



UNIVERSITY *of* WEST FLORIDA

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# Earl and Nancy Hutto Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)

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**2024-2025**  
**Program Handbook**

Welcome to the MSN Program at the University of West Florida. The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidelines for your journey and to assist you in making responsible choices in your program of study.

The University of West Florida School of Nursing (SON) MSN student handbook is updated annually and does not constitute a contract. The handbook is intended for information only. The SON reserves the right to change information in this publication. The most up to date version of this handbook is accessible on the School of Nursing website. All students are responsible for reading and abiding by the information contained in this handbook.

Dear Students:

It is with immense pleasure that I welcome you to the University of West Florida's School of Nursing and MSN Program. We are delighted that you have selected our top ranked nursing school for your continued studies. We feel most fortunate to have accepted such a varied and accomplished group of students who will no doubt make many meaningful contributions to our community, profession, and society. This is the start of what should be an exciting and rewarding time in your life as you seek to elevate your nursing career to a whole new level.

As a family nurse practitioner, nurse leader, or nurse educator, you will have the opportunity to provide and advocate for high quality and safe health care for our ever-changing population and health care environment. You also have the responsibility to work hard, be accountable, remain resolute, and seek every learning opportunity to make a difference and inspire wellness.

The first step from this point forth is for you to familiarize yourself with this MSN Handbook and all resources provided to you. The information found in this MSN Handbook is designed to serve as a compass for program processes and procedures in addition to helping you understand your responsibilities as a student. Know your handbook.

Once again, congratulations and a warm welcome to you all as you embark on this new endeavor. I look forward to greeting all of you with excitement and an intense sense of purpose, passion, and optimism. With confidence I can say that our goal is to help you achieve yours.

Go ARGOS!!



Billy F. Morales, DNP, APRN, FNP-C  
MSN Program Director  
Assistant Professor of Clinical Practice

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## Structure and Governance

### The University of West Florida Mission/Vision/Values

Our mission at UWF is to:

- Provide high-quality undergraduate and graduate education,
- Conduct teaching and research that services the body of knowledge, and
- Contribute to the needs of professions and society.

### Usha Kundu, MD College of Health Mission

#### Master of Science in Nursing Mission Statement

The mission of the University of West Florida Graduate Nursing Program is to educate the student to make contributions in advanced nursing practice in roles including leader, administrator, educator, researcher, scholar, and a life- long learner. The nursing graduate of the UWF Graduate Nursing Program will critically and accurately use the nursing process with diverse clients while remaining sensitive to a variety of subcultural influences, healthcare delivery systems, and global environment. Based on progression from the baccalaureate nursing program, the graduate nursing program refines clinical skills and stimulates the use of research, analysis, synthesis, and active inquiry. The student will use knowledge to respond critically and make appropriate decisions. This graduate nursing program provides a service to the healthcare community by increasing the number of nurses who practice professional nursing at an advanced level in education, executive, and primary care. The program also serves the populations' health needs by providing quality nursing care.

#### Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Nursing graduate students will acquire advanced skills and knowledge that enable them to practice advanced professional nursing and pursue doctoral level study. Direct measures of the student learning outcomes are conducted using examinations, essays, papers, group work, online presentations, observation, and problem-solving activities. The capstone experience is a required role practicum under the direction of a preceptor for the education and executive track only. Finally, the graduating student will participate in an exit survey upon completion of degree requirements. Graduates of the UWF Master of Science in Nursing program should be able to do the following:

##### Content

- Integrate scientific findings from nursing, biopsychosocial fields, global initiatives and other sciences to improve patient care across the lifespan and in diverse settings.
- Use Methods, technology and other tools, performance measures, and standards related to quality improvement and safety with organizations.

##### Critical Thinking

- Utilize organizational and systems leadership to promote decisions directed at achieving high quality, safe, and cost-efficient patient care.
- Translate and integrate scholarship, educational strategies, and evidence into practice settings to optimize quality patient outcomes.
- Integrate broad organizational, client-centered, and culturally appropriate concepts to provide evidence-based clinical prevention, care and services to individuals, families, and populations.

## Communication

- Utilize patient-centered communication technologies to integrate, deliver and enhance health care across the lifespan.
- Collaborate as a member and leader of inter-professional teams to intervene at the system level through policy development processes and employing advocacy strategies to influence health, education and practice.

## Integrity/Values

- Provide care and mentoring in a compassionate manner that respects, protects, and enhances spiritual integrity, human dignity, and cultural diversity.

## Job Prospects for Master of Science in Nursing Graduates

Nurse Educator	Nurse Executive	Family Nurse Practitioner
Undergraduate Nursing School Faculty	Nursing Administrator	Primary Care Office
	Chief Nursing Officer	Outpatient Community Medical Clinic
Healthcare Organization Education Specialist	Director of Nursing Services	School Based Clinic
	Case Management Consultant	Rural Health Clinic
Company Education Specialist	Unit/Department Leadership in IP or OP services	Organization On-site Health Clinic
School Based Clinic Educator		Urgent Care Clinic*
		Specialty Clinic**
* Recommend Post Graduate Primary Care Experience		** With Post Graduate Certification/Training

## Curriculum

Students wishing to earn a M.S.N. must successfully complete both the core courses and the specialty courses.

### Nursing Education Specialization

#### M.S.N. Core (12 sh)

<a href="#">NGR 6111</a>	Foundations of Nursing Science	3
<a href="#">NGR 6638</a>	Population Health Promotion and Management	3
<a href="#">NGR 6803</a>	Integration of Evidence in Advanced Nursing Practice	3
<a href="#">NGR 6893</a>	Health Systems Leadership and Policy Strategies	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>12</b>

#### Education Specialization (27 sh)

<a href="#">NGR 6172</a>	Advanced Pharmacology	3
<a href="#">NGR 6002</a>	Advanced Health Assessment	3
<a href="#">NGR 6140</a>	Advanced Pathophysiology	3
<a href="#">NGR 6710</a>	Advanced Nursing Practice for the Nurse Educator	3
<a href="#">NGR 6710L</a>	Nurse Educator Advanced Clinical Practicum	3
<a href="#">NGR 6715</a>	Nursing Education Seminar I	3
<a href="#">NGR 6715L</a>	Nursing Education Practicum I	3
<a href="#">NGR 6718</a>	Nursing Education Seminar II	3
<a href="#">NGR 6718L</a>	Nursing Education Practicum II	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>27</b>



## Nursing Leadership Specialization

### M.S.N. Core (12 sh)

<a href="#">NGR 6111</a>	Foundations of Nursing Science	3
<a href="#">NGR 6638</a>	Population Health Promotion and Management	3
<a href="#">NGR 6803</a>	Integration of Evidence in Advanced Nursing Practice	3
<a href="#">NGR 6893</a>	Health Systems Leadership and Policy Strategies	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>12</b>

### Nursing Leadership Specialization (27 sh)

<a href="#">NGR 6793</a>	Fiscal Administration for the Health Professional	3
<a href="#">NGR 6734</a>	Project Development and Management for Healthcare Professionals	3
<a href="#">NGR 6872</a>	Information Technology and Data Analysis for Healthcare Professionals	3
<a href="#">NGR 6728</a>	Nursing Leadership Seminar I	3
<a href="#">NGR 6728L</a>	Nursing Leadership Practicum I	3
<a href="#">NGR 6729</a>	Nursing Leadership Seminar II	3
<a href="#">NGR 6729L</a>	Nursing Leadership Practicum II	3
<a href="#">NGR 6727</a>	Nursing Leadership Seminar III	3
<a href="#">NGR 6727L</a>	Nursing Leadership Practicum III	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>27</b>

## Family Nurse Practitioner

### M.S.N. Direct Care Core (9 sh)

<a href="#">NGR 6002</a>	Advanced Health Assessment	3
<a href="#">NGR 6172</a>	Advanced Pharmacology	3
<a href="#">NGR 6140</a>	Advanced Pathophysiology	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>9</b>

### M.S.N Common Core (12 sh)

<a href="#">NGR 6111</a>	Foundations of Nursing Science	3
<a href="#">NGR 6803</a>	Integration of Evidence in Advanced Nursing Practice	3
<a href="#">NGR 6893</a>	Health Systems Leadership and Policy Strategies	3
<a href="#">NGR 6638</a>	Population Health Promotion and Management	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>12</b>

### Family Nurse Practitioner Specialization (24 sh)

<a href="#">NGR 6201</a>	Care of the Adult I	3
<a href="#">NGR 6201L</a>	Care of the Adult I Practicum	3
<a href="#">NGR 6343</a>	Care of the Woman and Family	3
<a href="#">NGR 6343L</a>	Care of the Woman and Family Practicum	2
<a href="#">NGR 6301</a>	Care of the Child and Family	3
<a href="#">NGR 6301L</a>	Care of the Child and Family Practicum	2
<a href="#">NGR 6202</a>	Care of the Adult II	3
<a href="#">NGR 6202L</a>	Care of the Adult II Practicum	3
<a href="#">NGR 6835</a>	Transition to Professional Practice	2
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>24</b>

## Admission & Progression

### Graduate Admission Requirements - Education & Leadership Programs

In addition to the University graduate admission requirements described in the [Admissions section](#) of the catalog, the department bases decisions for regular admission on a holistic review of credentials in which the following criteria are used to assess the potential success of each applicant:

- An earned Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from an NLNAC, ACEN or CCNE.
- Completion of an undergraduate statistics course with a grade of "C" or better.
- Students who, for academic or disciplinary reasons, are not eligible to register in the college or university last attended will not be admitted for graduate study.
- Possess a current unencumbered Registered Nurse license to practice nursing in a state or territory of the United States.
- Express Admission Students are required to become licensed as a registered nurse to practice in a state or territory of the United States by the end of the first semester of enrollment to progress in the program.
- Curriculum vitae (CV) or resume.

### Graduate Admission Requirements - Family Nurse Practitioner Program

In addition to the University graduate admission requirements described in the Admissions section of the catalog, the department bases decisions for regular admission on a holistic review of credentials in which the following criteria are used to assess the potential success of each applicant:

- An earned Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from an NLNAC, ACEN, or CCNE accredited nursing program with a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Completion of an undergraduate statistics course with a grade of "C" or better.
- Students who, for academic or disciplinary reasons, are not eligible to register in the college or university last attended will not be admitted for graduate study.
- Possess a current unencumbered Registered Nurse license to practice nursing in a state or territory of the United States.
- Express Admission is not applicable for the Family Nurse Practitioner program.
- Submission of Curriculum vitae (CV) that includes work history, educational background, and community service involvement. Community service within the last two years. Professional Organization membership.
- Submit a career goals statement that includes a narrative writing of your future career plans (where you hope to see yourself professionally in the next 5-10 years) and should be an example of your writing skills. References are not necessary. Submission should be typed and between 150-200 words.
- Submit a copy of your RN license.

**\*\*Approval by the School of Nursing Graduate Admissions Committee. Admission to this program is competitive and selective.\*\***

### Provisional Admission

\*\* For Nursing Education and Nurse Executive only. **FNP admission does not grant Provisional or Conditional Admission.**

### Conditional Admission

\*\* For Nursing Education and Nurse Executive only. **FNP admission does not grant Provisional or Conditional Admission.**

## Progression in the Education & Leadership Programs

Students in the MSN program are admitted in cohort groups to assure that courses will be offered in the sequence and semesters needed to complete a Program of Study (POS) in a timely manner. Students may progress on a full- time or part-time basis but all MSN courses must be completed within 6 years from admission. Should a student need to alter their plan of study, contact with the program advisor is necessary to ensure the students eligibility through educational records and academic standings as well as space availability in the courses.

- Students are required to earn a “B” in all courses (3.0 on a 4.0 scale)
- Students may repeat the same nursing course only once, and on a space-available basis.
- Students are allowed to repeat two different nursing courses before mandatory withdrawal from the nursing major.
- Students with a grade below “B” in a nursing course at midterm will be issued a letter of warning of their academic standing via email.

The faculty of the School of Nursing reserves the right to retain only those students who satisfy the requirements of scholarship and adhere to behaviors that conform to Florida Nurse Practice Act.

## Progression in the Family Nurse Practitioner MSN Specialization

- Each student should adhere to their FNP program plan of study (cohort progression) that they receive upon admission in order to guarantee a seat in each course. Note: A break in progression includes earning a non-passing grade, dropping a course, withdrawal, or failing to enroll in 1 or more courses.
- When a break in progression occurs, the student will meet with their advisor to discuss future coursework.
- The School of Nursing recruitment, admissions, retention and progression (RARP) committee reviews and decides if a seat is available in courses missed due to a break in progression.
- If a seat is not available in the needed course(s), the RARP committee will notify the student. The student will be considered for a seat the next time the course is offered. When an extended break (3 or more semesters without enrolling in courses) in progression occurs, the student must reapply to the graduate school and FNP program.

## Course and GPA Requirements for the FNP Program

- Students are required to earn a “B” in all courses (minimal 3.0 GPA or a 4.0 scale).
- Students may repeat the same nursing course only once, and on a space-available basis.
- Students who receive less than a “B” in the same course two (2) times will be dismissed from the FNP program.
- Students who receive less than a “B” in two (2) different nursing courses will be dismissed from the FNP program.

## Degree Requirements

- Students must successfully complete both the core courses and the specialty courses. All courses in the plan of study must be passed at a grade of “B” or higher.

## **FNP Immersion Workshop**

As part of the Family Nurse Practitioner program, you are strongly encouraged to participate in our Summer Immersion orientation and workshop event prior to the practicum phase of the program. The Summer Immersion includes a one-day virtual skills workshop typically offered during the month of August. The one-day virtual workshop introduces you to routine primary care skills that are vital to any practice. Skills include but may not be limited to simple wound closure, incision and drainage, nail trephination, cryotherapy, and skin biopsies. The workshop does include a fee, however, UWF is committed to the program and will cover the fee associated with the workshop. With the cost, you will receive a kit that includes all tools and supplies needed for the virtual workshop and for continued practice throughout the program. In addition to the workshop, you will receive additional primary care skills and an orientation to help prepare you for practicums. Upon completion of the workshop, you will receive a certification for your records. Once accepted into the program you will be contacted with further information. We look forward to seeing you in the Summer Immersion.

In addition to the workshop, you will receive additional primary care skills and an orientation to help prepare you for practicums. Upon completion of the workshop, you will receive a certification for your records. Once accepted into the program you will be contacted with further information.

## **Typhon**

Typhon is a program used by the student to track the student's clinical required hours and procedures. The cost is \$100 and is good for the duration of the program and 5 years after graduation.

Typhon's Student Tracking System is used to track your clinical encounters, your time spent at clinical facilities, your evaluations, schedule, portfolio, and much more. Typhon is web-based software, so you can access your account and enter information on any connected device.

## **UWF State Authorization Status**

Federal and state regulations require that all institutions of higher education comply with existing state laws regarding distance learning. As these regulations continuously evolve, the University of West Florida makes every effort to maintain compliance so we can deliver as many of our fully online programs to students in as many states as possible. Please contact the appropriate licensing agency in those states to request information and additional guidance before beginning or continuing a program that leads to licensure or certification. [Click on this link](#) to access the information.

## **Master's Degree Requirements**

### **Requirements for Second UWF Master's Degree**

## **Student Services and Resources**

## After Admission

These links provide an overview to financial aid, military and veteran's benefits, mandatory immunizations, setting up your email account, tuition, student rights and responsibilities, grievance, student code of conduct:

[Student Orientation](#)

[Academic Advising](#)

[Nursing Student Organization](#)

[Financial Aid](#)

[Student Accessibility Resources](#)

[Grading Practices](#)

The School of Nursing adheres to the grading practices established by the university as discussed in The University of West Florida catalog. Each faculty member establishes the specific grading plan for assigned courses. Each course syllabus includes the evaluation criteria.

Students are evaluated on meeting the prescribed objectives for each course. All course outcomes must be completed successfully with a grade of 'B' (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or better in order to progress in the nursing program. Instructors file course grades with the registrar at the end of each semester.

### [Policy Regarding Incompletes](#)

An incomplete ("I") grade signifies that all course requirements have not been met. Students with questions regarding the issuance of an "I" grade should contact the instructor of record for the course in question.

### [Withdrawal Policies](#)

A course deficiency letter will be issued to the student by the faculty when any behavior is observed that places the student at risk for failure and/or dismissal from the nursing program. If a second course deficiency letter is issued to a student during their enrollment in the nursing program, the student's progression in the program will be reviewed by the faculty and progression in the program will be contingent upon the approval of the faculty.

## Faculty/Student Communication

Professional communication between faculty and students is of utmost importance in this program. If the student has any questions about a practicum or course assignment, the student should not hesitate to contact the faculty via email or phone. The faculties have designed office hours which are posted on the course syllabi and the eLearning course home page. Faculty will provide contact email and telephone numbers at the beginning of each course for students.

## Student Records

Once students have been admitted to the nursing program, student files are kept in a central location within the School of Nursing. Files containing student records are under supervision or locked at all times. Only faculty and other appropriate institutional officials have access to these records.

## Name/Address Change

Change of local, permanent, and emergency contact addresses; name; or other information affecting the student's permanent academic record may be completed by using the [Contact and Privacy Info Wizard](#) through [MyUWF](#).

## Electronic Records

[MyUWF](#) gives currently enrolled UWF students access to their electronic records. Students can view grades, class schedule, financial aid status, access registration services, and other services.

## Professional Liability Insurance

Nursing is a profession in which its members are accountable. The University provides liability insurance coverage for the MSN student. Coverage obtained in your work setting does not cover you as a student and proof of professional liability insurance for the entire time you are enrolled as a student in the MSN program is mandatory in the amounts of \$1 million per incident and \$3 million aggregate.

General University policies and procedures are published online. University policies, as well as Departmental and program policies and procedures, extend to all sites where students are engaged in the role of nursing student.

## APA Guidelines

American Psychological Association (APA) 7<sup>th</sup> Edition is the formal writing style adopted by the University of West Florida, School of Nursing. All written assignments are to demonstrate a professional level of scholarship by adhering to the current American Psychological Association (APA) format. The APA manual contains specifications for researching, writing, documenting and formatting type written work. Guidelines for writing in APA style may be found in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition publication manual and at the following internet site: <https://apastyle.apa.org/>. The [UWF Writing Lab](#) also has useful guides for APA style and a paper evaluation service.

## School of Nursing Clinical Requirements/Clinical Clearance

Clinical Clearance is required for a student to participate in the required practicum experience. Failure to maintain clinical clearance will affect your ability to complete the required clinical hours. Clinical Clearance will be issued when all documentation required in Castlebranch and by the School of Nursing is complete. If you are not clinically cleared when it is time for your practicum, your practicum start will be delayed. The earliest you can expect practicum hours is the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the semester once approved by the instructor.

Castlebranch is the platform that the School of Nursing uses to track Clinical compliance.

Instructions on how to order a Castlebranch account are included in your acceptance packet.

Castlebranch needs to be completed by the start of your first practicum. **The drug screen, background check and fingerprints need to be completed the SEMESTER BEFORE YOUR FIRST PRACTICUM.** The rest of the requirements can be uploaded to Castlebranch at any time, but must be up to date at the start of your first practicum and throughout your practicum experience.

The following items are required in Castlebranch:

- Vaccinations: MMR, Varicella, HepB, Yearly TB, TDaP, Yearly Influenza. (Influenza is required. The only exception is if it is medically contraindicated, which requires a note on physician letterhead to that effect)
- Screenings: Drug Screen, Fingerprints and Background check. (These items need to be completed through Castlebranch and cannot be provided from another source. These are to be completed the semester before the start of your first practicum)
- UWF Health Form - this form needs to be signed by a physician.
- Certifications: RN License; CPR (American Heart Association or American Red Cross are the only acceptable certifications)

- Other requirements: E-learning modules in Castlebranch regarding Medical OSHA and HIPAA;
- Health Insurance (you must have current health insurance. This is a requirement of the affiliation agreements for practicum participation.)

Reminders of when things are coming due will be sent by Castlebranch. Be sure to check the email address you used to start your account frequently and heed these reminders. Please note, any communication from UWF will be to your UWF email account, so please check it frequently.

For technical issues regarding your Castlebranch contact the Castlebranch helpline at 888-723-4263.

Any other questions regarding Castlebranch, please contact June Strohmets, [jstrohmets@uwf.edu](mailto:jstrohmets@uwf.edu); 850-474-3215.

## **Drug Screen Policy & Procedure and Background Check**

Background Check School of Nursing Background Check Process Florida Law restricts access to children, elderly and disabled patients by persons convicted of specific misdemeanors and felonies. (Chapter 435 Florida Statutes). This law places restrictions on health care facilities, which in turn require students to comply with the same restrictions as their employees and volunteers. Any criminal history revealed on background checks may affect a student's ability to participate in clinical experiences, be admitted into a UWF SON Program, and/or obtain registered nurse licensure. (See the Florida Board of Nursing and Florida Statutes 408.809 Background Screening: Prohibited offenses) If the criminal background check findings reveal a history of criminal activity, the SON Director will discuss the findings with the student and if the findings do not meet clinical practice site requirements or eligibility for licensure as a registered nurse in the state of Florida, the student will not be admitted to the nursing program.

While in the program, if the student's criminal status changes, the student must disclose this to the School of Nursing within three (3) business days of the offense. Failure to disclose will result in dismissal from the program. Absolute honesty is essential. Clinical practice facilities have the right to refuse to permit a student to attend practice in their facility due to criminal charges. If a student is denied access to clinical practice, this could result in the inability to complete clinical requirements resulting in a course failure and dismissal from the SON program.

Students who are not enrolled for two or more consecutive semesters will be required to resubmit all criminal background check materials at the time of re-entry.

### **Drug Screening**

Affiliated clinical agencies require a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. They require that employees and students not be involved in the sale, manufacture, distribution, purchase, use, or possession of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs. Use of illegal or impairing substances by UWF nursing students that may impair cognitive functioning, critical thinking, or sound judgment will not be allowed.

The use of marijuana for any reason, prescribed or otherwise, is not permitted. This is in accordance with UWF's healthcare agency partnership contracts.

### **Procedure**

The UWF School of Nursing requires all clinical nursing students to undergo a routine drug screen. The purpose of the UWF School of Nursing's Drug Screen Policy and Procedure is to comply with regulations of area health care agencies/hospitals.



Nursing students are not to be involved in the sale, manufacture, distribution, purchase, use, or possession of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs. UWF nursing students must abide by the drug screen policies of each clinical health care agency/facility to which they are assigned before patient contact will begin.

Agencies may require on the spot drug screens if there is suspicion of drug use. Students enrolled in the UWF School of Nursing must comply with agency requests or they will be unable to complete the nursing clinical responsibilities of the program, and thus will not be able to continue in the nursing program. Student failure to submit to a drug screen, attempting to tamper with, contaminating, or switching a sample will result in the student not meeting course objectives for the clinical course. In this event, progression in the program will not be permitted.

## **Positive Results**

Students who test positive for illicit drugs in their first drug screen required by University of West Florida School of Nursing will be notified to meet with the Department Chair. The student will have the option to a repeat test at his/her own expense at a verifiable laboratory within 24 hours of the notification of the positive result. The student must provide proof of the date and time of the drug screen retest to the Chair of the UWF School of Nursing. The student will be suspended from all nursing clinical activities until the issue is resolved.

The results of the test will be considered by the Nursing Advisory Panel which consists of the following: the Dean of College of Health, Chair of the UWF School of Nursing, Director of MSN Program, Dean of Student Affairs, and Clinical Faculty of the student's clinical courses. Decisions of the Nursing Advisory Panel are final.

## **Second Test- Positive Results**

If the second drug screen is also positive, the student will be dismissed from the nursing program. The student will not be eligible for continuation or readmission to the School of Nursing at any time. It is highly encouraged that the student seek assistance from the Division of Student Affairs [Psychology and Counseling](#) at UWF or other outside resources.

## **Second Test- Negative Results and Random Follow-up Testing**

If the second (re-test) drug screen is negative, the student will be allowed to continue in the nursing program, but the student will be required to undergo random drug screens at his/her expense during the remainder of his/her course of study in the nursing program. The timing of the random drug screen(s) will be determined by the Chair of the UWF School of Nursing and Clinical Faculty. The student is required to provide proof to the Chair of the UWF School of Nursing that the drug screen was conducted within 24 hours of the written notification. If the random drug screen is positive, the student will be dismissed from the nursing program, and he/she will not be eligible for continuation or readmission to the School of Nursing at any time.

## **Security of Test Results**

Test results will not be shared, except as necessary, with individuals other than the Nursing Advisory Panel. All test results will be filed in a locked cabinet within the School of Nursing offices and shall remain confidential except as noted and to the extent permitted by law.

## **Drug Screening General Requirement**

Prior to a student starting a nursing clinical course, conducting a nursing research study or project, or a didactic course that involves contact with patients, a drug screen is required.

Students will be notified not more than 24 hours in advance of the date and time for drug screenings. All charges for drug screening(s) are the responsibility of the student.

If the drug screen indicates an area of concern, the student will be notified by the Director of the UWF School of Nursing. The Nursing Advisory Panel will convene to determine the action that needs to be taken. Decisions of the Nursing Advisory Panel are final.

Test results are confidential with only the Dean of Health, Director of the UWF School of Nursing, Director of MSN Program, Dean of Student Affairs, and Clinical Faculty of the student's clinical courses notified. The action may include that the student submit to a repeat test of body fluids for the presence of illicit drugs at his/her own expense and to have a report sent to the Director of the UWF School of Nursing as soon as possible (within 24 hours).

The results of the testing will be considered by the Nursing Advisory Panel in determining the student's continuance in the program. The person will be suspended from all nursing clinical activities until the issue is resolved. Also, the student may be dismissed from the UWF School of Nursing based on testing results.

In the event that a nursing student is suspected of illicit use of substances while participating in clinical activities, the MSN Program Director must be notified immediately by the UWF clinical instructor. The MSN Program Director will then notify the Director of the UWF School of Nursing. If a student is requested to take a drug screen at any time during the UWF nursing experience, the student will be placed in a taxi at his/her own expense and sent to a laboratory collection site for testing. The student will be accompanied by the instructor or other UWF faculty or staff member. At that time a bodily specimen will be requested for testing. The student will submit an authorization allowing the designated company to test body fluids for the presence of illicit drugs at his/her own expense and to have a report sent to the Director of the UWF School of Nursing as soon as possible (within 24- 48 hours). The report is to be sent to:

Brandy Strahan, PhD, RN, CNE  
Interim Director and Assistant Clinical Professor  
UWF School of Nursing  
11000 University Parkway, Bldg 37  
Pensacola, FL 32514

The results of the testing will be considered by the Nursing Advisory Panel in determining the student's continuance in the program. The person will be suspended from all nursing clinical activities until the issue is resolved. Also, the student may be dismissed from the UWF nursing program based on testing results.

### **School of Nursing Background Check Process**

Florida Law restricts access to children, elderly and disabled patients by persons convicted of specific misdemeanors and felonies. ([Chapter 435 Florida Statutes](#)). This law places restrictions on health care facilities, which in turn require students to comply with the same restrictions as their employees and volunteers. Any criminal history revealed on background checks may affect a student's ability to participate in clinical experiences, be admitted into a UWF SON Program, and/or obtain registered nurse licensure. (See the [Florida Board of Nursing](#) and [Florida Statutes 408.809 Background Screening: Prohibited offenses](#))

If the criminal background check findings reveal a history of criminal activity, the SON Chair will discuss the findings with the student and if the findings do not meet clinical practice site requirements or eligibility for licensure as a registered nurse in the state of Florida, the student will not be admitted to the nursing program.

While in the program, if the student's criminal status changes, the student must disclose this to the School of Nursing within three (3) business days of the offense. Failure to disclose will result in dismissal from the program. Absolute honesty is essential. Clinical practice facilities have the right to refuse to permit a student to attend practice in their facility due to criminal charges. If a student is denied access to clinical practice, this

could result in the inability to complete clinical requirements resulting in a course failure and dismissal from the SON program.

## UWF COVID-19 Statement

### COVID-19 Vaccine Information

- o The university does not have a COVID-19 vaccination requirement.
- o Nursing students complete clinical rotations at various clinical sites and thus are subject to those clinical site vaccination requirements.
- o We currently have clinical sites requiring the COVID-19 vaccine for nursing students.
- o The decision regarding exemption will be determined by the respective clinical site facility requiring the COVID-19 vaccine.
- o Due to the rapidly changing healthcare environment, further information may be received regarding clinical site vaccination requirements. We will be sure to communicate any changes or updates by email.

### UWF School of Nursing Grievance Procedure

The SON grievance procedure is intended to provide students with clear instructions on how to bring complaints to the attention of the School of Nursing faculty and leadership, and ensure that student concerns are addressed in a prompt and fair manner. A grievance is defined as a complaint or dissatisfaction occurring when a student thinks that an action or decision by the University affecting him/her is unjust, inequitable or creates unnecessary hardship. Such grievances include but are not limited to problems with student or academic services, other university departments, or other matters. The SON follows the [University Policy: SA-27.02-02/17 Student Grievance Process](#).

Within the SON the following procedure should be followed:

#### **I. Informal Resolution**

A student may seek informal resolution of the complaint or dissatisfaction before filing a written grievance if the student wishes. A student may seek informal resolution by:

- a. Talking with **the individual** about the complaint or dissatisfaction to see if informal resolution is possible.
- b. Talking with **the individual** he or she believes has caused the complaint or dissatisfaction to see if informal resolution is possible, and/or talking with the SON Director of the individual he or she believes has caused the complaint or dissatisfaction to see if informal resolution is possible.

#### **II. Steps of the Written Grievance Process**

##### **Step 1:**

A student with a complaint meeting the definition detailed above must provide a written complaint to the SON Director of the individual alleged to have caused the complaint or dissatisfaction within 10 calendar days of when the issue occurred. The written complaint must include the following:

1. Date of the written complaint
2. The Student's name, local address, UWF e-mail address and phone number

3. The name and location of the office/department or individual by whom the student feels aggrieved
4. A concise statement of the event(s) causing the student to feel aggrieved including, wherever possible, the dates of the events.
5. A statement of any action previously taken to resolve the issue and the results of these actions.
6. The disposition desired by the Student.

The Director who received the written complaint shall meet with the Student to hear the Student's concerns within 10 calendar days of receiving the written grievance.

The Director shall also consult with the respondent and may request additional information from the aggrieved student or others prior to rendering a decision. The Director shall prepare a written decision and provide it to the student and to the respondent within 10 calendar days of the Step 1 meeting.

It shall be the responsibility of the Director to inform the student and the respondent of any extension of time needed to complete the written decision. If either the student or respondent is unsatisfied with the Step 1 decision, the grievance process continues. Should the student not find the Step 1 decision satisfactory, the student may appeal to the next level supervisor as detailed in Step 2. If the respondent is unsatisfied with the Step 1 decision, he or she may submit a rebuttal.

## **Step 2:**

A Student not satisfied with the Step 1 decision may appeal to the Assistant Dean of the Usha Kundu MD College of Health (UKCOH). This appeal must be in writing and address the rationale for appeal. The appeal should be submitted to the UKCOH Assistant Dean within 10 calendar days of the date of the Step 1 decision. If the respondent is not satisfied with the Step 1 decision, he or she may submit a rebuttal to the UKCOH Assistant Dean. The rebuttal should be submitted to the UKCOH Assistant Dean within 10 calendar days of the date of the Step 1 decision. The UKCOH Assistant Dean shall review the grievance, Step 1 decision and appeal and/or rebuttal. He or she may request more information and/or request to meet with the student bringing the grievance and/or the respondent. The UKCOH Assistant Dean shall prepare a written decision and provide it to the student and the respondent within 10 calendar days of receipt of the appeal. It shall be the responsibility of the UKCOH Assistant Dean to inform the student and the respondent of any extension of time needed to complete the written decision. If the student and the respondent are satisfied with the Step 2 decision the grievance process is complete. Should the student or the respondent not find the resolution satisfactory, a final appeal or rebuttal may be submitted to the appropriate Vice President (e.g., senior division head).

## **Final Decision**

A student who is not satisfied with the Step 2 decision may appeal to the appropriate Vice President. A respondent who is not satisfied with the Step 2 decision may submit a rebuttal to the appropriate Vice President. The appeal /rebuttal must be in writing, must be submitted to the appropriate Vice President within 10 calendar days of the date of the Step 2 decision, and must address the rationale for appeal or rebuttal.

Grounds for appeal or rebuttal are limited to the following:

1. The student's/Respondent's rights, as outlined in this policy, were violated in the grievance process;
2. New information is discovered that was not available at the time of the previous reviews;
3. The information presented does not support the decision.

The Vice President (or designee) receiving the final appeal shall review the grievance, appeals and Step 1 and Step 2 decisions. He or she may request more information and/or request to meet with the student bringing the grievance and/or the faculty member. The Vice President (or designee) shall prepare a written decision and provide it to the student and the faculty member within 10 calendar days of receipt of the appeal. It shall be the responsibility of the Vice President (or designee) to inform the student and the faculty member of any extension of time needed to complete the written decision. This decision of the Vice President or designee shall be the final decision of the University.

The semester break (the days between the last day of final examinations and the first day of class of the next term) and Spring break shall not be counted as calendar days for the purposes of this grievance process.

## **Affiliation Agreements**

### **WHAT IS AN AFFILIATION AGREEMENT?**

It is a legal document between the University of West Florida and a facility for the purpose of student clinical education.

### **WHO NEEDS AN AFFILIATION AGREEMENT?**

All MSN & FNP students must be sure the facility/facilities they choose to do their practicum/s has a current affiliation agreement with UWF.

### **WHEN DOES THE AFFILIATION AGREEMENT NEED TO BE IN PLACE?**

The agreement needs to be in place by the time the student is ready to start their practicum experience at that facility. If the student will be using different sites to be able to get all of the required hours, there needs to be an agreement in place for each facility by the time they start at each facility.

### **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET AN AFFILIATION AGREEMENT IN PLACE?**

The time range varies with each agreement, some take weeks, some take six months or more. The student needs to plan ahead so that their practicum is not delayed by the lack of an affiliation agreement.

### **HOW DO I GO ABOUT GETTING AN AFFILIATION AGREEMENT?**

There are two ways to go about getting an affiliation agreement.

#### **1. AFFILIATION REVIEW PROCESS:**

If you choose an affiliate from the Affiliation Agreements (this will be a link) list on the website, you MUST fill out an Affiliation Agreement REVIEW Form (also a link). This form alerts the affiliations coordinator that you are interested in one of the facilities. The coordinator will then make sure that everything is current and provide any information specific to that agreement to the student. The list is inclusive of all degree pathways (FNP, Educ., & Exec.). A site on the list does not reflect its appropriateness for your specific degree pathway. For further information regarding the FNP affiliation sites please review the FNP Handbook.

#### **2. AFFILIATION REQUEST PROCESS:**

If you choose an affiliate that is NOT on the current Affiliation Agreements list, YOU MUST fill out an Affiliation Agreement REQUEST form. This form alerts the coordinator that a student is interested in a new facility. The coordinator will then initiate the request procedure with the facility. This process can take weeks or months depending on various factors (i.e. responsiveness of the affiliate, negotiating the agreement, etc). The coordinator will let the student know the form was

received and the request process started. When an agreement is in place, the student will be notified. If an agreement cannot be negotiated, the student will be notified they need to find a new facility.

## **FYI**

If a student has gotten their Affiliation Agreement in place early in their time at UWF, it is recommended the semester before their practicum they email the affiliations coordinator just to make sure that nothing has changed since they were first approved at the site.

## **Practicum Site**

A *practicum site* is a health agency or other appropriate setting such as a university or school of nursing where students have supervised, applied practice, educational experiences consistent with their course and chosen track at UWF. Officials at practicum sites enter into an Affiliation Agreement with UWF, stating they will provide appropriate support and supervision for students during the practicum experience. The student must also have an agreement with an appropriate preceptor before beginning the practicum experience. Having an affiliation agreement does not mean there is also an agreement with a particular preceptor in that agency. And having a preceptor agree to mentor the student does not mean there is an agency affiliation in place. Both are separate agreements, and both must be in place for the student to begin the practicum experience.

If a Military student is participating in practicum hours outside of the United States, the following documentation is needed with regard to the Drug Screen and Fingerprint requirement:

The student must provide documentation from their Commanding Officer stating that they have no criminal record, and they are current on their security clearance criteria.

If at any time during the student's practicum experience, they return to the United States to participate in practicum hours, they must complete a fingerprint check and drug screen through the University of West Florida School of Nursing's Castlebranch platform.

## **Finding Practicum Sites and Preceptors**

UWF provides guidelines for how to choose a preceptor as well as a practicum site; however, because our students can be located around the country, students have the primary responsibility to secure their own sites based on their region/location. Students will select a practicum site and initiate contact with a potential preceptor who meets the qualifications and may be willing to work with them.

Students may conduct their practicums in the same agency where they are employed as long as they are training/learning in a different setting than their usual assigned employment role or work, and completed outside of their normal working hours.

It is recommended to start the search process for a practicum and preceptor early in the program as it often takes time to secure an affiliation agreement. Most students should have their first preceptor and a practicum site identified by the middle of their second term. UWF has an Affiliation Agreement Coordinator and will help the student complete the appropriate paperwork after a practicum site has been located. Also, UWF maintains a list of current affiliation agreements that can be found on the UWF MSN webpage or through the Affiliation Agreement Coordinator. The student is also responsible for completing a preceptor agreement. This agreement is signed by the student, the preceptor and presented to the instructor with the preceptors current CV for approval.

UWF's involvement in the location and approval of practicum sites and preceptors is aligned with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education's (CCNE) Key Element II-B Standard, which states "the program is responsible for ensuring adequate physical resources and clinical sites. Clinical sites are sufficient, appropriate, and available to achieve the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes." UWF's SON will help ensure adequate physical resources and practicum sites by collaborating with students, preceptors, and administrators to support any way we can in the successful completion of each student's program of study, including the practicum experience and clinical placements. The SON will meet with agency representatives if desired

Nurse Educator students are encouraged to seek out sites at both an academic site as well as a clinical site for either nursing or patient education. The Nurse Educator is educated to be prepared to work in either setting and/or with different types of learners.

## **Tips for Practicum Site and Preceptor Search**

Securing a practicum site and preceptor can be as intensive as a job search, and some students may have to travel outside of their local area to find sites. Here are some ideas for students when they begin the search process.

UWF maintains a list of affiliation agreements This list comprises affiliates for all MSN degree pathways. It is up to you to contact the affiliate to determine if the affiliate has preceptors for your degree pathway need. Using this list does not guarantee there will be a preceptor available, but it is a place to start. (List available on the website)

- Use professional and personal network sites to make connections; develop a profile on professional networks (e.g., LinkedIn) to network; research field sites; connect with colleagues, alumni of UWF, and a variety of other professional nursing-related groups;
- Research local professional nursing associations and organizations to contact potential preceptors
- Contact your state board of nursing to see if there is a list of potential preceptors or agencies
- Make appointments at schools, universities, and hospitals in your community if you are in the Nurse Educator or Nurse Executive tracks. If you are in the FNP track, primary care settings, family practice offices, clinics, health departments and other outpatient sites where primary care is the healthcare focus.
- Call appropriate sites and make an appointment for an interview just as you would if you were applying for a job. Dress appropriately, take a resume, and even leave a business card you can print up easily off the internet or order for a nominal fee from many sites.

## **General Requirements and Procedure:**

The University of West Florida, School of Nursing expects its students to represent the organization in a manner that reflects high standards of personal integrity, education, and service to others. It is expected that, as a student in the nursing program, you will conduct yourself according to the ethical standards as published in the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics. Please refer also to the Florida Nurse Practice Act and the American Nurses' Association Scope and Standards for more details on the legal requirements for all nurses. The underlying principles of these standards are based on common courtesy and ethical/moral behavior. These standards are essential for you to grow professionally and to receive the desired trust and respect of all members of the healthcare professions.

Students may have access to confidential medical/personal client and family information, and to sensitive agency information as part of the course learning experiences. It is of **utmost importance** that client/agency confidentiality is observed. Information concerning a client/family or agency is not to be discussed outside of the didactic or practicum setting. Violation of this policy may result in dismissal from the UWF nursing program.

## HIPAA

All those in healthcare must now comply with the federal regulations of the Administration Simplification Subtitle of the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). This Act requires that individually identifiable patient information be disclosed on a need to know basis only.

Care must be taken to minimize incidental disclosures and must disclose only minimal amounts of information necessary to accomplish the task. The minimum disclosure standard, however, does not apply to requests for information by a healthcare provider for treatment purposes. For example, if one must administer a medication, you will have full access to the medical record. This is covered by the patient's consent for treatment.

In order to protect patient/client privacy, all personally identifying information must be removed from student papers, such as care plans and case studies.

Information to be removed includes: the individual's name, initials, address, phone number, fax number and social security number.

Student papers may not be copied for careless circulation and handling. These written documents containing private health information must be either carefully stored or shredded to prevent the circulation of confidential patient information. Confidentiality and privacy also extends to oral communications which extend beyond the need to know for treatment and/or educational purposes.

*HIPAA is a Federal law. Penalties for wrongful disclosure range from fine and/or imprisonment.*

## Keys to Confidentiality

- DO NOT discuss patients/personnel/institutions or any identifying data in public settings such as cafeterias, elevators, hallways, over the phone and/or post on any social media site, with family or friends, with other patients or anywhere you may be overheard
- Discussion of your patient/personnel/institution should only occur in approved settings such as course discussion forum and assignments
- Use patient/institution initials in all discussions and on written documents submitted to the School of Nursing
- Destroy all notes and computer-generated papers after completion of assignment
- Protect the integrity of the medical record and do not photocopy or otherwise transmit material from the medical record.

***If you have concerns about confidentiality, check with your faculty to obtain guidance along with failure to exhibit behaviors that reflect the professional standards for legal/ethical conduct, major infractions of conduct and behavior as set forth in the general university catalog will be grounds for dismissal from the Nursing Program. These include, but are not limited to, consumption of alcoholic beverages in a course related activity; illegal drug usage; impaired behavior; language, and/or disruptive behavior with peers, faculty or community.***

## Student Rights and Responsibilities



The School of Nursing adheres to the same policies affecting all students within the university in regard to student rights and regulations. These rights and regulations are summarized in the [UWF Student Handbook](#). For a complete version of the UWF Student Code of Conduct, please select it below.

## Suspected Student Impairment in the Practicum Area

Students who are unable to practice nursing with reasonable skills and safety to students/patients due to the use of alcohol, drugs, or any other type of material or as a result of any physical or mental condition may be dismissed from the nursing program. Since each nursing student represents the University, the School of Nursing, and the nursing profession, the faculty believes adherence to the [Florida Nurse Practice Act](#) and Required Professional Behaviors is necessary for all nursing students in each learning environment throughout the program of study to assure patient comfort and safety.

Affiliated clinical agencies require a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. They require that employees and students not be involved in the sale, manufacture, distribution, purchase, use, or possession of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs. Use of illegal or impairing substances by UWF nursing students that may impair cognitive functioning, critical thinking, or sound judgment will not be allowed.

The use of marijuana for any reason, prescribed or otherwise, is not permitted. This is in accordance with UWF's healthcare agency partnership contracts.

## Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure

In the profession of nursing, exposure to bloodborne pathogens is an occupational hazard. Bloodborne pathogens are defined as being infectious microorganisms that cause disease in humans. They include, but are not limited to, Hepatitis and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). In order to meet the specific needs of students who may have the potential for blood borne pathogen exposure as part of their practicum experience, the School of Nursing has developed this Blood borne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan for graduate Nursing Students in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Blood borne Pathogens Standard, 29 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 1910.1030.

### PROCEDURE:

1. The student must immediately report any bloodborne exposure to their practicum preceptor and course faculty. The faculty will notify the Graduate Program Director and/or the SON Director. The preceptor will be responsible for immediately notifying appropriate agency personnel.
2. The preceptor, the student and/or appropriate agency personnel will assess the circumstances of the exposure and will determine the appropriate location for follow-up.
3. Post Exposure prophylaxis (PEP) must be initiated within 72 hours of exposure per UHS guidelines.
4. Testing for students can be done at the UWF Health Center on the Pensacola campus. If the clinical site where exposure takes place is not in the Pensacola area or occurs after hours or on a UWF holiday, the student can be triaged based on their own preference at the nearest hospital, Urgent Care or primary care provider. ***The University of West Florida does not cover the financial cost of testing and/or treatment.***
5. Testing: [CDC and US PHS guidelines](#)
6. Follow up and medication selection, if recommended, should follow the current UHS Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure for Patient's Guideline, unless other timelines and medications are indicated by the site of treatment (i.e. hospital protocol off campus) or individual student's health status.
7. Post Exposure Prophylaxis will follow the Current CDC PEP Guidelines; Available at: Current

CDC and USPHS recommended treatment. Telephone Consultation is available at PEP Consultation Service for Clinicians 1-888-448-4911 from 9 a.m. – 2 a.m. ET 6.

***UWF graduate nursing students are required to carry adequate health insurance and will be responsible for any charges for testing and/or treatment not covered by the agency where the exposure took place.***

## **Practicum Dress Code**

It is a professional expectation of UWF SON students to take pride in their personal appearance as a professional representative of the UWF School of Nursing, the graduate program, and the nursing profession as a whole.

Contractual affiliation agreements with practicum sites specify clinical agency policies must be followed in addition to SON guidelines for clinical rotations. Students dressed inappropriately as determined by the agency administration and/or the practicum preceptor can be removed from the practicum site for the day or the entire experience at their discretion. Repeated breaches of this policy by a student may result in removal from the clinical experience. Students who are unable to meet a clinical agency's policy on attire and appearance and who cannot be placed in a comparable clinical assignment will not be able to progress in the nursing program.

Graduate students are expected to be properly attired for practicum experiences and at all times when representing the UWF School of Nursing. Students and employees with visible tattoos and body piercing ornaments are prohibited from some clinical agencies. The student with any of these visible needs to address this with the preceptor prior to the start of the practicum experience.

## **Departmental Committees**

The School of Nursing provides for student representation on departmental committees. Through student representation, a mechanism exists for sharing views and concerns regarding nursing education and departmental policies.

Faculty and committee meetings are open to all students who wish to attend and due consideration given to non-members' opinions, although only members and student representatives may vote to decide policy. According to the Faculty Organization Bylaws students are asked to be members of the following departmental committees: Curriculum Committee; Evaluation Committee; Recruitment, Admission, Retention and Progression Committee; Student Affairs Committee.

**University of West Florida  
School of Nursing  
MSN Program**

**PRINT AND SIGN THIS PAGE**

TO VERIFY YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS MSN STUDENT HANDBOOK

SIGN AND DATE

I have received a copy of the Student Handbook for MSN Nursing and agree to abide by the contents.

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

UWF Student ID \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_