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Masters Nursing Program
Student Handbook
2015-2016

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Welcome

The faculty, staff, and administration welcome you to the University of Southern Maine, School of Nursing (USM SON). The School of Nursing administrators, faculty, and staff wish you success in your graduate studies and are available if you have questions.

This handbook is designed to provide specific information related to the master’s degree nursing programs and our special study options. The information in this handbook is as up-to-date and accurate as possible. It is, however, subject to change during the academic year. It is important, therefore, that you have close contact with your advisor and other faculty members. Please note that the information in the Handbook does not replace information in the USM graduate catalog. Follow the blue underlined links for more information about a given topic. Some links connect with PDF files, which require Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Several key resources for students are:

The USM graduate catalog is the agreement between the student and the University. Everything students need to know about academic policies and procedures is in the front of each catalog. There are different levels of policies and procedures. There are University policies and procedures and then the School of Nursing may have stricter policies or additions to the University policies and procedures.

Students are assigned a Catalog for the year that they matriculate at USM. The catalogs from 2005-6 to the present are on-line at: http://www.usm.maine.edu/catalogs. Prior to this time, catalogs were issued in print. Students received the catalog when they matriculated at USM. If you don’t have a copy of your catalog, your advisor may have a copy that you can reference.

The School of Nursing website contains information for all nursing students and can be found at http://www.usm.maine.edu/nursing.

History of the School of Nursing

The School of Nursing’s baccalaureate program was established at the University of Maine - Orono in 1958. The School was relocated to the University of Maine Portland-Gorham (which became the University of Southern Maine in 1978) in 1969 to take advantage of the proximity to larger clinical facilities. In September 1982, the first class was admitted into the Master of Science in nursing program. The Recreation and Leisure Studies program joined the School of Nursing in January 1983.

In the fall of 1996, the school was renamed the College of Nursing, and the School of Health Professions was created within the college to provide representation for the non-nursing programs. The Health Sciences program joined in 1996, the Department of Sports Medicine in 1997, and the Radiation Therapy program in September 2000. In 2000, the university system’s board of trustees approved the change in the college’s name to the College of Nursing and Health Professions. The Undergraduate nursing program expanded to the Lewiston-Auburn campus in 2001.

In 2010, the University of Southern Maine restructured its colleges so that the school and departments within the College of Nursing and Health Professions are now joined with engineering, science, math,
technology, psychology and linguistics. The School of Nursing is now located within the College of Science, Technology, & Health.

Mission Statements

University of Southern Maine
The University of Southern Maine, northern New England’s outstanding public, regional, comprehensive university, is dedicated to providing students with a high-quality, accessible, affordable education. Through its undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, USM faculty members educate future leaders in the liberal arts and sciences, engineering and technology, health and social services, education, business, law, and public service. Distinguished for their teaching, research, scholarly publication, and creative activity, the faculty are committed to fostering a spirit of critical inquiry and civic participation. USM embraces academic freedom for students, faculty, and staff, and advocates diversity in all aspects of its campus life and academic work. It supports sustainable development, environmental stewardship, and community involvement. As a center for discovery, scholarship, and creativity, USM provides resources for the state, the nation, and the world.

*This Mission Statement was passed by the USM Faculty Senate on October 3, 2008, and approved by the University of Maine System Board of Trustees on November 15, 2010.*

College of Science, Technology, & Health
Mission Statement is under development.

School of Nursing

The University of Southern Maine School of Nursing is dedicated to advancing the health and well-being of its community through the education of caring and competent nurses prepared for the challenges of 21st century nursing practice.

Civility Statement

The School of Nursing encourages all students to review our "commitment to civility". The entire statement is available in the USM catalog as well as on the School’s website. As outlined in the statement, “we will not tolerate harassing or discriminatory conduct of any form. Everyone has the responsibility to foster a safe and supportive learning and work environment. This can include any individual asking others to stop disrespectful or abusive speech and or disruptive behavior. Collectively, faculty, staff and students in the School of Nursing are responsible for ensuring a safe and supportive learning and work environment.”
Philosophy Statement

We, the faculty, believe that professional and safe nursing practice is at the intersection of clinical excellence and effective relational practice. Relational practice is an outcome-orientated approach to nursing that includes reflective practice, strong communication, and respectful disciplinary, and interprofessional collaboration with a focus on patient and family-centered care.

Baccalaureate nursing education is guided by theory and knowledge from nursing science, the arts and humanities, the social sciences, and the biological sciences. It builds on this background to advance the art and science of nursing using informatics, technology and evidence to address issues of quality and safety. In an effort to deliver compassionate and ethical care, students develop a broad understanding of social structures as they gain awareness and respect for individuals. Nursing students develop an understanding of how systems affect the health and well-being of diverse communities, families, and individuals across the life span. In an ever-changing, complex and global world our graduates will have generalist nursing knowledge, orientation to leadership and a focus on the growing needs of an aging population.

The University of Southern Maine School of Nursing undergraduate nursing program embraces the Maine Nurse Core Competencies (2013), AACN Baccalaureate Essentials (2008) and the University of Southern Maine’s Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes (2011) as foundational to the curriculum.

Our philosophy of teaching nursing is based on the principles outlined in the Carnegie Foundation sponsored research on Educating Nurses (Benner, Sutphen, Leonard and Day, 2010) which advances four essential shifts for effective integration of the three apprenticeships of nursing (knowledge, know-how, and formation). The shifts are defined in Appendix.

Graduate nursing education builds on baccalaureate education and is guided by advanced theory and knowledge from nursing and other sciences. A primary aim of graduate nursing education is to ensure that every student acquires the ability to analyze, synthesize and utilize knowledge to advance the practice of nursing. Graduate education prepares the nurse to engage in scholarly enquiry using research and quality improvement methods, contemporary technology and interprofessional collaboration.


At the University of Southern Maine School of Nursing students, faculty members, practicing nurses and clients work as partners in learning. Students begin from a place of self-awareness.
with an expectation that deep learning will challenge long-held beliefs, attitudes and responses. Learning begins when students acknowledge, respect and reflect upon past and present experiences. Learning is enhanced by critical engagement in the educational process, by the perception that the task of education is relevant and meaningful and by an expectation of success. Repetition and meaningful feedback allow students to develop insight, new habits and practice patterns. Varied strategies and sequential mastery of content enable learners to develop approaches, establish connections and verify patterns to make generalizations and discriminations. The shared responsibility for identifying learning needs and evaluating learning experiences enhances self-confidence and the ability to become increasingly self-directed. Successful learning takes place in an environment where learners feel both challenged and supported.

Master of Science in Nursing Program

The Master of Science in Nursing presents a vibrant, challenging, future-oriented program of study that prepares graduates for practice in diverse health care settings. The program is designed to prepare nurses as nurse practitioners, clinical nurse leaders, nurse educators, and nurse managers. Coursework builds on the baccalaureate degree in nursing and is based on theory and research in nursing and related disciplines. The program provides the foundation for continued professional development and for doctoral study. Students are prepared to provide leadership and initiate collaborative relationships with others for the purposes of improving nursing and health care and influencing health policy.

Master’s Programs Objectives

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Program Outcomes

By the end of the advanced practice registered nurse program, the graduate will be able to:

1. Demonstrate advanced practice clinical decision making, utilizing critical thinking grounded in the sciences and humanities, to interpret patient and diagnostic test data and formulate differential diagnoses and a plan of care for patients in their population foci. (Competency:* 1; Essential:** 1, 9)

2. Implement effective strategies for engaging individuals from selected client populations in health promotion and maintenance. (Competency: 9; Essential: 8, 9)

3. Advocate for patients and families to provide cost-effective, culturally evidence-based, ethical, quality care in and across health care settings. (Competency: 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9; Essential: 2, 6, 7)

4. Analyze socio-cultural, spiritual, economic, legal, and political issues that influence and lead to the highest level of nursing practice. (Competency: 4, 6, 7; Essential: 1, 4, 8)
5. Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate, and engage in **collaborative** intra
and inter-professional relationships efforts, to develop and implement policies to improve
health care delivery and outcomes. (Competency 2, 7; Essential: 6, 7)

6. Demonstrate **leadership and effective management** strategies for advanced practice,
including proficiency in the use of **information technology/technology** resources to
support practice and ensure continuity of patient care. (Competency 2, 5; Essential: 2, 5)

7. **Translate research** into practice through activities that reflect critical appraisal of
existing evidence, development of evidence-based practice, and evaluation of outcomes.
(Competency 1, 3, 4; Essential: 1, 3, 4, 9)

*Competency refers to:
competencies*. Washington, DC: NONPH
nciesfinal2012.pdf

**Essentials refer to:
American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). (2011). *The essentials of master’s
education in nursing*. Washington, DC: AACN http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-
resources/MastersEssentials11.pdf

4.9.2015

**Master’s in Nursing: Education Program Outcomes**

By the end of the Master’s in Education program, the graduate will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an **advanced level of understanding of nursing, other sciences,
humanities, and education theory, and integrates this knowledge to facilitate
learning and improve nursing care** across diverse settings (Essentials*: 1, 9; NLN Core
Competency**: 1).

2. Demonstrate teaching effectiveness in the application of **quality principles**, in health
care and nursing education, to improve patient outcomes. (Essential 3: NLN Core
Competency: 6)

3. Demonstrate **leadership** skills to shape and implement change in practice and education
systems. (Essential: 2; NLN Competency: 2).

4. Create **learning experiences** which support **cognitive, psychomotor, and affective
development**. (Essential: 9; NLN Competency: 2).
5. Demonstrate the ability to formally and informally assess and evaluate cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning. (Essential: 9; NLN Competency: 3).

6. Utilize technology in the teaching-learning process to support delivery of high quality and safe patient care. (Essentials: 3, 5; NLN Competency: 1).

7. Synthesize broad ecological, global, epidemiological, cultural, and social determinants of health in order to integrate evidence-based population principles into the nursing curricula (Essentials: 1, 4, 8; NLN Core Competency: 4).

8. Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate and engage in collaborative intra and inter-professional relationships at the systems level to develop and implement policies to influence health, health care outcomes, and innovative education practices. (Essentials: 6, 7; NLN Core Competencies: 5, 8)

9. Translate research into practice through critical appraisal of existing evidence to: resolve education and practice problems; develop evidence-based teaching, assessment and evaluation practices; and disseminate results. (Essentials: 1, 4; NLN Core Competencies: 1, 3, 7)

* Essentials refer to:

**NLN Core Competencies refer to**

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Master’s Nursing Program Concentrations:

Master’s students in nursing gain skills and knowledge that build on their clinical experience and on generalist undergraduate preparation. Graduate students extend their clinical expertise in working with individuals, families, and high risk populations. Master’s students gain skills in clinical decision making and differential diagnosis; in case management and consultation; in client and student teaching; in assessments and interventions; in improving patient safety and outcomes; and, in program design, implementation, and evaluation. Information regarding the master’s nursing program can be found at http://www.usm.maine.edu/nursing/degrees.

Areas of specialty and preparation include:

- Nurse Practitioner
  - Adult-Gerontology Primary Care
  - Family
  - Psychiatric Mental Health (through the lifespan)
- Advanced Generalist
  - Nursing Education (This concentration is not available to students applying to the MS-Option Program)

Program Entry Alternatives for Master of Science in Nursing

Master of Science in Nursing for Non-Nurses with a Baccalaureate Degree (Direct Entry Option Program)

This program for non-nurses has been created for baccalaureate graduates who wish to receive graduate level nursing education. This option, initiated in 1990, allows individuals who hold a bachelors or higher degree in another field to earn a master's degree in nursing in three years of full-time study. Students admitted to this program integrate and build from previous academic and life experiences as they develop knowledge and skill in nursing.

Students complete upper-division nursing courses with regularly enrolled baccalaureate nursing students. In summer of the second year, students begin graduate non-clinical nursing courses with regularly enrolled master’s students. Students in the MS-Option program, however, bypass the baccalaureate degree in nursing and proceed directly into graduate courses as soon as the required undergraduate courses have been completed. Upon completion of the graduate courses, the MS in Nursing is conferred.

Students in this program are eligible to sit for NCLEX-RN after completion of the first 9 credits of graduate course work in this program and must become licensed as Registered Nurses prior to beginning clinical coursework in the spring of the second year. Refer to the graduate catalog for more specifics regarding this program.

Master of Science in Nursing for Nurses without a Baccalaureate Degree - RN to MS

The RN to Master of Science degree program has been created specifically for registered nurses whose career goals will be enhanced through graduate study. The program facilitates and supports educational mobility and strengthens the leadership abilities of nurses who already have a foundation of professional experience. When required undergraduate courses have been completed, students in this program proceed directly into graduate courses, bypassing the baccalaureate degree.

Updated 12-2015
This program is designed so that students may complete the required junior and senior undergraduate nursing courses in one full-time year, beginning in May and ending the following May. Part-time study is also possible. The RN completes courses in new areas of content. In addition, there is assessment of and credit for previously attained knowledge and skill.

The RN to master’s program is built upon prerequisites to the nursing major that include courses in the natural and behavioral sciences, humanities, fine arts, and core courses required of all undergraduate students at USM.

Refer to the USM Graduate Catalog for admission requirements and application forms to be completed.

Organization of the Graduate Curriculum

Faculty members anticipate rapid changes in the field of nursing and are committed to offering programs which will prepare graduates to practice in diverse settings in the health care systems of the future. Students in these concentrations gain skills in clinical decision making and differential diagnosis, in case management and consultation, in patient teaching, in community assessments and interventions, and in program design, implementation, and evaluation.

The family nurse practitioner, adult-gerontology primary care nurse practitioner, and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner concentrations have a total of 616 clinical hours: 168 hours in clinical semester one, 224 hours in clinical semester two, and 224 hours in clinical semester three. The clinical nurse leader concentration has a total of 468 clinical hours: 84 hours in clinical semester one, 84 hours in clinical semester two, and 300 hours in clinical semester three. The nursing education and nursing management concentrations have a total of 224 experiential hours: 112 hours in clinical semester one and 112 hours in clinical semester two. The nursing portion of the MS/MBA concentration has a total of 336 experiential hours: 168 in clinical semester one and 168 in clinical semester two.

The Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (A-GPCNP) concentration prepares an advanced practice nurse who functions as a primary care practitioner to adolescents, adults, and older adults in the context of families, groups, and communities. Graduates who complete this program are eligible to sit for national certification as a family nurse practitioner.

The Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) concentration prepares an advanced practice nurse who functions as a primary care practitioner to individuals, families, groups, and communities. Graduates who complete this program are eligible to sit for national certification as a family nurse practitioner.

The Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (Across the Lifespan) (PMHNP) concentration prepares an advanced practice nurse with skills in therapeutic interventions with individuals, families, groups, and vulnerable populations and introduces medication management with individuals across the lifespan. Graduates who complete this program are eligible to sit for national certification as a nurse practitioner in family psychiatric/mental health.

The Nursing Education concentration prepares graduates to teach in entry-level nursing programs in both didactic and clinical courses and engage in other professional roles such as professional staff development. Graduates who complete this program meet the educational criteria for the National League for Nursing (NLN) Nurse Educator Certification. The graduate must also meet the NLN role criteria for certification eligibility.
Post-Masters Programs (Certificate of Advanced Study – CAS)

The post-master’s certificate is designed to meet the educational needs of the master’s prepared registered nurse interested in obtaining initial preparation for advanced practice or a change in specialty as an advanced practice nurse (e.g., adult nurse practitioner to family nurse practitioner or adult gerontology primary care nurse practitioner). Students enrolled in this program join the master’s students enrolled in the respective concentrations. Programs of study are individualized based on prior master’s program of study.

Post-Master’s Certificates of Advanced Study (CAS) are available in the following specialties:
- Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (A-GPCNP)
- Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)
- Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)
- Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL)
- Nursing Education
- Nursing Management

Accelerated Master of Science Program for Certified Advanced Practice Nurses in Family, Adult, or Women’s Health

The accelerated MS program for advanced practice nurses entering the RN to MS or regular master’s program is designed to meet the educational needs of advanced practice nurses who do not hold a master’s degree in nursing or who do not either have a baccalaureate and/or master’s degree in nursing. Program length varies according to the academic credentials of the individual entering the program. Those practitioners without a baccalaureate degree must complete additional undergraduate coursework required in the RN to MS program.

General Information for Students

Location:

The School of Nursing has offices on both the Portland and Lewiston-Auburn (LAC) Campuses. The USM School of Nursing offices in Portland are located in Masterton Hall at 71 Bedford Street. Masterton Hall is home to the administrative office of the School, as well as offices for the faculty and staff. Brenda Webster, Coordinator of Nursing Student Services (207-780-4802) maintains an office on the first floor of Masterton Hall.

Communication:

Email policy: Email is the standard of communication at USM. Many items of communication will only take place via email, so please activate and frequently check your email! Please do not forward your USM e-mail to another e-mail account such as Gmail, or yahoo, as you may not receive messages sent through our list serves (see below).
E-Mail List serves: Nursing students are registered in an appropriate SON graduate list serve. The SON uses these list serves to send out information to students such as clinical and curriculum changes, employment opportunities, funding and scholarship options, and meeting notices. Students can also use these list serves to share information with each other. Brenda Webster (207) 280-4802 administers the list serves. If you aren’t receiving messages from the School of Nursing, please contact Brenda to make sure that you’re on the appropriate mailing list for your program.

- CONGRAD, for students in Master of Science in Nursing programs
- CONOPTIONS for students in the graduate Option Program

School of Nursing Faculty & Staff Contact Information

USM Faculty & Staff Contact Information

The USM Academic Calendar is published through the Registrar’s Office and provides information for fall, spring, and summer semesters.

Faculty mailboxes: In Portland, faculty mailboxes are located on the second floor of Masterton Hall in the mailroom near the elevator. Mail should have the faculty member’s name on it and may be inserted in the mail slot outside the mailroom. Mail for LAC faculty may be given to Elaine Ogrodnik at LAC.

Bulletin boards: Boards are for the posting of notices and information for all programs and are located near the mailboxes (Portland only).

Storm Cancellations: The decision to close the University is made by 5 a.m. Last year announcements were made by about 6 am and communicated to radio stations by 6:30 a.m. The following stations are contacted with information about the closing of USM classes, offices, the School of Law, and the off-campus centers:

- WMGX/WGAN Portland; WBLM Portland-Lewiston; WWGT Portland; WSME/WCDQ Sanford; WHYR Saco; WPKM Portland; WYNZ Portland; WMPG Gorham; WPOR Portland; WCLZ Brunswick; WJTO/WIGY Bath; WOXO Norway; WTVL Waterville; WTSN Dover, NH; WKZS/WLAM/WJBQ Lewiston; WRKD/WMCM Rockland; WIDE Biddeford; WMME Augusta; WXGL Lewiston; WHEB Portsmouth, NH; WABK Augusta; and WCME Wiscasset. Any changes in this list occur in late fall. Please watch the Free Press (the USM student newspaper) for an updated list.

- University closings are also announced via the USM Storm Line (207-780-4800) - Portland campus.

- Students, faculty, and the general public calling from local areas may use this number. Those people calling long distance between 6:00 AM and 8:00 PM may call 1-800-800-4876. You will need to choose “1” for the Storm Line

- USM Alert is the emergency warning system of the University. You can receive text and/or e-mail messages about cancellations by signing up for this service.

- The decision to cancel evening classes (after 4 p.m.) is made by 2 p.m. of that day.

- Individual clinical faculty members have the prerogative to cancel their own group's clinical day (applies to students enrolled in Option Program only).
• Should students find the weather conditions severe in their area and be unsure about traveling to their clinical/practicum site, they should call their clinical instructor/preceptor prior to leaving home.

Blackboard & MaineStreet:

Blackboard is a course development tool which allows your instructor to teach all or part of your course on the Web. If you’re unfamiliar with Blackboard, check out UMS Blackboard Support for more information. You can do some or all of the following in your course, depending on how your instructor plans the course:
• See announcements about the course
• See your instructor's biographical and contact information
• Check the syllabus, including assignments and due dates, readings, etc.
• Participate in on-line "chats" (synchronous) with other students and your instructor
• Participate in a Discussion Board (asynchronous), posting and reading messages from your instructor and other students
• Access course materials and resources on the Web
• Participate in small group discussions and projects
• Send assignments to instructors via an “activated” assignment mechanism and receive their feedback and your grade via the same venue
• Take on-line quizzes and check your grade
• Create your own Web page to introduce yourself to the class

MaineStreet is the UMS information system gateway for course search, registration, etc. If you move, or change your phone number, you can change this information on-line in your MaineStreet Student Center. Please make sure that your contact information is up-to-date.

Computer assistance is available through the USM Help Desk
Academic Program Information

Advisement and Registration

Advising Bulletin
Prior to the enrollment period for fall and spring semesters, the Nursing Student Advising Bulletin is posted on the Graduate Student Resource page. The Nursing Student Advising Bulletin for each fall semester also includes course offerings for the preceding summer. This bulletin offers important information about course requirements and registration each semester.

Advisors
All students enrolled in the graduate nursing program are assigned an advisor. Each semester graduate students are assigned a registration date by the Registrar’s Office. Students may not register for courses without their advisor's prior approval. After meeting with the advisor, students receive a PIN which allows self-enrollment in classes via MaineStreet.

While working on undergraduate course work, all graduate students matriculated into the RN-MS program are assigned to Brenda Webster as their academic advisor. Brenda Webster (207) 780-4802, Coordinator of Nursing Student Services, can be contacted regarding program requirements. RN- MS students are assigned a graduate faculty advisor when they begin their graduate level work.

MS-Option students are advised by Elizabeth Elliott (207) 780-4508, Coordinator of the Undergraduate Nursing Programs, on all matters pertaining to the undergraduate program. During their first summer taking graduate courses, Option students are advised by Cheryl Sarton (207) 780-4114. During the next two years of graduate study, Option students are assigned a graduate faculty advisor who is available for all other advising purposes relating to the graduate program.

Students who do not know who their advisor is may contact Brenda Webster at (207) 780-4802 or look in their “Student Service Center” section of MaineStreet.

There are five purposes for academic advising with the underlying purpose of enhancing student success at USM:

1. *Conveying the Purposes of the University*: includes advice regarding the meaning of higher education, the essence of disciplinary and interdisciplinary study, the reasons for academic requirements, the expected standards of achievement and the spirit and satisfaction of scholarly work.
2. *Information Sharing*: includes advice about registration, course offerings, areas of faculty interest and expertise, educational opportunities, degree programs and requirements, educational policies and regulations, as well as administrative procedures.
3. *Short Range Program Planning*: includes advice and consultation regarding program planning, selection of specific courses, adjustments in course loads, and pre-registration.
4. *Long Range Planning*: includes advice and consultation about educational and professional objectives suited to the student's demonstrated abilities and interests, as well as identification of the relationship between course programs and occupations.
5. *Student Referral*: recognizes that the academic advisor cannot meet all student needs, but that specialized campus services are available for advice and consultation complimentary to the knowledge and skill of the advisor.
Responsibilities of the Student (Advisee)

1. Establish time to meet with your advisor at least once a semester. Specific office hours are often posted on your faculty advisor's office door.
2. Obtain a grid outlining the requirements for your nursing program and use it to monitor progress toward fulfilling degree requirements.
3. Plan a suitable schedule of classes before seeing your advisor.
4. Inform your advisor of changes which directly affect your academic performance and educational goals (e.g. finances, job, health, and academic performance, changes in academic and career goals).
5. Discuss academic performance and its implications with your advisor.
6. Follow-up on referrals agreed upon with your advisor.
7. Be familiar with the published rules and regulations of the School of Nursing and the University, including criteria for graduation.

Responsibilities of the Advisor

1. Establish, post, and maintain adequate office hours throughout the term, with particular emphasis given to pre-registration and the add/drop period. Give student phone numbers where you may be reached to arrange appointments.
2. Be knowledgeable about the nursing program, University requirements, and degree requirements.
3. Assist student in planning a suitable schedule of classes.
4. Discuss academic performance and its implications with students.
5. Refer student to appropriate resources as necessary.
6. Maintain appropriate records of advising and academic progress.
7. Be a student advocate - based on trust and confidentiality.

The Advising Network is a valuable resource for students in planning sessions with their advisor. This website also includes a GPA calculator, graduation planner, and other helpful links to USM services.

Registration

See the Registrar’s home page for information about add/drop periods and registration policies. The following forms are available on the Registrar’s website:

- Academic Forgiveness
- Add Form
- Application for Degree
- Catalog Change Date
- Change of Major
- Course Withdrawal
- Drop Form
- Name and Address Change
- Semester Leave Form
- Transcript Request Form

Withdrawal from Courses

Students should discuss adding and dropping courses with their advisor. There may be both academic and financial ramifications from withdrawing from classes, as outlined here:
http://usm.maine.edu/reg/addingdroppingwithdrawal. Students who must withdraw from all classes for a semester should fill out the Semester Leave Form found at http://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/Office%20of%20the%20Registrar/semesterleave.pdf.

Student Support Services

Disability Accommodations
If you need course accommodations because of a disability or injury, please make an appointment with the Disability Service Center at (207) 780-4706 as soon as possible.

Library
The libraries on the Portland and Gorham campuses and at Lewiston-Auburn College have extensive holdings. Many nursing materials are held in Portland. Hours are posted at the library. Library personnel are available for assistance, questions, and an orientation to resources and their use. The following people are most consistently involved with nursing students:

- Portland: the reference staff can help in researching and defining topics and areas of interest.
- Cassie Fitzherbert, or her assistant (207) 780-4279 - can help you gain access to journals and books not held at USM through Interlibrary Loan.
- Pat Prieto (207) 780-5662- is the subject librarian for Nursing, and can run computer searches to assist you in identifying resources on a given topic.
- Evelyn Greenlaw (207) 753-6541 – is available on the Lewiston-Auburn campus

Textbooks
Required textbooks for each course are listed at the USM Bookstore’s website.

Tutoring
Contact your advisor or course instructor if you need extra help in a specific subject. Fellow students may be interested in tutoring. Funds may be available for students who have Federal Work Study who are interested in tutoring. The Learning Commons can assist with study and test taking skills, tutoring, and other services.

USM Student Online Orientation is an on-line resource for students new to USM.

USM Counseling Services are available to all USM Students on both the Portland and Gorham campuses.

Transportation: Clinical experiences occur in a variety of settings in the southern and south central Maine areas for undergraduate students and throughout Maine and southern New Hampshire for graduate students. Students must be prepared to provide their own transportation to rural as well as urban areas. During fall and spring semesters, USM operates a free shuttle bus service on a regular schedule between the Portland and Gorham campuses.

Campus Maps & Directions

Course and Instructor Evaluations
At the end of each nursing course every student is given a form for evaluating both the instructor and the course. Students can choose to sign it or not. Instructors see both signed and unsigned copies after grades are submitted for the course; signed copies are kept in the instructor’s file. Portland evaluation packets
may be dropped off with Katie Mitchell, Administrative Assistant, in the nursing administrative offices on the first floor of Masterton Hall (#124).

**Graduate Practicum & Experiential Courses**
Clinical and experiential placements for graduate student practicum occur in a variety of settings and states (ME, NH, MA, etc) depending on the concentration in which students are matriculated. Students enrolled in the advanced practice concentrations are placed with nurse practitioners, physicians, psychiatrists, and/or physician assistants depending on program specialty and programmatic requirements. Students enrolled in the clinical nurse leader, nursing education, or nursing management concentrations are placed with preceptors in health care and/or academic institutions depending on their program requirements.

The coordination and clinical placements of students in the Family and Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner concentrations are the responsibility of the Coordinator of Graduate Clinical Placements, Deb Stone, part-time nursing faculty. Clinical placements for graduate students in the Family Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner specialty concentrations are arranged by Abby Darus, part-time nursing faculty. Clinical placements for the Nurse Education track are arranged by Dr. Linda Samia, full-time nursing faculty.

Prior to each semester a letter is sent to each contracted preceptor by the faculty member responsible for the coordination of clinical placements. The letter is verification of student placement, the specific focus of the expected clinical experience, the minimum number of clinical hours to be completed based on programmatic requirements, student responsibilities [i.e., provides to preceptor(s) - copies of syllabus, clinical objectives, preceptor handbook, student evaluation form, and clinical hour form], acknowledgement of a signed clinical affiliation agreement with the SON, and coordinator contact information.

Graduate students also receive a letter from the clinical coordinator responsible for their clinical placements that confirms their clinical practicum site, minimum clinical hours to be completed per semester, status of RN licensure, and contact information.

At the beginning of each semester, faculty assigned to the seminar and practicum courses also send a letter to each preceptor(s) assigned to individual students that introduces them to the preceptor and provides contact information as the faculty of record for the seminar/practicum course. Additional information is provided regarding the student evaluation process, completion of the clinical hours form, and the planning of a site evaluation visit and student observation during the semester.

**Practicum/Clinical Prerequisites**

**Health & Immunization Policy**
Students are to fulfill the University's published Health Policies and Regulations (see graduate catalog). In addition, students are to comply with the health requirements of the School of Nursing

In order to meet the health requirements of the various clinical facilities and to protect students as well as the clients being cared for, tests and immunizations are required prior to the start of the first clinical/laboratory/practicum experience.

- **Undergraduate (Option Program only)** - This first experience occurs during NUR 213. Failure to comply with these health and immunization requirements by the stated deadlines will prevent students from moving forward in their nursing education. Visit the health requirements link for the latest information about these policies. Health
requirement information MUST be submitted on-line. There is a fee associated with this service which must be paid by credit card.

- **Graduate** – The first experience for students is at the beginning of their clinical practicum sequence which will continue for 2 to 3 semesters depending on specialty concentration. Failure to comply with these health and immunization requirements by the stated deadlines will prevent students from moving forward in their nursing education. Visit the [health requirements](#) link for the latest information about these policies. Health requirement information must be submitted on-line. There is a fee associated with this service which must be paid by credit card.

**Background Check Policy**

All students must pay for and complete a comprehensive background check. In addition, students must sign a disclosure agreement allowing the school to provide access to this background information to our clinical affiliates. Affiliates have the right to deny clinical placement based on criminal background. Denial of clinical placements will stop progression in the nursing program. Background check information is submitted online. Information about this requirement is here: [http://www.usm.maine.edu/nursing/health-and-immunization-requirements-nursing-clinical-settings](http://www.usm.maine.edu/nursing/health-and-immunization-requirements-nursing-clinical-settings)

- The background check must be complete prior to starting the undergraduate clinical experiences (Option Program only) and the graduate specialty clinical sequence.

**Dress Code – practicum/clinical**

Graduate students who engage in undergraduate clinical experiences (Option Program only) must adhere to undergraduate [Uniform Requirements](#). Graduate students engaged in their graduate level practicum must adhere to the dress code of the clinical site (e.g., lab coat with USM insignia and name tag over street clothes).

**Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens**

Students who are exposed to blood-borne pathogens need to adhere to the SON tracking policy and complete the [Student Incident Exposure Tracking Procedure and Form](#).

**Learning Resource & Simulation Center (LRSC) Portland**

The University of Southern Maine School of Nursing LRSC is a state of the art facility occupying three distinct spaces in Masterton Hall and designed to serve many courses including Health Assessment for undergraduates and graduates, nursing fundamentals and advanced nursing skills. It is equipped to best prepare students for evidence-based practices they will use as novice and expert nurses. We have anatomical models for inspection and observation as well as mannequins for the practice of nursing in simulated nursing environments. Patient simulators include interactive mannequins, diverse in age, gender, and race, and the capability for behavioral, live action, and high fidelity simulations. In other words, monitors beep, patients breathe, and babies cry—just as they do in real-life settings. Simulations offer challenging but safe opportunities to review and assess the effectiveness of our students’ developing competencies, diagnostic abilities, and organizational and decision-making choices. The high-tech, high-touch interaction shapes our students’ experience with the knowledge, the tools, and the best practices to influence care and policy. The experiences in these learning spaces teach the student to perform both individually and as a team member. Students may sign out a variety of equipment for home practice with vital signs and health assessments.

**CNA Registry:** The Maine State Board of Nursing allows students to apply to be listed on the Maine Certified Nurse Assistant (CAN) Registry when they have completed half of their first full semester of
clinical work. At USM, this full semester course is NUR 325 clinical (Introduction to Adult/Older Adult Health clinical). Since the student may be halfway through a clinical course at the time of request, the student will need to obtain a Mid-semester Clinical Validation Form from their instructor at the mid-semester point. This statement should then be sent to Brenda Webster who will write a letter to the MSBN in place of the CNA Training Certificate required as part of the application documentation. Please note that CNA eligibility is subject to change by the MSBN.

Graduation – USM and School of Nursing

USM Graduation
During the semester in which the student expects to graduate, the student must initiate processing an application for degree. There are two methods of completing this process as follows:

- Log onto MaineStreet, choose “Student Self Service”, then “Student Center”, then “other academic”, then “apply for graduation”, and follow the prompts. OR
- Print and complete an Application for Degree. This form may be faxed to Gorham Registrar’s Office at 207-780-5517.

Refer to the graduate catalog for graduation requirements. Graduation dates for graduate students are either in December or May. Caps and Gowns are ordered from the USM Bookstore.

USM Commencement
Commencement takes place in May, usually at the Cumberland County Civic Center in Portland. If there are questions about Commencement contact the Registrar’s Office at 207-780-5230.

SON Convocation
Convocation is the School of Nursing’s pinning ceremony that takes place at the end of each semester. An e-mail will be sent during the semester about ordering pins. Tickets to Convocation are limited depending on how many students are graduating.

Licensure & Certification Information

National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN)
This nationwide computerized test was developed and is regulated by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing https://www.ncsbn.org. Visit the state board of nursing website in the state to which you plan to apply for your first license for information about how to apply to take the NCLEX-RN. Brenda Webster is the contact person for information about the NCLEX-RN. Option students in the graduate nursing program are eligible to sit for NCLEX-RN upon completion of all undergraduate course work and 9 credits of graduate course work. Option students are invited to the NCLEX-RN information session associated with NUR 470 which is held each semester.
Graduate students are eligible to sit for national certification in the area of specialty completed during their graduate nursing education. Four organizations are currently available from which to obtain certification in certain specialty areas.

- American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
  - Adult-Gerontology Primacy Care Nurse Practitioner
  - Family Nurse Practitioner
  - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
  - Nursing Management - must also meet the ANCC role criteria for certification eligibility.

- Commission on Nurse Certification
  - Clinical Nurse Leaders

- American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)
  - Family Nurse Practitioner

- National League for Nursing
  - Nursing Education – must also meet NLN role criteria for certification eligibility

Each graduate student must complete the certification application and submit it to Brenda Webster. Upon successful completion of all graduate courses and verification of graduation status, the application will be signed by the SON Director and returned to the student for submission.

Scholarships & Other Funding Sources

The Financial Aid Office has information about scholarships and other funding sources.

Federal Work Study: There are some positions at SON for those students who have work study funds. On the Portland campus, contact Susan Taylor for more information.

School of Nursing Scholarships: The Application Information Page has more information about applying for nursing scholarships. The School of Nursing awards ceremony is held every April.

School of Nursing – Professional Nurse Traineeships
These Traineeships may pay all or part of the cost of the tuition, books, and fees of the program of nursing and reasonable living expenses of the individual during the period for which the traineeship is provided. To be eligible, students must be matriculated and enrolled in either full-time or part-time study.

National Health Service Corps (NHSC): Since 1972, more than 30,000 clinicians have served in the Corps, bringing high quality health care to places and people without access to even basic services. Nearly 80 percent stay in the underserved area after fulfilling the NHSC service commitment; more than half make a career of caring for underserved people. In 2011, about 3,500 NHSC providers cared for over 4 million people - changing their own and their patients' lives. Information about the NHSC can be found at: http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/.

Scholarship: students who are awarded scholarships due so in exchange for 2 to 4 years of service in a National Health Service Corps (NHSC) approved site in a Health Professional
Shortage Area of greatest need. Information can be found at: http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/scholarships/index.html.

- Tuition, fees, other reasonable educational costs and living stipend
- Students in training to become primary care physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, or physician assistants are eligible.

**Loan Repayment**: students who are approved due so in exchange for 2 years of service in an NHSC-approved site in a Health Professional Shortage Area. Information can be found at: http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment/.

- $50,000 toward repayment of student loans (or outstanding balance, if it is less than $50,000)
- Potential for additional years of support
- Physicians, nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, physician assistants, dentists, dental hygienists, and mental health providers are eligible.

**Graduate Research/Teaching Assistantships**: An essential purpose of graduate study is to transform participants from students to developed professionals and scholars. Well-designed graduate assistantships serve to enhance the graduate experience and to facilitate the desired growth in professionalism and scholarship. Graduate assistantships serve three purposes: to provide financial support for students, to enhance students’ professional and scholarly development, and to support faculty scholarship and teaching. To learn more about graduate assistantships go to: http://usm.maine.edu/grad/graduate-assistantships.

**USM Financial Resources**
For additional graduate financial aid opportunities contact the USM Financial Aid Office (207) 780-5250 on the Gorham campus. The Reference Librarians at the University Library on the Portland Campus can help locate other scholarship/financial aid sources.

**USM Graduate Student Government**
The role of the Graduate Student Government (GSG) is to represent graduate student interests to the USM administration, faculty, and community. The GSG enhances graduate student quality of life by pursuing and providing opportunities for graduate student professional development, social events, and other means that they shall find appropriate. The graduate senate membership is representative of the graduate programs at USM.

**Nursing Organization**
*Sigma Theta Tau International* - *Honor Society of Nursing*

- **Organizational Mission**: The mission of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International is to support the learning, knowledge, and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide.
- **Society Vision**: The vision of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International is to create a global community of nurses who lead in using knowledge, scholarship, service and learning to improve the health of the world’s people.
**Membership:** Membership is by invitation to baccalaureate and graduate nursing students who demonstrate excellence in scholarship, and to nurse leaders exhibiting exceptional achievements in nursing.

**The Local Chapter:**
- **Kappa Zeta Chapter-at-Large** was established in 1988 and is co-sponsored by the University of Southern Maine School of Nursing, St. Joseph’s College Department of Nursing, and the University of New England Department of Nursing. Undergraduate students, upon completion of their junior year, graduate students, and RN students who meet the grade point average and class standing criteria are eligible to join. Contact members of Sigma Theta Tau International to learn more about the organization.
Academic Policies

Refer to the graduate catalog for comprehensive policy information.

USM Academic Policies

Academic Integrity Policies
Everyone associated with the University of Southern Maine is expected to adhere to the principles of academic integrity central to the academic function of the University. Any breach of academic integrity represents a serious offense. Each student has a responsibility to know the standards of conduct and expectations of academic integrity that apply to academic tasks. Violations of student academic integrity include any actions that attempt to promote or enhance the academic standing of any student by dishonest means. Cheating on an examination, stealing the words or ideas of another (i.e., plagiarism), making statements known to be false or misleading, falsifying the results of one’s research, improperly using library materials or computer files, or altering or forging academic records are examples of violations of this policy that are contrary to the academic purposes for which the University exists. Acts that violate academic integrity disrupt the educational process and are not acceptable.

Evidence of a violation of the academic integrity policy will normally result in disciplinary action. A copy of the complete policy may be obtained from the Office of Community Standards, 125 Upton Hall, Gorham, (207) 780-5242.

Plagiarism
The development of original thinking and intellectual honesty are regarded as central to a graduate education. Although in the pursuit of these goals, students will continually consult existing works, it is expected that they will acknowledge the debt owed to others by citing all sources.

Plagiarism, the use without attribution of language, ideas, or the organization of ideas not one’s own, is a fundamental breach of basic academic principles and is prohibited in all courses. Unless group work is assigned, coursework is normally completed independently. If books, journals, magazines, or any other sources are reviewed and the ideas or language therein used, they must be cited. Where specific guidelines are not given, students should consult a reference source on proper notation.

Evidence of plagiarism will result in a grade of F for the assignment and may, at the discretion of the instructor, lead to an F in the course. In addition, further sanctions (i.e., censure, probation, suspension, or dismissal) may be imposed through the Student Conduct Code.

The case of any student who admits to or is found guilty of a violation of academic integrity will be reviewed by the Student Conduct Code Review Board. The student will be subject to appropriate sanctions, including expulsion from the University. A copy of the USM Student Guide to Academic Integrity and/or a copy of the Student Academic Integrity Policy is available from the Office of Community Standards, 125 Upton Hall, Gorham, (207) 780-5242.
Academic Policies for Graduate Students

Full-time status: Students must register for nine (9) credits per semester in order to achieve full-time status.

Continuous Enrollment Policy
Continuous enrollment requires that every graduate student must either be enrolled in coursework in his/her program (minimum of six [6] credits per calendar year required), enrolled in GRS 601, 602, 701, or 702, or be on a formal leave of absence, approved by the student’s program chair and on file with the Office of Graduate Studies. The above listed courses aid students in maintaining continuous enrollment status. Enrollment in any of these courses requires authorization as noted on the approval form and by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Withdrawal
Withdrawal from the University of Southern Maine may be for personal reasons on the part of the student, academic reasons as determined by the program requirements, or by administrative decision.

- **Student Withdrawal** To withdraw from the University the student must submit an official Withdrawal Form to the Registrar’s Office and complete an exit interview with his or her advisor.
- **Academic Withdrawal** If a student has not made satisfactory academic progress toward fulfilling degree requirements (see above), he or she may be withdrawn from the University.
- **Administrative Withdrawal** A student may be withdrawn from a particular graduate program for reasons of a professional nature as determined by the program director or department chair.

Student Appeals and Complaints

Non-Academic Complaints
To provide graduate students with assistance in resolving disagreements or complaints of a non-academic nature, the University has designated the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) to respond to student inquiries. The mission of OGS is to provide impartial guidance to students in identifying the nature of their disagreement or complaint. OGS staff will guide students to the appropriate University policy or procedure to utilize in seeking resolution. The academic policies described below are not applicable to student complaints about unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment; however, an OGS representative can advise the student about the University policies and procedures to follow when student complaints of this nature arise.

Academic Grade Appeal Policy
The purpose of the academic grade appeal policy is to provide a fair and speedy review of all student appeals of academic grades in graduate/professional programs at the University of Southern Maine; this policy will permit such appeals to be determined in a manner that reflects the interests of both the student and the instructor. The only matters reviewable under this policy are claims of prejudice on the part of an instructor in an academic exercise or activity for which a grade leading to academic credit is awarded, and/or evident and prejudicial error in the administration or grading method used for any paper, examination, performance, or other exercise or activity for which a grade leading to academic credit is awarded, provided that the academic judgment used in determining the merits of the grade to be awarded to such exercise of activity shall not be reviewable.
An appeal under this policy shall be carried out according to the following procedures:

1. The student should present his or her claim, in writing, to the instructor involved and shall seek to have the matter resolved by the instructor. In no event shall there be a right of appeal hereunder for a claim presented to the instructor more than 30 days after a final grade is posted to the student's record. The instructor must respond within 14 days of receiving the appeal.

2. If the student remains aggrieved by the decision of the instructor under Step 1, he or she may, within 14 days after formal receipt of the instructor's final decision, appeal, in writing, to the chairperson of the department or program director of the college in which the course or other exercise or activity is offered. The chairperson/program director must respond within 14 days of receiving the appeal.

3. If the student remains aggrieved by the decision of the chairperson or program director of the department under Step 2, he or she may, within 14 days after formal receipt of the chairperson's or program directors final decision, appeal, in writing, to the dean of the college in which the course or other exercise or activity is offered.

4. The dean, after discussion with the student and instructor, may resolve the grievance by agreement or render a decision within 21 days of receipt of the written appeal. The decision may be (a) that the appeal be dismissed, (b) that a grade be changed or the student be allowed an opportunity to retake an examination or other exercise, or (c) that another appropriate remedy be administered.

5. The student or the instructor may, within 14 days of the receipt of the decision of the dean, appeal to the dean of Graduate Studies in writing, stating the reason for the appeal and delivering a copy of the writing to the opposing party and the dean. The opposing party may, within 10 days of receipt of the reasons for appeal, reply in writing to the associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies. The dean of Graduate Studies shall review the original claim, the written decision of the chairperson or program director and dean, and the written reasons for the appeal and reply. The dean of Graduate Studies shall, within 28 days of receipt of the appeal and after reviewing the matter, prepare a written decision which shall uphold the decision of the chairperson, program director, or dean, or prescribe any other appropriate remedy. The dean of Graduate Studies' decision shall be final and not subject to further review. Copies of the decision of the dean of Graduate Studies shall be delivered to the student, the instructor, and the chairperson or program director and dean. The total time for resolution from the first appeal to the final decision shall be less than 120 days. If a faculty member/administrator fails to address the appeal within the specified time frame, the student may take the appeal to the next level.

**Appeals or Dismissal or Withdrawal**

A graduate student has the right to appeal an academic dismissal or withdrawal by their academic program. Such an appeal of an academic dismissal or withdrawal must follow the appeals process as defined by the graduate program’s school or college, which must include a review by the Dean of the College as part of this process. It is the responsibility of the student to demonstrate a compelling case at each step of the appeal process. On appeal, the decision of a graduate program is presumed to be correct and final unless the student presents sufficient facts to establish that the due process was not followed. The question to be considered in the appeal is whether one or more of the following factors improperly entered into the program decision to dismiss or withdrawal of the student into the program: there was arbitrariness, capriciousness, a constitutional or statutory violation (complaints of discrimination are referred to the Office of Equity and Compliance), a material failure to follow procedures, or a substantial departure from accepted academic norms when the program decision was made, or there is new/additional information that
could bear on the program decision. Students must be advised of the decision by the Academic Dean of the College in writing within 30 days of the student appeal. Within 14 days following receipt, in writing, of the decision by the dean, the student may appeal the decision to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The decision of the dean of Graduate Studies shall be rendered within three weeks of a student appeal of academic dismissal or withdrawal and shall be final.

If a student withdraws or is withdrawn from the University during the first two weeks of the semester, there will be no courses or grades recorded. A student withdrawing or being withdrawn after the second week through the eighth week will receive a W grade for each course in which the student was enrolled. A student withdrawing or being withdrawn after the eighth week will receive regular grade designations as determined by the instructor(s). Under unusual circumstances, grades of W can be assigned after the eighth week if approved by the instructor and the director of the program, and with final approval of the associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies.

These graduate appeal policies can be found at: http://usm.maine.edu/reg(academic-policies-graduate

School of Nursing Graduate Academic Policies

Attendance

Clinical/practicum attendance is mandatory: In case of inclement weather, students are responsible for ascertaining whether or not clinical is canceled.

Classroom attendance: The expectation is that students will attend class. Content presented in class may be amplification of material read or material not found in the readings. Students are responsible for missed classes. A course syllabus may expand upon this policy.

Exams

Exams will not be given early. If an exam must be missed due to extraordinary circumstances, the course faculty member(s) must be notified personally prior to the exam. Exam make-up may be arranged with the faculty member(s), who reserves the right to change the examination format or defer the exam. A course syllabus may expand upon this policy.

Papers: APA Format: Students are expected to follow the format of *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA). The APA Publication Manual presents explicit style requirements for authors and students in the preparation of manuscripts and papers. The sample paper found in the back of the APA manual may be very helpful. APA tutoring is available through the Learning Center located in Luther Bonney Hall (207) 780-4228.

Papers are due on the date specified in the syllabus or negotiated with the faculty member. Any paper received after the designated date will be considered late. Exception to the due date will be made only under extraordinary circumstances and must be negotiated before the paper is due. A paper may have 5 percentage points deducted for every day it is late. Students should keep a clean copy of all papers submitted. If a student wishes to contest a grade on a paper, he/she may submit this clean copy to the Director of the School of Nursing with a request for a second reader. Second reader and student will remain anonymous. The final grade for a paper submitted for a second reading will be the average of the original grade and the grade given by the second reader.
Confidentiality: Students are expected to maintain professional confidentiality regarding clients' identities and sensitive information by: not including identifying information (client initials, address, employment, etc.) in course work or course notes; guarding any notes carefully; limiting discussions of clients to clinical instructor/graduate preceptor/seminar faculty, fellow students during clinical conference/graduate clinical seminar and with appropriate staff members of the clinical agency. This expectation is required by federal law with fees and punishment for disclosure of a patient's personal health information. It is also important to treat any sensitive information related to peers and faculty with confidentially, accountability, and responsibility.

The School of Nursing subscribes to the ANA guidelines* for ethical practice. These guidelines state that:

1. The nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurses’ primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.
4. The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and determines the appropriate delegation of tasks consistent with the nurse’s obligation to provide optimum patient care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to preserve integrity and safety, to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse participates in establishing, maintaining, and improving health care environments and conditions of employment conducive to the provision of quality health care and consistent with the values of the profession through individual and collective action.
7. The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to practice, education, administration, and knowledge development.
8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public in promoting community, national, and international efforts to meet health needs.
9. The profession of nursing, as represented by associations and their members, is responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy.


Cheating: If a student is found cheating on an exam or an assignment, the policies stated under plagiarism in the appropriate graduate catalog will be followed.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined by the faculty, in part, as “the submission of another’s work as one’s own, without adequate attribution.” Should a student be found plagiarizing in a paper, case study, nursing care plan, or log, the student will be reported by the faculty member to the Director of the School of Nursing. The process described in the USM Student Academic Integrity Policy will be used. See the current edition of the USM or graduate catalog for specific information. Plagiarism is a serious offense in academia and may result in expulsion from the School of Nursing and the University.
ATI Tests (policy applies to students enrolled in Option Program only)
Students are required to take specific tests from the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) when they are registered for courses which require these tests. This program helps students prepare for the NCLEX-RN examination and helps the School of Nursing with curriculum evaluation. Some exams are given in a proctored format; some exams are given in an un-proctored format. For un-proctored exams, there will be a two week period of availability and students must complete within the time frame posted. On-line practice exams will also be available during the semester. They are recommended and are valuable tools.

The ATI Comprehensive Predictor Assessment for RN's is a proctored exam designed to help students and faculty assess student preparation for the NCLEX-RN exam. Students must take the Predictor exam within a scheduled time frame during the semester. Option students take this exam during their first summer of graduate courses, prior to taking their NCLEX-RN exam.

Students who fail to take the required ATI exams by the end of exam week will lose a minimum of 2 points from their final grade in the course requiring an ATI. Faculty may choose to subtract additional points for missing the exam and may opt to give incentive points. There are no ATI makeup exams after the posted time frame.

Clinical/Practicum Policies
Students are required to attend all clinical experiences. It is the student's responsibility to arrange transportation to and from the clinical setting. If a student, due to extraordinary circumstances, must miss a clinical experience, the instructor and the clinical site must be notified prior to the time of the clinical. Clinical make-ups will be at the discretion of the instructor/preceptor.

Responsibility and Accountability in nursing practice are required at all times. Failure in these areas may result in dismissal from the School of Nursing. Students are expected to be aware of their clinical practice limitations and to seek appropriate guidance from clinical faculty/preceptors as appropriate and necessary. Use of mind-altering drugs (alcohol, marijuana, depressants, etc.) before or during clinical experiences is grounds for dismissal from the nursing program. See The USM Substance Abuse Policy in the current graduate catalog.

Care Plans (applies to students in Option Program only)
Care Plans are tools for providing high level care. Therefore, care plans need to be prepared before the clinical nursing experience whenever possible and appropriate. Care plans are required to meet minimum guidelines as established by individual clinical instructors. It is important to remember the nursing care for the client and not the care plan itself is the end product of the planning. Consistent lateness or failure to complete care plans may result in an unsatisfactory evaluation in safety and accountability and thus a failure in the course.

Grading Policies
Classroom Grading
Refer to the USM graduate catalog for additional general University grading policies.

In the graduate program, all students must achieve a minimum of a B- for all required undergraduate (RN-MS, Option students) and graduate courses. In order for students enrolled in all graduate programs to remain in good academic standing, students must maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.
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<tr>
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<td>90-92</td>
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**Clinical Grading (undergraduate policy applies to students enrolled in Option Program only)**

- H- Pass with distinction
- P- Pass
- L- Low Pass
- F- Fail

Pass with distinction represents the exceptional student: It begins with requiring that a student be successful in all criteria identified on the Nursing Clinical Performance Appraisal (DOC).

Further criteria include:

- Someone who is self-directed and seeks opportunities on her or his own.
- Someone who assumes responsibility for learning in new situations.
- Someone who identifies and manages conflict effectively.
- Someone who examines ethical issues in practice and can identify the ethical components of her or his practice.
- Someone with strong evidence of theory or research-based practice.
- This honor is ultimately based on the opinion of the individual clinical instructor.

The faculty member will write an exemplar or narrative of exemplary nursing care demonstrated by the student during the clinical rotation. Clinical faculty in a given course will meet at the end of the course to discuss those student(s) worthy of receiving a pass with distinction.

**Low Pass:** A clinical instructor choosing to give a low pass to a student is required to clearly identify, using the Clinical Performance Appraisal found at the clinical information page, areas where the student is lacking, and, in association with the student, identify strategies for addressing those weaknesses. This appraisal is to be placed in the student’s file. If a student receives a second low pass grade, this second low pass constitutes an F which stops progression in clinical course work and necessitates a repeat of the clinical course in which it was received. Please review SON policies related to repeating coursework in the Academic Policies section of the graduate catalog. This notification is to be copied to the student’s advisor. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor of the subsequent clinical course to discuss the weaknesses identified in the clinical appraisal resulting in a low pass designation.
Program Policies
In addition to the general policies described in the University of Southern Maine graduate catalog Academic Policies chapter, specific policies for the graduate program in nursing are as follows:

General Enrollment Policies
When students have accepted admission to the Graduate Nursing Program they must matriculate in the semester for which they were admitted or they will be withdrawn from the program.

Students enrolled in either the MS Option Program or the RN to Master of Science Degree Program must successfully complete all of the required undergraduate requirements before starting their graduate course of study. If students in either of these programs choose to drop back into the traditional undergraduate nursing program they will be withdrawn from the Graduate Nursing Program. Students may then reapply to the graduate nursing program once they have successfully completed the Bachelor of Science degree with a major in nursing and successfully passed the NCLEX-RN examination (if applicable).

Matriculated students in the early phase of their graduate studies may choose to change their area of specialization prior to starting the specialty core. Transfer of major into a specialty other than identified at the time of matriculation is dependent on availability. Once graduate students have started in the theory/clinical sequence of their specialty concentration no changes will be permitted.

Admission Credit
This credit, which has been earned at USM, must be approved by the graduate admission committee prior to admission and is subject to the condition that a grade of B or better was received for the coursework. No graduate courses that are older than five years will be accepted for admission credit. Graduate courses in Advanced Pharmacology, Advanced Psychopharmacology, or Advanced Health Assessment will not be accepted for admission credit if older than three years. A maximum of six (6) credit hours may be approved for admission credit provided a grade of at least a B was earned in each individual course. Exceptions to the maximum credits allowed at time of admission must be approved by the Graduate Curriculum, Admission, and Advancement Committee (GCAAC).

Transfer Credit
This credit must be approved at the time of admission and request for approval included as part of the admission application. No graduate courses that are older than five years will be accepted for transfer credit. Graduate courses in Advanced Pharmacology, Advanced Psychopharmacology or Advanced Health Assessment will not be accepted for transfer credit if older than three years. Up to a total of nine (9) credit hours may be approved as transfer credit provided a grade of at least a B was earned in each individual course. Additional transfer credit may be approved in unusual circumstances. Transfer credits will be noted on the student’s USM transcript and counted toward the student’s degree.

• For each graduate course the student wishes to be considered for transfer credit, the student must:
  • Have completed the course in question no more than five years prior to beginning graduate study in nursing at USM.
  • Have submitted, as part of the application file, a transcript that indicates completion of the course under consideration for transfer, with a minimum grade of B.
• Have submitted a complete syllabus (course name and number, course description and objectives, reading lists, etc.) and supporting documentation (evaluation information, papers/reports, etc.), and indicated the USM course name and number to be considered as equivalent.

• The request will be reviewed by the Graduate Curriculum, Admission and Advancement Committee (GCAAC) committee and referred to the faculty designee who has expertise in the area of instruction. The faculty designee may ask for additional information from the student, including an official transcript, or consult with the previous instructor or other sources.

• The designee will then make a recommendation to the graduate admissions committee, and the committee members will vote to determine whether the course(s) is/are considered equivalent.

• The student will be informed of the decision by the chair of graduate admissions committee.

• The result of the request will be documented in the student’s SON academic file, and the appropriate information will be filed in the registrar’s office.

Background Check Policy
Students must pay for and complete a comprehensive background check prior to starting graduate clinical courses. In addition, students must sign a disclosure agreement allowing the school to provide access to this background information to our clinical affiliates. Affiliates have the right to deny clinical placement based on criminal background. Denial of clinical placements will stop progression in the graduate nursing program.

Program Grade Policies
In the undergraduate portion of their program, students in the RN-MS Program and students in the MS-Option Program for non-nurses must achieve a minimum of a B- in all NUR, CON, statistics, and pathophysiology designated undergraduate courses. If such students earn below a B-, they may retake the course one time; however, they will be placed on probation and may not progress to graduate courses. Failure to correct probationary status after one semester will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University. A grade of less than C- in a required undergraduate course will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University.

Students in the MS-Option program must receive a minimum of “pass” in undergraduate clinical courses to progress. For an option student who receives a first low pass grade in an undergraduate clinical course, the first low pass course may be repeated once. If the student receives a second low pass in the same or another undergraduate clinical course, the student will be dismissed from the Graduate Nursing Program. Option students must complete all undergraduate course and clinical requirements before being eligible to start graduate courses.

Option students who fail NCLEX-RN cannot progress in their course of study without review by the GCAAC and permission of the Director of the School of Nursing.

In the graduate portion of their program, all students must achieve a minimum of a B- grade for all required graduate courses. The first time a student earns below a B-, the course must be retaken successfully (B- or above) in order to continue with program progression. A graduate course can only be retaken one time. Failure of the course retaken or of a second course will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University. If the course in which a grade below a B- has been earned has a concurrent clinical
course, progression in the theory/practice course sequence stops. A grade of B- or better must be achieved in the course which is repeated before the theory/practice course sequence resumes. Because of the interrelatedness of concurrent clinical and theory courses, the following policies apply:

- If a student fails a clinical course (C+ or below) but passes the concurrent theory course (B- or above), the student must repeat the clinical course within one calendar year. If more than one calendar year elapses between failing and repeating the required clinical course, the student will be required to retake the concurrent theory course.
- If the student fails a theory course (C+ or below) but passes the concurrent clinical course (B- or above), and the student retakes the theory course within one calendar year, the student will be required to perform 8 hours of clinical, including attendance at clinical seminar every week. If more than one year elapses between failing a required theory course and retaking it, the clinical course must be repeated in its entirety.
- Students who fail (C+ or below) any of the concurrent clinical or theory courses cannot proceed to the next clinical theory sequence course until the failed course has been successfully retaken.
- A grade of C or below in the clinical component of a course will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University (please refer to the Academic Policies section of this catalog).

In any semester in which the cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 (B average) the student will be placed on probation. Failure to correct probationary status after one semester will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University. An incomplete grade in a clinical and/or concurrent theory course must be satisfied prior to progression to the next sequential course unless an arrangement involving the student and the faculty of both courses has been agreed to in writing. A 3.0 GPA is necessary for graduation. Students may only count 3 credits of C in an elective toward graduation. A cumulative GPA below 2.0 in any one semester will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University.

The GCAAC and program faculty reserve the right to review a student’s record to make recommendations regarding progression.

**Program Progression**

**Continuous Enrollment**

Once matriculated into the graduate program, students must be continuously enrolled in the program unless a written, formal request for a leave of absence has been submitted to and approved by the coordinator of the Graduate Nursing Programs or the chairperson of the GCAAC. Continuous enrollment requires that every graduate student must earn at least 6 credits toward his or her degree every calendar year from the time of the first registration until completion of all requirements for the graduate degree. If the continuous enrollment policy is not maintained, a letter will be sent to the student, the advisor, and the Office of Graduate Studies from the coordinator of the Graduate Nursing Programs.

- In extenuating circumstances a graduate student may petition for exception to the continuous enrollment policy (refer to USM graduate catalog); the petition must bear approval of the student's advisor and the Coordinator of the Graduate Nursing Program. A signed Leave of Absence form must be sent to the Office of Graduate Admissions and a copy forwarded to the Coordinator of the Graduate Nursing Program.
Leave of Absence
Students enrolled in the full-time MS Option Program are not eligible for a leave of absence. All other students in the Graduate Nursing Programs may request a leave of absence. The leave of absence waives the continuous enrollment policy for a period of one calendar year. Note that when a request for a leave of absence is made at midterm, USM’s current grading policies apply. Approval of the leave of absence is the responsibility of the coordinator of the Graduate Nursing Programs or the chairperson of the GCAAC. Once a decision has been made regarding the leave of absence, a letter will be sent from the coordinator to the student, the advisor, the Office of Graduate Studies, and the registrar. To request a leave of absence, the student must:

- Meet with his or her advisor to discuss the potential impact of the leave of absence on progression
- Collaborate with the advisor and describe the terms of the request
- Submit a written request to the coordinator or chairperson of the GCAAC with a copy to the advisor
- Confer with the coordinator prior to the end of the leave of absence to ensure that the student can register

Inactivation Policy
Student admission, matriculation, and/or progression will be inactivated under the following conditions:

- Failure to maintain continuous enrollment as outlined above
- Absence of written communication with the advisor and/or coordinator regarding matriculation/progression plans (e.g., no request for leave of absence)

Time Limit
All requirements for the degree must be completed within six years from the date of first matriculation.

Professional Licensure
All students in the graduate program, except MS-Option students, must hold and maintain a current unencumbered Maine Registered Nurse LICENSURE. MS Option students upon completion of the summer of the second year or after completing 9 credits of graduate study following completion of undergraduate courses, must sit for the State Board Examination (NCLEX-RN) and become licensed as a registered nurse. Failure to pass the NCLEX-RN licensure examination prior to the first graduate clinical practicum will stop progression in the program. Students are required to notify the graduate program coordinator of any change in status of their RN license.

Directed Study
Directed Study should be planned with a faculty advisor prior to the semester in which it is to take place. Credit allocation (up to three) is negotiated with the faculty person.

Thesis
All students have the option of completing a thesis. Information regarding the entire thesis process will be provided by your academic advisor.
Graduation Process
During the semester in which the student expects to graduate, the student must initiate processing an application for degree. There are two methods of completing this process as follows:

- Log onto MaineStreet, choose “Student Self Service”, then “Student Center”, then “other academic”, then “apply for graduation”, and follow the prompts. OR
- Print and complete an Application for Degree. This form may be faxed to Gorham Registrar's Office at 207-780-5517.

Refer to the graduate catalog for graduation requirements. Graduation dates for graduate students are either in December or May. Caps and Gowns are ordered from the USM Bookstore.

Academic Grade Appeal Policy
The purpose of the academic grade appeal policy is to provide a fair and speedy review of all student appeals of academic grades in graduate/professional programs at the University of Southern Maine; this policy will permit such appeals to be determined in a manner that reflects the interests of both the student and the instructor. The only matters reviewable under this policy are claims of prejudice on the part of an instructor in an academic exercise or activity for which a grade leading to academic credit is awarded, and/or evident and prejudicial error in the administration or grading method used for any paper, examination, performance, or other exercise or activity for which a grade leading to academic credit is awarded, provided that the academic judgment used in determining the merits of the grade to be awarded to such exercise of activity shall not be reviewable.

An appeal under this policy shall be carried out according to the following procedures:

1. The student should present his or her claim, in writing, to the instructor involved and shall seek to have the matter resolved by the instructor. In no event shall there be a right of appeal hereunder for a claim presented to the instructor more than 30 days after a final grade is posted to the student's record. The instructor must respond within 14 days of receiving the appeal.

2. If the student remains aggrieved by the decision of the instructor under Step 1, he or she may, within 14 days after formal receipt of the instructor's final decision, appeal, in writing, to the chairperson of the department or program director of the college in which the course or other exercise or activity is offered. The chairperson/program director must respond within 14 days of receiving the appeal.

3. If the student remains aggrieved by the decision of the chairperson or program director of the department under Step 2, he or she may, within 14 days after formal receipt of the chairperson's or program director's final decision, appeal, in writing, to the dean of the college in which the course or other exercise or activity is offered.

4. The dean, after discussion with the student and instructor, may resolve the grievance by agreement or render a decision within 21 days of receipt of the written appeal. The decision may be (a) that the appeal be dismissed or (b) that a grade be changed or the student be allowed an opportunity to retake an examination or other exercise or (c) that another appropriate remedy be administered.

5. The student or the instructor may, within 14 days of the receipt of the decision of the dean, appeal to the dean of Graduate Studies in writing, stating the reason for the appeal and delivering a copy of the writing to the opposing party and the dean. The opposing party may, within 10 days of receipt of the reasons for appeal, reply in writing to the dean of Graduate Studies. The dean of Graduate Studies shall review the original claim, the written decision of the chairperson or program director and dean, and the written reasons for the appeal and reply. The dean of Graduate Studies shall, within 28 days of receipt of
the appeal and after reviewing the matter, prepare a written decision which shall uphold the decision of the chairperson, program director, or dean, or prescribe any other appropriate remedy. The dean of Graduate Studies' decision shall be final and not subject to further review. Copies of the decision of the dean of Graduate Studies shall be delivered to the student, the instructor, and the chairperson or program director and dean. The total time for resolution from the first appeal to the final decision shall be less than 120 days. If a faculty member/administrator fails to address the appeal within the specified time frame, the student may take the appeal to the next level.

**Appeals or Dismissal or Withdrawal**

A graduate student has the right to appeal an academic dismissal or withdrawal by their academic program. Such an appeal of an academic dismissal or withdrawal must follow the appeals process as defined by the graduate program’s school or college, which must include a review by the Dean of the College as part of this process. It is the responsibility of the student to demonstrate a compelling case at each step of the appeal process. On appeal, the decision of a graduate program is presumed to be correct and final unless the student presents sufficient facts to establish that the due process was not followed. The question to be considered in the appeal is whether one or more of the following factors improperly entered into the program decision to dismiss or withdrawal of the student into the program: there was arbitrariness, capriciousness, a constitutional or statutory violation (complaints of discrimination are referred to the Office of Equity and Compliance), a material failure to follow procedures, or a substantial departure from accepted academic norms when the program decision was made, or there is new/additional information that could bear on the program decision. Students must be advised of the decision by the Academic Dean of the College in writing within 30 days of the student appeal. Within 14 days following receipt, in writing, of the decision by the dean, the student may appeal the decision to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The decision of the dean of Graduate Studies shall be rendered within three weeks of a student appeal of academic dismissal or withdrawal and shall be final.

If a student withdraws or is withdrawn from the University during the first two weeks of the semester, there will be no courses or grades recorded. A student withdrawing or being withdrawn after the second week through the eighth week will receive a W grade for each course in which the student was enrolled. A student withdrawing or being withdrawn after the eighth week will receive regular grade designations as determined by the instructor(s). Under unusual circumstances, grades of W can be assigned after the eighth week if approved by the instructor and the director of the program, and with final approval of the associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies.

These graduate appeal policies can be found at [http://usm.maine.edu/reg/academic-policies-graduate#StudentAppealsandComplaints](http://usm.maine.edu/reg/academic-policies-graduate#StudentAppealsandComplaints)

**New England Regional Student Program**

The University of Southern Maine master’s degree program in nursing is a participant in the New England Regional Student Program. For further information contact the Office of Graduate Studies, University of Southern Maine, 96 Falmouth St., Portland, Maine 04103, (207) 780-4386.