</td>
<td>Specialty Nursing Practicum</td>
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<tr>
<th>Semester III (9 or 11 Hours)</th>
<th>Semester IV (8 or 10 Hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N6502 Assessment and Instruction in Nursing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N6587 Nurse Educator Role Practicum I</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Statistics</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>N6987/6999 Project or Thesis</td>
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#### Six Semester Plan (36 Hours)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
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<th>Hours</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N6000</td>
<td>Caring and the Advanced Practice of Nursing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N6200</td>
<td>Nursing Research Methods</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>N6487</td>
<td>Specialty Nursing Practicum</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester III (6 Hours)</th>
<th>Semester IV (5 Hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N6300 Health Care Delivery Systems</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester V (6 Hours)</th>
<th>Semester VI (7 Hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N6502 Assessment and Instruction in Nursing</td>
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<tr>
<td>N6587 Nurse Educator Role Practicum I</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>N6987/6999 Project or Thesis</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*If the student elects to implement a project in lieu of a thesis, a cognate is required. Cognates may be taken any semester.*

A description of each of the above courses can be found in the *UWG Graduate Catalog*. 
## SAMPLE DEGREE PLANS
### HEALTH SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP ROLE

#### Four Semester Plan (36 Hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Semester II (9 Hours)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>N6000</td>
<td>Caring and the Advanced Practice of Nursing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N6601</td>
<td>Role of the Nurse as Leader/Manager</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>N6100</td>
<td>Theoretical Foundations of Nursing Practice</td>
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<td>N6200</td>
<td>Nursing Research Methods</td>
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<td>N6300</td>
<td>Health Care Delivery Systems</td>
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<td>Cognate*</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Semester III (9 or 11 Hours)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Semester IV (8 or 10 Hours)</strong></td>
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<td>N6602</td>
<td>Problem Solving in Health Systems Leadership</td>
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<td>N6603</td>
<td>Outcomes Evaluation in Health Systems Leadership</td>
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*If the student elects to implement a project in lieu of a thesis, a cognate is required. Cognates may be taken any semester.

A description of each of the above courses can be found in the *UWG Graduate Catalog*.
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

1. The comprehensive exam provides the opportunity for students to demonstrate a synthesis of knowledge in their area of concentration (education or health systems leadership).
2. Students, the faculty advisor, and the committee will work together to determine the appropriate format for the exam.
3. Students must submit an application during the first two weeks of the semester in which they plan to take the examination.
4. Each student must successfully complete this examination in order to graduate from the MSN program.
5. The exam is administered in the last semester of course work.

ADVISORS

Faculty advisors will be assigned to MSN students upon admission to the program. Student and advisor will meet to plan the program of study and complete a Program of Study form. The advisor will assist the student in selecting courses to meet the student’s learning goals; the advisor may also provide suggestions for selecting cognate courses. Once the student has selected a project or thesis and formed a committee, the chair of the committee will become the student’s advisor. Students will meet each semester with their advisor to monitor the program plan and make revisions as needed. New Program of Study forms should be completed when changes are made.

GRADING SCALE

The following grading scale will be used for graduate level courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>A=90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>B=80-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>C=75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing</td>
<td>F=Below 75</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

THESIS GUIDELINES

http://www.westga.edu/~gradsch/grad/

1. The thesis option involves a research project conducted for the purpose of investigating a problem selected by the student and approved by the major professor. The research proposal requires approval by the UWG IRB committee and other review boards as necessary. Please see the website for information and application materials (http://www.westga.edu/~irp). The student is expected to submit the completed IRB forms with the thesis proposal at the initial meeting. If the thesis option is selected, the student will focus on gathering data one semester and writing the findings during the next semester.

2. In order to file for candidacy, the student must have completed 15 credit hours of course work. Candidacy forms should be filed with The Graduate School at least one semester prior to graduation. (See the graduate school web sites for more details about conducting
The thesis will be bound and placed in the library as stipulated in the guidelines found at the above web site. All committee members receive a bound copy. The following forms are located at the UWG Graduate School graduation web site listed above:

- Graduate Application
- Proposed Plan of Study Forms
- Admission to Candidacy Form
- Graduate Information Form
- Thesis and Research Project Rules of Form
- Change in Plan of Study

3. The thesis option involves selection of a committee and a chairperson, who serves as the major professor. After consultation with the major professor, the thesis committee is selected by the student. The committee is composed of three members. At least two of the committee members must be from the discipline of nursing. All of the committee members must be University of West Georgia faculty and be a member of the graduate faculty. The student may elect to have a fourth optional committee member to serve in a consultative capacity.

4. The role of the chair is to call the meetings to order and conduct all meetings. The chair along with the student will determine when the thesis is ready to be defended. The role of thesis committee members includes attending all meetings, reviewing and critiquing the thesis, providing guidance and specific feedback, and serving as a resource person and content expert.

5. Upon selection of the committee, the student will complete appropriate forms and turn them in to the committee chair in the DON and the graduate school. When the first three chapters of the thesis have been completed, the student along with the chair and committee members will select a date for a defense meeting. The student will provide each committee member with a copy of the proposal at least 10 working days prior to the meeting. The student will present the proposal to the committee members at the meeting. The presentation should take no longer than 30 minutes.

6. The student is instructed to follow information found in the Graduate School Thesis Guidelines (see web site) and information found in these guidelines. The current edition of the *APA Publication Manual* will be used as a guide to writing the thesis. If conflicting information is discovered, the graduate school guidelines take precedence.

7. The following checklist provides an overview of the activities involved in completion of the thesis.

- Complete chapters I, II, and III of thesis (including IRB forms)
- Schedule thesis proposal meeting with thesis committee.
- Consult with thesis chairperson regarding changes in proposal after thesis committee meeting.
- After committee approval of proposal and Human subjects forms, submit copies of the appropriate forms to the IRB Committee for approval.
- Consult with thesis chairperson regarding the outcome of the review for protection of human rights.
Upon receipt of approval from the IRB committee and the thesis committee, student may begin data collection.

Collect data and complete Chapters IV and V.

Schedule time and room for thesis committee meetings in consultation with thesis chairperson.

At the direction of the thesis committee, schedule oral examination (time and room). Contact the graduate school for deadline dates.

Post a thesis defense announcement in the DON and the graduate school at least 10 working days prior to defense. Invite appropriate individuals.

Submit completed copy of thesis to committee members at least two weeks prior to scheduled oral examination.

Complete oral examination (thesis defense). After the presentation and after the candidate has answered the committee members’ questions, the candidate and guests are asked to leave the room. At this time, the committee will discuss the candidate’s thesis and make one of the following recommendations: accept the thesis as is; accept the thesis with modifications, but without an additional meeting; accept the thesis, but with another meeting required; or reject the thesis with further direction provided. The defense usually lasts no longer than 60 minutes.

At the time of the oral examination, obtain thesis committee members’ signatures on the appropriate forms.

After the meeting, revise thesis according to chairperson and committee members’ directions.

Submit the original thesis and two copies of the approved thesis to the Graduate School.

8. The organization of the **Quantitative** thesis should be assembled as follows:

   a. Title page
   b. Approval certificate page
   c. Abstract
   d. Preface and acknowledgements
   e. Table of contents
   f. Lists of tables, figures and or illustrations
   g. Chapter 1 Introduction
      1. Introduction (unlabeled introductory paragraph)
      2. Statement of problem
      3. Statement of purpose
      4. Significance to nursing
      5. Hypotheses and or research questions
      6. Operational definitions
      7. Conceptual/theoretical framework
      8. Summary
   h. Chapter 2 Review of Literature
      1. Introduction (unlabeled introductory paragraph)
      2. Review of Literature
      3. Summary
   i. Chapter 3 Methodology
      1. Introduction (unlabeled introductory paragraph)
2. Design (including independent and dependent variables)
3. Sample (selection of subjects)
4. Instruments (purpose, scoring information, validity and reliability statistical information, and sources)
5. Procedure (including method of collecting and recording data)
6. Data analysis (proposed analyses for the study)
7. Summary

j. Chapter 4 Results
   1. Introduction (unlabeled introductory paragraph)
   2. Sample (sample is described using appropriate descriptive statistics)
   3. Results (presentation of findings; data to answer each research question or to support/reject each hypothesis is stated)
   4. Summary

k. Chapter 5 Discussion
   1. Introduction (unlabeled introductory paragraph)
   2. Findings (findings are related back to the literature; findings are discussed in relation to the theoretical/conceptual framework and whether or not the data support the framework)
   3. Limitations
   4. Implications for nursing practice/administration/leadership/education
   5. Recommendations for future research
   6. Summary

l. Appendices
   a. IRB approval
   b. Agency permission letter
   c. Informed consent
   d. Instruments
   e. Instrument copyrights permission letter
   f. Other

m. References

n. Biographical sketch

9. The organization of the Qualitative thesis should be assembled as follows:
   a. Title page
   b. Approval certificate page
   c. Abstract
   d. Preface and acknowledgements
   e. Table of contents
   f. Lists of tables, figures and or illustrations
   g. Chapter 1 Introduction
      1. Introduction (unlabeled introductory paragraph)
      2. Focus of the Inquiry
3. Statement of purpose
4. Background
5. Significance to nursing
6. Summary

h. Chapter 2 Context of the Study
   1. Introduction (unlabeled introductory paragraph)
   2. Assumptions
   3. Theoretical context
   4. Literary context
   5. Summary

i. Chapter 3 Research Plan
   1. Introduction (unlabeled introductory paragraph)
   2. Research Methodology
   3. Participants
   4. Data generation strategies
   5. Data analysis strategies
   6. Methodological rigor
   7. Summary

j. Chapter 4 Findings/Discussion
   1. Introduction (unlabeled introductory paragraph)
   2. Description of participants
   3. Interpretation of data
   4. Summary

k. Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations
   Introduction (unlabeled introductory paragraph)
   1. Overview of the study
   2. Conclusions
   3. Implications for nursing practice/administration/leadership/education
   4. Recommendations for future research
   5. Summary

l. Appendices
   a. IRB approval
   b. Agency permission letter
   c. Informed consent
   d. Instruments
   e. Instrument copyrights permission letter
   f. Other

m. References

o. Biographical sketch
Scholarly Project Guidelines
http://www.westga.edu/~gradsch/grad/

1. The project option involves a data gathering or collecting process conducted for the purpose of investigating or solving a problem selected by the student and approved by the committee. Students have the option of working in groups if the project lends itself to group work. The recommended size of the group is two. Projects may require the approval of the UWG IRB committee and other review boards as necessary. The project chairperson will determine if the project requires the approval of the IRB committee. If IRB approval is necessary, the student will submit the completed forms with the project proposal at the initial meeting of the committee. If the project is a research study, follow the thesis guidelines. The final report is located in the DON with appropriate binding. All committee members receive a bound copy. Types of projects include but are not limited to the following:
   - Development of an innovative clinical program
   - Evaluation of a clinical/teaching program
   - Participation with a faculty member on a research project resulting in a scholarly paper suitable for publication.
   - Development of a clinical protocol
   - Development of a detailed teaching project

2. In order to file for candidacy, the student must have completed 15 credit hours of course work. Candidacy forms should be filed with The Graduate School at least one semester prior to graduation. (See the graduate school web site for more details about conducting the project. The following forms are located at the UWG Graduate School graduation web site listed above:
   - Graduate Application
   - Proposed Plan of Study Forms
   - Admission to Candidacy Form
   - Graduate Information Form
   - Thesis and Research Project Rules of Form
   - Change in Plan of Study

3. The project option involves selection of a committee and a chairperson, who serves as the major professor. After consultation with the major professor, the project committee is selected by the student. The committee is composed of three members. At least two of the committee members must be from the discipline of nursing. All of the committee members must be University of West Georgia faculty and be a member of the graduate faculty. The student may elect to have a fourth optional committee member to serve in a consultative capacity.

4. The role of the chair is to call the meetings to order and conduct all meetings. The chair along with the student will determine when the project has been completed and is ready to be presented to the committee. The role of project committee members includes attending all meetings, reviewing and critiquing the proposed project and the completed project, providing guidance and specific feedback, and serving as a resource person and content expert.
5. Upon selection of the committee, the student will complete appropriate forms and turn in to committee chair in the DON and the graduate school. When the project proposal has been completed, the student along with the chair and committee members will select a date for a proposal defense meeting. Each committee member is provided with a copy of the project proposal at least 10 working days prior to the meeting. The student will present the proposal to the committee members at the meeting. The presentation should take no longer than 30 minutes.

6. The final report does not have to be sent to the library, but it is located in the DON with appropriate binding. All committee members receive a bound copy.

7. The proposal for the project should follow thesis guidelines when possible.

8. The following checklist provides an overview of the activities involved in completion of the project.

   - Complete the introduction, theoretical/conceptual framework, and literature review, and plan for the implementation and evaluation of the project.
   - Schedule a meeting to discuss the project proposal with the committee.
   - Consult with project chairperson regarding changes in proposal after committee meeting.
   - After committee approval of project, submit the appropriate forms to the IRB Committee for approval (if necessary).
   - Upon receipt of approval from the IRB committee and the project committee, student may begin the project.
   - Complete the project.
   - At the direction of the committee, schedule a presentation of the project.
   - Schedule time and room for all project committee meetings in consultation with chairperson.
   - Post an announcement of the presentation in the DON and the graduate school at least 10 working days prior to the meeting. Invite appropriate individuals.
   - Submit completed copy of the project to committee members at least two weeks prior to scheduled presentation.
   - After the presentation and the candidate has answered the committee members’ questions, the committee will discuss the candidate’s project and make one of the following recommendations: accept the project as is; accept the project with modifications, but without an additional meeting; accept the project with modifications, but with another meeting required; or reject the project with further direction provided.
   - At the time of the presentation, obtain committee members’ signatures on the appropriate forms.
   - After the meeting, revise the project according to the chairperson and committee members’ directions.
   - Submit bound copies of the project to committee members and one to the department chair to be retained in the DON.

9. The organization of the project should be assembled as follows:
   a. Introduction (including overview of goals and significance of the project).
   b. Theoretical/conceptual Framework
c. Review of the literature
d. Plan for the Implementation of the project
e. Implementation and evaluation of the project
f. Appendices
g. References
h. Biographical sketch

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Graduate students must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 or higher. If a graduate student receives two C's or one F, her/his record will be reviewed by the Graduate Dean and the Department Chair to determine whether or not she/he shall be allowed to continue. Appeals related to dismissal must be filed with the Dean of the Graduate School.

STUDENT POLICIES

http://www.westga.edu/~gradsch/admis/

The following UWG policies can be located at the above web site:

PROVISIONAL ADMISSION
TRANSFER OF NURSING COURSES
PROGRESSION
TRANSFER HOURS

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are admitted to the University of West Georgia and the MSN Program with the expectation that they will have developed acceptable personal standards of conduct and ethics. Academic dishonesty is defined in as follows:

1. No student shall give or receive, or otherwise furnish or procure, assistance not authorized in the preparation of an essay, report, examination, or other assignment in an academic course or in the fulfillment of program or degree requirements such as standardized examinations.
2. No student shall take, attempt to take, steal, or otherwise obtain, gain access to, or alter in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the conduct of a class or to the completion of any program or degree requirement, including but not limited to tests/examinations, laboratory equipment, roll books, academic records, or electronically stored data.
3. Plagiarism is prohibited. Themes, essays, term papers, tests and other similar requirements must be the work of the student submitting them. Direct quotations must be indicated and ideas of another must be appropriately acknowledged.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in the Department of Nursing. Faculty will take appropriate corrective measures to deal with those situations in which these standards have been breached. Students guilty of academic dishonesty may receive failing grades for assignments and/or courses and may be dismissed from the program. See course syllabi for specific policies. Procedures for appeals in cases of academic dishonesty can be found in the UWG Student Handbook, Connection.
DISMISSAL AND READMISSION

In accordance with the policies of the State University of West Georgia, the faculty of the Department of Nursing reserve the right to dismiss at any time a student whose health, conduct (e.g. cheating, plagiarism), general attitude, clinical performance, or scholastic standing make it inadvisable to retain the student in the program. Additionally, students are expected to display professional behaviors at all times.

PROGRESSION

A minimum grade of “B” is required in all nursing courses. Students who receive a “C”, “F”, “WF” or “U” in any nursing course may repeat that course one time only. Students who receive a “C”, “F”, “WF” or “U” in any two nursing courses may not continue in the program.

A student's continued enrollment in the nursing program is based on physical as well as emotional health. If the student demonstrates evidence of a physical or emotional illness, he/she may be referred to the University Student Development Center and the Student Health Center for additional care as needed. If, in the opinion of the faculty, the student's illness impairs his/her ability to implement nursing responsibilities safely, the student will be asked to withdraw from the program. (Approved 11/18/02)

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN CLINICAL COURSES

Health Requirements

The Department of Nursing requires that students meet the following requirements related to health and infectious disease before participating in clinical activities:

1. Completion of an annual physical examination with date of exam not to exceed one year from inclusive dates for the clinical experience. All students who have paid their student activity fees may have the exam form completed in the University Health Center.

2. MMR - as required by University admission policy.

3. TB - evidence of an annual negative TB skin test with date of testing not to exceed one year from inclusive dates for the clinical experience; students with positive TB skin tests must receive follow-up assessment and treatment as recommended by the CDC and affiliating agency before the student will be allowed to participate in clinical activities.

4. Hepatitis B - evidence of completion of the HBV immunization series; students who do not wish to complete the series must meet with nursing faculty and complete a waiver.

5. Varicella - students who have not had varicella (chickenpox) should notify the clinical instructor. After enrollment in a clinical nursing course, students should also report any exposure to chickenpox or shingles.
6. **Health insurance** – evidence of personal health insurance coverage. Should an injury or illness occur to a nursing student during a scheduled clinical or class activity, the student is responsible for all expenses incurred for medical care or treatment of the injury or illness. All students who have paid their student activity fees are eligible to be seen and treated in the University Health Center. If an injury should occur in a clinical facility during a clinical activity, the student can be seen in the nearest emergency room. The student is responsible for any expenses incurred for treatment received in a clinical facility.

**Professional Requirements**

The Department of Nursing requires that students meet the following professional requirements before participating in clinical activities:

1. **Professional liability insurance** - evidence of current professional liability insurance in the minimum amount of $1,000,000/3,000,000. Documentation must include the amount and dates of coverage.
2. **CPR** - evidence of current certification in basic CPR by either the American Heart Association or American Red Cross. Registered nurses certified in Advanced Cardiac Life Support may submit such evidence in place of the basic CPR certification.
3. **Licensure** – evidence of RN licensure. On advice of the Georgia State Board of Nursing, the student's license to practice as an RN must be shown to nursing faculty or clinical preceptors at the beginning of each semester of clinical course work.

- Evidence of all the above health and professional requirements must be on file in the Department of Nursing prior to participation in any clinical activity. Student files will be reviewed for currency of the documents prior to participation in clinical courses. Students are responsible for updating information as needed. Failure to provide documentation of the above may prevent the student from participating in any clinical activities and may result in administrative withdrawal of the student from the course by the instructor. Individual contracting clinical agencies may impose additional health and professional requirements that the student must meet before participating in clinical activities in that agency. Such additional requirements may include a criminal background check at the student’s expense.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVALUATION AND TREATMENT FOLLOWING CLINICAL EXPOSURE TO BLOOD OR BODY FLUIDS**

Students who sustain exposure to blood and body fluids while participating in university-related clinical activities should immediately notify the staff nurse responsible for the patient and the clinical instructor. The student is expected to follow the policies and procedures for the institution in which the incident occurs regarding reporting and necessary follow up procedures. The student may choose to receive treatment in the Emergency Department of the institution or a nearby institution at their own expense. Faculty must initiate a Post exposure Counseling Checklist for the student (See p. 23). A representative from the institution should communicate clearly to the student the post-exposure policy and necessary follow up treatment. Reporting, treatment and follow up procedures should be documented in the student’s record by the instructor.
UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NURSING
POSTEXPOSURE COUNSELING CHECKLIST

Name ___________________________________  Social Security Number _______________________
Date of exposure _______________________  Clinical site ______________________________________

I have read and understand the information contained within the UWG Department of Nursing Recommendations for Evaluation and Treatment Following Clinical Exposure to Blood or Body Fluids. The risks and benefits of HBV, HCV, and HIV testing and prophylaxis have been explained to me.

1. _____ I want my blood tested for HBV.

2. _____ I do not want my blood tested for HBV.

3. _____ I want my blood tested for HCV.

4. _____ I do not want my blood tested for HCV.

5. _____ I want my blood tested for HIV (agency must provide HIV counseling and obtain written consent before blood may be drawn.

6. _____ I do not want my blood tested for HIV.

7. _____ I want to have a sample of my blood drawn and stored for 90 days, but not tested at this time. I understand that I may request HBV, HCV, and/or HIV testing of this blood sample at any time within 90 days.

8. _____ I have been offered and accepted HBV prophylaxis.

9. _____ I have been offered and do not want HBV prophylaxis.

10. _____ I have been offered and accepted HIV prophylaxis (women: To the best of my knowledge, I am not currently pregnant).

11. _____ I have been offered and do not want HIV prophylaxis.

To prevent the possible transmission of HBV, HCV, and HIV, I agree to abstain from sexual relations, or if I choose to have sexual relations, to inform my partner of my possible exposure and use barrier precautions (latex condom with spermicide until I know the results of the 6 month follow-up. I will not donate blood semen, or organs until completion of the follow-up period (women: I agree to avoid pregnancy for a minimum of 6 months. If currently breast-feeding, I will cease for a minimum of 6 months).

I accept responsibility for all fees associated with postexposure testing and prophylaxis. I understand that extended postexposure testing and prophylaxis may be completed at the UWG Health Center or a personal health care provider of my choice. I understand that I should report any acute illness causing fever, rash, lymphadenopathy, persistent cough or diarrhea within the next 3 months to my health care provider. If participating in the HBV and/or HIV prophylaxis, I agree to adhere to the monitoring requirements.

I understand that the results of my testing will remain confidential. I will not disclose the name and infectious status of the source patient.

__________________________________________  ________________
UWG Student/Faculty Signature    Date
UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA  
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING  

LICENSE VERIFICATION FORM

To comply with Georgia Board of Nursing requirements, licenses of registered nurse students and preceptors must be visualized prior to clinical learning experiences. To accomplish this, students will visualize their selected preceptor’s license and preceptors will visualize student licenses.

Please complete the following form to document this process and return it to the Secretary in the Department of Nursing.

STUDENT ___________________________________________

COURSE ___________________________________________

PRECEPTOR _______________________________________

AGENCY ___________________________________________

I have visualized this preceptor’s RN licensure. This expiration date is ________________.

The license number is ________________.

Student signature _______________________________

Date____________________

I have visualized this student’s RN license. The expiration date is ________________.

The license number is ________________.

Preceptor signature _____________________________

Date __________________
HEPATITIS B VACCINE WAIVER

I understand that due to my occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials as a BSN nursing student, I may be at risk for acquiring hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection. I have been informed of the recommendation that all health care workers be vaccinated with hepatitis B vaccine. However, I decline hepatitis B vaccination at this time. I understand that by declining this vaccine, I could be at risk for acquiring hepatitis B, a serious disease.

Signatures

Student: ___________________________ Date: 

Witness: ___________________________ Date: 

Additional Comments:
UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING
MSN PROGRAM
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Purpose

Nursing students and faculty are frequently privy to confidential information during clinical and classroom experiences. Students and faculty have access to medical records, obtain personal information from patients and families, and participate in formational assessments, personnel issues, continuous quality improvement and financial or strategic planning. Faculty are often privileged to personal information about students during advisement, Caring Groups, and journaling. Because confidentiality is a legal and ethical expectation of students and faculty, The Department of Nursing at the University of West Georgia has developed the following policy to clarify the scope and significance of maintaining confidentiality.

Guidelines

All nursing students and faculty in The Department of Nursing at the University of West Georgia are expected to abide by the following guidelines:

1. All written and verbal information regarding a patient or institution is to be kept in strict confidence.
2. Verbal or written disclosure of information about patients or agencies to any unauthorized person is prohibited.
3. Any written information about a patient must only contain the patient's initials and should be secured and shared only with students and faculty participating in the care of the patient.
4. The reporting of information specific to agencies may include the department or individual titles; however, it may not include the names of agencies or persons involved. Data must be summarized and reported collectively to ensure confidentiality for the participants.
5. Any written communication (proposal or report) between the student and preceptor/agency must be approved by the faculty before it is presented to the preceptor.
6. Any verbal or written communication whether in the classroom, seminar, lab, or clinical settings is for the sole purpose of learning and is also considered under this confidentiality policy.
7. Students and faculty participating in teaching/learning activities (Caring Groups, counseling, etc) are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding personal information shared.
8. Students and faculty should continue to keep all privileged information obtained during enrollment or employment at the State University of West Georgia confidential, even after graduation or termination.
9. Students in violation of this policy will be reviewed by the faculty and the Department Chairman and may receive a failing course grade. Faculty in violation of the policy will be reviewed by other faculty and the Department Chairman and a plan of action will be decided at that time.
10. Students and faculty will renew and review this contract annually.

_________________________________     ________________
Signature                                  Date

_________________________________     ________________
Signature                                  Date
A plan of study must be completed for each student at the time of enrollment in the Master of Science in Nursing program. The Faculty Advisor and the student must update the plan of study each semester. A copy of the plan of study must be given to the student, and the original signed copy will go into the student file. Any change in the plan of study necessitates completion of a new form.

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Faculty Advisor  Student  Date

PLEASE CIRCLE THE STUDENT’S DECISION CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING:

- Education
- Scholarly Project
- Part-time
- Health Systems Leadership
- Thesis
- Full-time
UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING
MSN PROGRAM

I have read the 2005-06 University of West Georgia Department of Nursing MSN Handbook and understand the information and student policies contained therein. This document will be placed in my student folder.

Signatures:

Student _______________________________  Date _____________________

Witness ________________________________  Date _____________________