Frequently Asked Questions for Accelerated Students

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How do I get my USM ID card?
ID cards are obtained from the USM Card Office located at 4 Payson Smith Hall on the Portland campus and in the basement of Upton Hall on the Gorham campus. More information about the USM Card can be found on the Card Office’s website

How do I use my USM E-mail/Mainestreet/Blackboard?
An ID number and account activation key will be assigned when a student is accepted to the University of Maine System. Before any of the above can be accessed, please visit Account Activation to activate your account.

E-mail After the student’s account is activated, E-mail can be accessed at http://gmail.maine.edu

MaineStreet is the online portal for information, tools, and resources specific to your role as a student or applicant for admission.

Blackboard is a web-based course management system which enables instructors to provide students with course materials, discussion boards, virtual chat, online quizzes, and more.

Are there campus resources for carpooling, off-campus housing, parking, etc.? Carpooling is best set up on a student-to-student basis. Communication through the CONACCEL email list works well in locating other nursing students with similar needs.

Parking information for USM campuses as well as how to obtain parking permits is available at http://usm.maine.edu/police/parking-and-transportation

Off-campus housing listings can be found here: http://webapp.usm.maine.edu/OffCampusHousing/
What are the expected costs (not including tuition) for nursing students? (e.g., stethoscope, lab fees, cost for NCLEX review, etc.)

Course fees for clinicals are subject to change year to year and range from $100 to $250. Required uniforms can either be purchased second-hand from other students or from local uniform stores, and as such the cost will vary. The USM School of Nursing emblem purchased from Uniforms Express in South Portland costs $3.50 and a name pin is $7.95. Personal stethoscopes are not required but are helpful during lab times; stethoscopes vary in price from $20 and up, depending upon quality. To fulfill health requirements each student will need to enroll and set up an account with Certified Background. To be compliant with clinical affiliate regulations, a criminal background check through Certified Background will need to be completed. The total cost of this package is $94.00. Students will also need to consider provider fees, immunization fees, and the cost associated with CPR courses in order to fulfill health requirements. Financial Aid information may be found at [http://usm.maine.edu/fin/](http://usm.maine.edu/fin/)

What are the academic policies of the program and what GPA must I maintain?

Undergraduate students must maintain a GPA of 2.75 throughout the program and must achieve a grade of C+ or higher in all graded NUR courses and a C or higher in required CON courses (CON 252, CON 302, CON 356, and CON 321. A student may only repeat a course once unless permission is granted by the Director of the School of Nursing. Further information on academic policies may be found in the [USM catalog](http://usm.maine.edu/catalog) Additional information is available in the [Nursing Student Handbook](http://usm.maine.edu/catalog)

What is the sequence of courses?

First semester:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIO 345</td>
<td>Pathophysiology</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CON 302</td>
<td>Pharmacology</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CON 252</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 211</td>
<td>Nursing Role for Accelerated/Option Students</td>
<td>1 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 300/301</td>
<td>Health Assessment and Lab</td>
<td>5 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 306</td>
<td>Nursing Arts and Science</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 305</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Nursing Lab</td>
<td>2 cr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second semester:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CON 356</td>
<td>Concepts in Community Health</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 323/325</td>
<td>Adult/Older Adult Health Nursing lecture and 14-week clinical</td>
<td>7 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 330/331</td>
<td>Mental Health lecture and 7-week clinical</td>
<td>5 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 332</td>
<td>Nursing Care of the Older Adult in the Community</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Third semester:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUR 421/422</td>
<td>Reproductive &amp; Sexual Health lecture and 7-week clin.</td>
<td>5 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 427/428</td>
<td>Child Health lecture and 7-week clinical</td>
<td>5 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CON 321</td>
<td>Health Related Research</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 436</td>
<td>Community Nursing Partnership I</td>
<td>2 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 424</td>
<td>Clinically-Applied Genetics</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fourth semester:
NUR 423/425  Management of Critically Ill Adult/Older Adult Lecture and clinical (first 7 weeks)   5 cr
NUR 413  Advanced Skills Lab 7-week lab  1 cr
NUR 437  Community Nursing Partnership II  2 cr
NUR 470  Leadership, Management & Ethics (last 7 weeks)  3 cr
NUR 480  Practicum/Care Management (last 7 weeks)  3 cr

May I take any of the courses out of sequence?
Accelerated students are in a cohort group. The cohort moves through the sequence in a set order and cannot be changed except in extenuating circumstances that must be approved by Coordinator of the Undergraduate Nursing Programs and the Director of the School of Nursing.

May I take fewer classes and spread my course work out over a longer period of time?
The Accelerated BS program requires full time enrollment. Students who want to extend their course work over a longer period of time may consider changing to the traditional undergraduate program. Additional courses (chemistry, microbiology, sociology, psychology, or human growth and development) may be required. Contact Liz Elliott, Coordinator of the Undergraduate Nursing Programs, Elliott@usm.maine.edu, and your faculty advisor.

Is tutoring available in any of the subject areas?
The School of Nursing does not offer an official tutoring program for CON or NUR courses. The CONACCEL email list may be used to connect to other nursing students who may be willing to offer tutoring services. There are services available through the USM Learning Commons http://usm.maine.edu/lap/portland.htm

Are Disability or Counseling Services Available?

Disability Accommodations: If you need course accommodations because of a disability or injury, please make an appointment with Disabilities Services Center (207 780-4706) http://usm.maine.edu/dsc

USM Counseling Services are available to all USM Students. The Mission Statement of Counseling Services says that “University Counseling Services supports the mission of the University of Southern Maine of teaching, research and public services by providing brief, confidential clinical treatment, outreach services, and community referrals to students who experience academic, personal, vocational and emotional concerns.” USM Counseling Services are available on both the Portland and Gorham campuses (207 780-4050) http://www.usm.maine.edu/uhs/counseling-services.

What are health requirements?
Health requirements are formal documentation of immunizations, CPR certification, and proof of health insurance, and criminal background check that must be provided by new Accelerated students, and which must be kept current through each clinical course. See Health Requirements for more information.
Will a CPR course be offered on campus to fulfill the requirement, or should I take CPR before classes start?
CPR classes are periodically scheduled at USM but students should not rely upon a school-sponsored class to fulfill the requirement.

What is “clinical”?
Clinical is a health-care agency based experience with a small group of students and a faculty member. Our acute care clinical affiliates include Maine Medical Center, Mercy Hospital and Spring Harbor Hospital in Portland, Mid Coast Hospital in Brunswick, Central Maine Medical Center and St. Mary’s Hospital in Lewiston. Our community health clinical associations involve our community partnerships such as Sagamore Village, Casco Bay Fishing Community, and Southern Maine Area on Aging (more information of community partnerships below).

A clinical could be from four to eight hours, depending on the number of credits. The credit-to-clinical ratio is 1:2, one credit hour equals two clinical hours. Clinical courses are taught in combination with an associated lecture course. As an example, Adult/Older Adult Health Nursing lecture (NUR 323) is taught in combination with Adult/Older Adult Health Nursing clinical (NUR 325). Attendance at clinical is mandatory.

May I take a lecture and a clinical at different times?
Clinicals must be taken concurrently with their associated lecture courses.

How do I select my clinical?
There is a set order in which clinical courses are taken. Each semester you will meet with the Coordinator of the Undergraduate Programs or your faculty advisor to discuss courses for the following semester.

Your registration will be done for you. Each semester an advising bulletin is posted on the Student Resources web page which identifies the clinical courses for the following semester. You may indicate some clinical time preferences by contacting Liz Elliott, Coordinator of the Undergraduate Nursing Program, at Elliott@usm.maine.edu, but requests are not guaranteed. Clinical assignments are available approximately three weeks prior to the start of the semester.

How do I know where to go for clinical?
Each semester the faculty member teaching your clinical section will post a Clinical Letter to the Blackboard site for the class one to two weeks before the clinical begins. The letter will include instructions on what to wear, when to meet, where to meet, what to bring, where to park.

What do I wear to clinical?
Student uniform requirements are listed on the Nursing Resources web page http://www.usm.maine.edu/nursing/nursing-uniform-requirements The official student uniform consists of white or royal blue pants and tops and a white lab coat, name pin, U.S.M.SON emblem, and white shoes. Please check the web page for more information.
Do I wear the same uniform at each clinical (pediatrics, adult health, reproductive health, mental health)?

Adult health and reproductive health requires you to wear the student uniform. Child health clinical allows you to wear a more colorful top and mental health clinical requires you to wear professional attire.

If school is cancelled because of weather, is clinical also cancelled?

Yes.

What are “care plans”?

Care plans and clinical preparation worksheets are tools that clinical faculty utilize in patient care assignments. You can find the prep worksheet at the Nursing Resource web page. Individual faculty will review the worksheet at the orientation when clinical first begins. These clinical preparation worksheets are mostly used in the Adult/Older Adult Health Nursing courses.

Do I pick up my clinical assignment the night before clinical?

Adult health and child health clinicals require that students pick up the clinical assignment prior to attending clinical. Mental health and reproductive health clinicals do not require students to retrieve an assignment prior to clinical hours. Your clinical faculty will review this information with you at the orientation when clinical first begins.

How can I best prepare for my first clinical?

Make sure to access your Clinical Letter which will be posted on the course Blackboard site. If you are starting your first clinical (NUR 325 Introduction of Adult/Older Adult Health Nursing), it is helpful to review fundamental skills such as sterile fields, body mechanics, and medication administration. Your clinical faculty will let you know more specific areas based on the clinical unit.

What will be expected of me in each clinical? (e.g., Repro vs. Med-Surg)

Clinical instructors will outline their specific expectations at the beginning of each clinical. In adult/older adult and child health clinical rotations, students start by working with one patient. A student/patient assignment is posted prior to the clinical time and students research the patient’s conditions and begin work on a clinical preparation worksheet. The student identifies areas of concern and plans care for the patient the night before as well as learning about any medications the patient takes based on review of the patient’s medical record. During the clinical day, the student will assess and monitor the patient, provide basic care (bathing, feeding, etc) and perform medication administration as well as any procedures (dressing changes, ROM exercises, foley/NG tube insertion, etc.) if needed and as deemed appropriate by the clinical instructor. As the clinical rotation proceeds the student may be assigned more than one patient if both student and instructor are comfortable with the student’s progress. Care plans may be expected each clinical for the week’s assigned patients.

In mental health clinical, students will practice therapeutic communication techniques with patients. Depending on the clinical site the student will either be assigned a patient the day of the clinical, may pick a patient to practice communication skills with, or may observe therapy groups or mental health nurses and their practice. Process recordings often take the place of care plans during this rotation, in which the student will analyze his or her responses in the therapeutic communication process.
In repro clinical students work with mother and baby couplets completing assessment skills, documentation, and minimal medication administration. Students may rotate to the nursery where they care for multiple newborns alongside a nurse and perform assessments, bathing, feeding, car seat testing, and hearing tests. Also it is sometimes possible for many students to observe vaginal or Caesarean deliveries.

**How much direct supervision will I be given at my first clinical?**

Students are closely supervised by their clinical instructor during clinical. Each new procedure and medication administration the student performs is observed by the instructor until he or she is comfortable with the student’s abilities. Patients assigned to students are also followed by a staff nurse who must be kept aware of the patient’s condition and will sometimes be available to aid the student if the instructor is not free.

**What is “partnership” (NUR 436, NUR 437)?**

Partnership is a sequence of two, 2-credit courses (NUR 436 and NUR 437) that addresses identified health needs of a community. Community partnership is based on the concept of partnership building, risk identification, and health promotion within a community. Students will collaborate with community partners to develop an understanding of both short- and long-term needs of the community. Problem-posing and problem-solving will come from the community. Students will engage in ongoing community assessment, support communities in developing long term interventions/approaches, and engage in evaluation of community level practice. Students will identify individuals and families within their communities who would benefit from individual and family-based nursing assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation. Prior to or concurrent with NUR 436 students must take CON 356, Concepts in Community Health.

Students must stay with one partnership. If a student leaves or withdraws from one partnership, the student must start the new partnership from the beginning course. Specific descriptions of the different partnerships are available on the [Partnership web page](#).

**May I arrange my own partnership?**

Partnership is a faculty-guided community health experience based in pre-established community settings. You may not arrange a partnership with an outside community setting.

**What are the “ATIs”?**

Nursing students are required to take specific tests from the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) when they are registered for courses which require these tests. This testing program helps students prepare for the NCLEX-RN examination and helps the School of Nursing with curriculum evaluation.

**What is practicum (NUR 480)?**

Practicum is a course taken during the last 7 weeks before graduation. It has both required weekly clinical hours and a weekly seminar time. Students complete 154 hours in the clinical area; the clinical location is based on student interest. Practicum provides a culminating, intensive clinical experience that gives the opportunity to refine your clinical practice. Emphasis is placed on integrating the multiple roles of professional nursing and serves as a vehicle for you to enhance your critical thinking and communication skills.
The primary purpose of this course is to develop your competency in nursing care including organizational, prioritizing and decision-making skills. Topics explored include delegation, end-of-life and professional ethics as applied to a wider range of health care settings. All students will develop a capstone project which is presented orally and requires application of competent technical skills. The seminar meets weekly for 2 hours with faculty. These seminars are MANDATORY. There are assigned readings and assignments for each class. Student presentations are scheduled during this seminar.

The semester prior to graduation you will receive an email via the CONUNDER list serve asking you to complete the paper work on the Senior Practicum web page. The web site provides guidance for choosing a practicum site, possible practicum locations, and the form to complete for practicum placement.

May I arrange my own practicum?
Please check the Guide to Choosing a Practicum Site on the web site: http://www.usm.maine.edu/nursing/guide-choosing-practicum-site

When/Where should I begin studying for the NCLEX?
It is recommended that students begin studying for NCLEX during or immediately following their last semester of the program. Resources for studying are suggested during the Leadership, Management & Ethics course taken during the student’s last semester. An ERI review course is offered after completion of the program; the fee for the review course is incorporated into course fees throughout the program. Another recommended resource is offered through the National Council State Boards of Nursing, information for which can be found here http://learningext.com/pages/home.

Does USM provide any assistance with finding jobs after graduation?
The Student Success Center on every campus has advisors and resources that help students locate job opportunities while in school and after graduation. See their website for more information http://usm.maine.edu/success

Contacts
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Liz Elliott, MS, RN, Coordinator, Undergraduate Nursing Programs Elliott@usm.maine.edu