Undergraduate Nursing Student Handbook

2015-16

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Part I: Welcome to the School of Nursing

The faculty, staff, and administration welcome you to the University of Southern Maine School of Nursing (SON). This handbook is designed to provide you with specific information related to the baccalaureate degree nursing programs. It consists of the following:

- The School’s History, Mission Statement, and Philosophy
- General information for students
- Undergraduate Policies

Two other key resources for students are:

**The USM Undergraduate Catalog**: The 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. The policies and procedures are different for undergraduate and graduate students so be sure to check the correct catalog.

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 the above link. 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. If a student exceeds a 10-year enrollment at USM, they should request a new catalog.

**The School of Nursing Website** also serves as a resource for nursing students, who will find helpful links on the student resources page.

**Using this Handbook**

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 Catalog. Follow the blue underlined links for more information about a given topic. Some links connect with PDF files, which require Adobe Acrobat Reader.

The School of Nursing administrators, faculty, and staff wish you success in your studies and are available if you have questions.
The Historical Perspective 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. 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 2011, the University of Southern Maine restructured its colleges, and the School of Nursing is now part of the College of Science, Technology, and Health (CSTH). In the fall of 2011, the first class was admitted into the USM Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program.

Mission

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.

School of Nursing 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.

**Undergraduate Program Student Learning Outcomes**

The baccalaureate graduate will:

1. Apply knowledge from the biological, physical, and social sciences, and the arts and humanities as a foundation for compassionate professional nursing practice in a complex and global world.

2. Demonstrate *professional accountability*, ethical behaviors and *leadership skills* as a contributing member of the *nursing profession*.

3. Demonstrate effective use of *technology and information systems* to *communicate*, manage knowledge, minimize error and to support *evidenced based* decision making for *safe nursing practice*.

4. Apply knowledge of individual, family and community preferences, values and needs to provide culturally competent, *patient centered care* across the lifespan.

5. Utilize knowledge of changing *healthcare systems* to *improve quality* of care, manage resources, and function effectively within nursing *and interdisciplinary care teams*.

6. Utilize clinical reasoning to provide age appropriate, *patient centered care* for vulnerable populations (including *older adults*) in a variety of settings.

*Approved by SON Faculty 2/12/2015*
Civility

The School of Nursing encourages all students to review our commitment to civility. As outlined in the statement, "we will not tolerate disrespectful or abusive speech and or disruptive behavior from individuals or groups. Everyone has the responsibility to foster a safe and supportive learning and work environment."

Part II: General Information for Nursing Students

Locations and Resources
The School of Nursing has offices on both the Portland and Lewiston-Auburn (LAC) Campuses. The Regular BS in Nursing program, and the RN to BS in Nursing Program are offered on both campuses. The Accelerated BS in Nursing program is offered only on the Portland campus.

Portland:

The Advisor for first and second year Nursing students is Netty Provost. Her office is 137K Luther Bonney Hall on the Portland campus. 207-780-4547.

The USM School of Nursing administrative offices and labs, as well as faculty offices, are located in Masterton Hall, 71 Bedford St. The following offices are located on the first floor of Masterton Hall:

119B: Brenda Webster, Coordinator of Nursing Student Services (207) 780-4802
123: Katie Mitchell, Administrative Assistant (207) 780-4131
122: Krista Meinersmann, Director of the School of Nursing (207) 780-4993

Nursing faculty offices are located on the second and third floor of Masterton Hall. Tammy Berry, Faculty Support for the School of Nursing, and Elizabeth Elliott, Undergraduate Nursing Coordinator, both have offices on the second floor. Links to individual faculty information can be found at: https://usm.maine.edu/nursing/people

In Portland, the Simulation Center is located on the first floor, the Health Assessment lab is located on the second floor, and the Fundamentals lab is located on the third floor of Masterton Hall.

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.

**Lewiston-Auburn (LAC):**
The LAC campus is located at 51 Westminster St. in Lewiston. The USM nursing office is in Room 153, next to the cafeteria. Elaine Ogrodnik (207) 753-6624 is the Administrative Assistant and contact for Nursing at the Lewiston Auburn campus. Brenda Webster and Netty Provost also share office space in Room 153 at Lewiston. Their LAC phone number is (207) 753-6647. Nursing faculty offices are located in the faculty suite, area 162, adjacent to the Atrium Art Gallery. LAC Student Services are located across from the Library at LAC.

The newly remodeled LAC Nursing labs are located on the second floor of the building:

- Health Assessment Lab: Room 226
- Fundamentals of Nursing Lab: Room 228

Skill practice times must be coordinated between the faculty and Elaine Ogrodnik or a work-study student assigned to the lab.

**Communication**

**E-MAIL** 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 Hotmail, 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 School of Nursing undergraduate list serve depending on the program in which they are enrolled:

- CONUNDER, for students in the Traditional BS in Nursing program
- USM-RN for RN to BS students
- CONACCEL for students in the Accelerated BS in Nursing program

The SON uses these list serves to send information to students about clinical and curriculum changes, pin ordering information, meeting notices, and other timely information. Students may also use these
list serves to share public information with each other. Please do not unsubscribe from the list serve for your program, or you will miss important information. **Brenda Webster** ((207) 280-4802) administers the list serves. If you aren’t receiving messages from the School of Nursing, please contact Brenda Webster to make sure that you are on the appropriate mailing list for your program.

The **MyUSM campus portal site** is your single sign-on point of entry to MaineStreet, Blackboard, student email (GMail) and more. Logging into MyUSM means you’re automatically logged into multiple systems automatically:

- Blackboard
- Gmail (@maine.edu mail)
- Google Calendar
- Google Drive
- MaineStreet
- Study Room Reservations (Open Room)
- Tutoring Support (AskOnline)

**Blackboard** is a course development tool which allows your instructor to teach all or part of your course on the Web. 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

If you’re unfamiliar with Blackboard, check out [UMS Blackboard Support](#) for more info.

**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.

**School of Nursing Faculty & Staff Contact Information**

**USM Faculty Directory**
USM Staff Directory

USM Academic Calendar

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.

Storm Cancellations

The decision to close the University is generally made between 5 and 6 a.m. and is communicated to local radio and television stations by 6:30 a.m. University closings are also announced via the USM Storm Line ((207) 780-4800) - Portland campus. The LAC campus storm line number is (207) 753-6595. Announcements specifically naming USM’s Lewiston campus or USM’s Lewiston-Auburn College and/or Portland-Gorham campuses will be broadcast on local radio stations and television channels.

- The decision to cancel evening classes (after 4 p.m.) is made by 2 p.m. that day.
- Individual clinical faculty members have the prerogative to cancel their own group’s clinical day.
- 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.
- 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.

University Resources

Visit the Student Resources Website for information about how to access new student services, academic resources, dining and housing information, financial information, student life information, and other resources for USM students.

Disability Accommodations: If you need course accommodations because of a disability or injury, please make an appointment with the Disability Services Center http://usm.maine.edu/dsc (207) 780-4706 as soon as possible. Accommodations are requested on a semester-by-semester basis to reflect the specific nature of the course and the changing needs of the student. A student who wishes to be considered for reasonable accommodations must follow the procedure posted on the DSC website.

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 and can help you gain access to journals and books not held at USM through Interlibrary Loan.

Pat Prieto (207) 780-5662 is the reference librarian for Nursing. She 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
The Registrar’s Office has a number of forms that are currently in use. They can be accessed at http://www.usm.maine.edu/reg/1forms:

1. Academic Forgiveness
2. Add Form
3. Application for Degree
4. Campus Solutions Access
5. Catalog Change Date
6. Change of Program
7. Course Withdrawal
8. Declaration of Minor & Concentration
9. Drop Form
10. Grade Change Form
11. Independent Study
12. MaineStreet (Internal only)
13. Name/Address Change
14. Prior Approval Form
15. Registration Worksheet
16. Repeat/Audit Form
17. Replacement Diploma
18. Semester Leave Form
19. Student Consent to Release Info.
20. Transcript Request Form
21. Variable Credit
22. Verification Form

Textbooks: Required textbooks for each course are listed at the USM Bookstores website.

Tutoring: The Learning Commons offers additional support resources such as tutoring. You can also 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 monies who are interested in tutoring.

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

USM Health and Counseling Services are available to all USM Students. Health Services are available in Gorham. Counseling Services are available in Gorham, Portland, and Lewiston.
Transportation: Since clinical experiences occur in a variety of settings in southern and south central Maine, students must be prepared to provide their own transportation to suburban 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

Nursing Organizations
Student Nurse Organization (SNO): A local organization, SNO consists of undergraduate nursing students who unite to explore issues in nursing. It frequently acts as a liaison between faculty and students in the School of Nursing. Members of SNO are responsible for organizing some aspects of Convocation (pinning), and other events such as blood drives, stethoscope sales, and various School of Nursing activities and workshops including CPR training. Membership dues are nominal. All nursing students are invited to join. Information about SNO meeting and activities are announced on the CONUNDER list serve.

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 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, 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.
Scholarships & Other Funding Sources
Please visit the USM Scholarship Portal: usm.maine.edu/scholarships for information and application forms for School of Nursing, CSTH, and USM scholarships.

School of Nursing often has work study opportunities for students who have federal work study funds. You may contact Elaine Ogrodnik on the LAC campus for updated information about LAC opportunities. On the Portland campus, please contact Katie Mitchell for more information about current work study openings. For more information regarding other financial aid available to Nursing students contact Helen Parker in the Financial Aid Office (207) 780-5118, 107 Bailey Hall, Gorham Campus.

The Reference Librarians at the University Library on the Portland Campus can help locate other scholarship/financial aid sources.

Letters of Recommendation In order to receive a verbal or written letter of recommendation, students must complete a Reference Release Form listing the individual(s) to whom they give such permission. The Reference Release form is located here on the Undergraduate Student Resources page.

The Nursing Curriculum
Nursing students complete the USM core curriculum, as well as courses in the nursing major. The curriculum is based on prerequisite courses in the liberal arts, physical sciences and social sciences. Nursing students are required to successfully complete the following courses with a minimum grade of C before starting upper level clinical courses.

Please note: As of fall 2014, the minimum grade in all required NUR courses is a C+

- College Writing
- General Psychology
- Introduction to Sociology
- Multicultural Growth & Development
- Anatomy & Physiology I & II and labs
- Chemistry for the Health Sciences
- Microbiology and lab
- Human Nutrition
- Pathophysiology
- Pharmacology (CON 302)
- Introduction to Professional Nursing (NUR 100)
- Health Assessment and lab (NUR 300/301)
- Nursing Arts and Science and Fundamentals in Nursing Lab (NUR 306/307)
Upper level nursing courses include:

- Introduction to Adult/Older Adult Health Nursing and clinical (NUR 323/325)
- Mental Health Nursing and clinical (NUR 330/331)
- Care of the Adult in the Community (NUR 332)
- Reproductive and Sexual Health Nursing and clinical (NUR 421/422)
- Child Health Nursing and clinical (NUR 427/428)
- Clinically-Applied Genetics (NUR 424)
- Management of Critically Ill Adults/Older Adults and clinical (NUR 423/425)
- Advanced Skills Lab (NUR 413)
- Community Partnership I and II (NUR 339 and NUR 341)
- Leadership, Management and Ethics (NUR 470)
- Practicum/Care Management (NUR 480)

Declaring a Minor
Undergraduate nursing students in the traditional nursing program may choose to complete additional coursework in order to obtain a Minor. The Holistic and Integrative Health Minor is a popular minor for nursing students. Other minors are listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. A Declaration of Minor form must be completed by the student and signed by the student’s advisor as well as the chairperson of the Minor. Completing a minor fulfills the 3-course cluster requirement in the new core curriculum. The Minor must be completed by the time the student is ready to graduate. Nursing advisors can help students determine courses needed to fulfill the requirements for a minor.

Advising

Nursing Advising Bulletin
We post a spring bulletin and a summer/fall bulletin prior to registration. This bulletin offers important information about requirements and registration each semester.

Please visit the Nursing Resource Page for the current bulletin.

Advisors
All students enrolled in the nursing major are assigned an advisor. Students may not register for courses without their advisor's prior approval. After meeting with their advisor, students receive a registration number (PIN) which allows enrollment in classes in MaineStreet. Enrollment dates vary, depending upon the number of credits a student has completed.

Netty Provost, (207) 780-4547, Academic Advisor, advises all traditional undergraduate students on both the Portland and Lewiston-Auburn campuses until they are ready to enter upper level clinical courses. At that time students are assigned a faculty advisor.
While working on undergraduate course work, all RN students (RN-BS and RN-MS) are advised by Brenda Webster (207) 780-4802, Coordinator of Nursing Student Services, regarding program requirements. RN-MS students are also assigned a faculty advisor.

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 a time to meet with your advisor at least once a semester. Specific office hours are often posted on your faculty advisor’s office door. Students may also contact their advisor via e-mail.

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, regulations and policies 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 email/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 student.
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.

Please note that you have access to the advising notes that your advisor has written in Mainestreet.

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

Each semester students are assigned a registration date and an enrollment number (PIN) for registration. Students obtain their PIN from their advisor. See the Registrar’s home page for information about add/drop periods and registration policies. (Please note that course numbers and registration dates may vary at the LAC campus.)

Withdrawing 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 at the Registrar’s Website. Students who must withdraw from all classes for a semester should fill out the Semester Leave Form.

Lab and Clinical Course Information

Please refer to the Nursing Clinical Information page at the SON website for complete information for students entering nursing lab and clinical courses. These include Health, Immunization and Criminal Background check requirements, uniform requirements and orientation requirements for our clinical sites. The following is general information about these requirements:

Health & Immunization Requirements:

In order to meet the health requirements of the various clinical facilities and to protect you, as well as the clients you will be caring for, tests and immunizations are required prior to the start of the first clinical/labatory/practicum experience. This first health care experience occurs during Fundamentals of Nursing lab, NUR 307 (NUR 214 for students in the Accelerated BS program).

Failure to comply with the immunization requirements by the stated deadlines will prevent you from moving forward in your nursing education. Visit the health requirements link for the latest information about these policies.
Background Check Requirement:
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. Visit the health requirements link for the latest information about these policies.

The background check must be completed prior to, but no more than 4 months prior to starting NUR 306/307, Nursing Arts and Science and Fundamentals in Nursing lab.

Maine Medical Center Compliance: The semester prior to clinical in Introduction to Adult/Older Adult Health Nursing clinical (NUR 325), you must complete the basic orientation and safety modules on our website. [http://www.usm.maine.edu/nursing/mmc-required-reading](http://www.usm.maine.edu/nursing/mmc-required-reading) Print out and sign the statement of completion and the confidentiality agreement at the above link.

Return the completed form to Brenda Webster. If these forms are not submitted, you will not be able to attend clinical.

Required Online Orientation for Clinicals and Practicum
In preparation for clinicals, students are required to complete an online orientation through the Centralized Clinical Placement System (CCPS). The orientation modules include basic safety information, nurse core competencies, infection control and prevention and environment of care, and are relevant for anyone working in an acute care setting. Please visit the [CCPS Information page](#) for links to the modules.

Uniform Requirements: Check this web page for information about clinical uniform requirements. Students are generally expected to be in uniform for the second week of nursing lab courses (NUR 301 and NUR 306). The course syllabus will outline the details of the requirement for specific courses.

Nursing Clinical Courses
Nursing clinical courses take place at our clinical affiliates such as Maine Medical Center, Mercy Hospital, Midcoast Hospital, Central Maine Medical Center, Spring Harbor Hospital, Southern Maine Health Care, or St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center.

NUR 323/325, Adult/Older Adult Health Nursing is always the first clinical course. At the beginning of each clinical course, students will access a Clinical Letter from the clinical faculty with information about where to meet for the first meeting of the clinical, what to bring, what to wear and other important information about the first clinical day. Clinical Letters are posted in Blackboard. Clinical Letters are not posted for campus-based laboratories.

Maine Medical Center (MMC) and Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC) have mandatory computer training for nursing students. Mercy Hospital has required computer training which may be required prior to the start of the semester. Other clinical affiliates are considering mandatory computer training times. Students must sign up and attend training before their second clinical at MMC. Students will be notified by e-mail of dates and times for computer training prior to starting the clinical experience.
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 must be notified prior to the time of the clinical. Clinical make-up and alternative assignment will be at the discretion of the instructor.

**CNA Registry Form:** The Maine State Board of Nursing allows students to apply to be listed on the Maine CNA Registry when they have completed half of their first full semester of clinical work. At USM, this full semester course is NUR 325 (Introduction to Adult/Older Adult Health clinical). Since the student may be only halfway through a clinical course at the time of the request, the student will need to obtain a **Mid-semester Clinical Validation Form for CNA Registry** from their instructor at the mid-semester point. This statement should be sent to Brenda Webster who will then write a letter to the Board of Nursing 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 Maine State Board of Nursing.
Student is Exposed Bloodborne Pathogen (e.g., needle stick)

1. Student should immediately clean the site (e.g., wash injured skin – needle stick or cut with soap and water; flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water; irrigating eyes with clean water, saline or sterile irrigant).

2. The student and his/her faculty member should contact the source person (per agency policy), if known, to determine his/her willingness to release medical information and/or undergo applicable testing (e.g., hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV antibodies). If the source person is willing to do either or both of the above the student should write down the person’s name, phone number, and health care provider’s name. The student should notify his/her health care provider that he/she has source person contact information. The student’s health care provider may elect to follow-up with the source person and/or his/her health care provider. If the source person can be accessed at a later time the student should go immediately for initial testing, counseling around treatment, and treatment (see step 3).

3. Initial testing, counseling around treatment, and treatment may be available at the clinical agency, if applicable. If initial testing, counseling around treatment, and treatment are not available at the clinical agency the student should go immediately to an emergency room. The student should not delay getting initial testing, counseling around treatment, and treatment.

4. After initial testing, counseling around treatment, and treatment the involved faculty member works with the student to complete the UMS Incident Report Form and any additional required forms for the clinical agency, if applicable.

5. The faculty notifies the Undergraduate or Graduate Nursing coordinator and the clinical agency, if applicable, and follows their policies/procedures.

6. After the initial testing, counseling around treatment, and treatment the student can elect to follow-up with any of the following:

   Health care provider of choice.

   Maine Medical Center, Falmouth Family Practice Clinic (207) 781-1500, or Maine Medical Center Family Practice Center 272 Congress St., Portland, (207) 874-2466.

   Portland Public Health, 103 India St. (207) 874-8446. It is important to note that Portland Public Health’s days and times for testing are limited.

7. Involved faculty provides student with CDC hotline 1-800-232-4636 or http://www.cdc.gov/netinfo.htm for the most up-to-date information on testing and follow-up. The faculty should strongly encourage the student to call the hotline. Additional resources are identified in note 7 below. Involved faculty, Undergraduate or Graduate Nursing Coordinator, and the USM Director of Environmental Health and Safety will treat student exposure with utmost confidentiality.
Notes:

1. Student and/or his/her health care insurer (as allowed for under benefit package) are responsible for costs associated with testing, treatment and follow-up.

2. USM University Health Services is not able to do testing and follow-up at this time.

3. The USM form is forwarded to the Director of Environmental Health and Safety solely for USM tracking purposes.

4. If unable to reach the Undergraduate or Graduate Nursing Coordinator, notify the Director of Nursing.

5. If the student is covered by USM’s student health insurer, Cross Insurance, he/she must contact USM University Health Services Director for an automatic referral.

6. Cross Insurance’s policy regarding confidentiality may be found both in the Claims Appeal Process section of the student brochure or at http://www2.crossagency.com/2015-2016/usm.php  Medical information is not released to any entity other than the one involved in the process of adjudicating a specific claim. State law prevents any health insurance carrier from discriminating in the acceptance of an applicant if they have been previously insured elsewhere.

7. Hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus: 1-888-443-7232 or visit CDC hepatitis website www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/index.htm The HIV/AIDS Treatment Information Service (1-800-448-0440) can be contacted for information on the clinical treatment of HIV/AIDS. For free copies of printed material on HIV infection and AIDS, please call or write the CDC National Prevention Information Network, PO Box 6003, Rockville, MD 20849-6003, 1-800-458-5231 www.cdcnpin.org Additional information about occupational exposures to blood borne pathogens is available on the CDC’s National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health’s web site at http://www.cdc.gov/hai/ or call 1-800-232-4636. The National Clinicians Post Exposure Prophylaxis Hotline (PEPline) is 1-888-448-4911.
School of Nursing Policies

Attendance:

- **Clinical 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.

**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 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 Undergraduate Catalog.

**Clinical Preparation Worksheets and Logs:** Clinical Preparation Worksheets are tools for providing high level care. They need to be prepared before your nursing experience whenever possible and appropriate. Worksheets 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 worksheet itself is the end product of your planning. Logs are tools for learning. In them you reflect for yourself and your instructor what, where, when, and how you have learned from your experience. Consistent lateness or failure to complete assignments may result in an unsatisfactory evaluation in safety and accountability and thus a failure in the course.

**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 /seminar faculty, fellow students during clinical conference 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 confidentiality, 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.

USM Academic Integrity Policies
Please refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for comprehensive policy information.

**Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism, cheating, and falsification of information are violations of academic integrity that will not be tolerated by the School of Nursing. Please visit the Dean of Students Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

**Harassment:** Harassment is defined as looks, words or actions between unequals in social authority (e.g., professor/student) and/or between students and staff/peers that create a chilling environment for the student resulting in impaired work and/or learning. Students who feel they have been harassed should report the harassment to the Chairperson/Director of the Department offering the course, or to the Chairperson/Director of the Department where the incident has occurred, as soon as possible. At the Chairperson/Director's request, students who report harassment should be prepared to provide, in writing, examples/incidences of behavior, which would support the perception of harassment. If the perceived harassment involves the Department Chairperson/Director, the students should report the harassment to the Dean of the College. The Chairperson/Director or Dean will investigate the complaint, including talking to the involved parties separately. In the case of harassment based on any of the protected classes, see the University's Sexual Harassment Policy in the University's Undergraduate Catalog. Protected classes include race, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, physical and mental disability, and sexual orientation.

**Cheating:** If a student is found cheating on an exam or an assignment, the policies stated under plagiarism in the Undergraduate 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 Undergraduate Catalog for specific information. Plagiarism is a serious offense in academia and may result in expulsion from the School of Nursing and the University.
Grading
Refer to the Undergraduate Nursing Policies for detailed information about Academic Requirements and Retention/Progression policies of the School of Nursing. Undergraduate nursing students should pay particular attention to the following: to be in good standing in the undergraduate nursing program a student must have a minimum USM grade point average of 2.75 or 2.5 as outlined here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit hours completed</th>
<th>For Good Standing</th>
<th>For Probationary Standing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46-120</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.5 – 2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-45</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.5 – 2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-24</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0 – 2.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classroom Grading:
See the Undergraduate Catalog for general University grading policies.

Grade policy change for required NUR courses, effective Fall, 2014:
The faculty of the School of Nursing raised the minimum passing grade to 77 (C+) in the following courses; NUR 100, 200, 211, 300, 306, 323, 330, 332, 421, 423, 424, 427, 470. For those courses that utilize an objective examination format, students must achieve an average grade of ≥ 77% on all exams to pass the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 and above</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clinical Grading Criteria: Pass/Fail/Low Pass/Pass with Distinction

PASS/FAIL Undergraduate nursing clinical courses are graded as follows:

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

A passing grade in clinical implies that the student is meeting the high standards expected in the nursing program. These standards have been developed from the baccalaureate program objectives in four evaluative areas: critical thinking, clinical nursing practice, communication and personal/professional growth, as noted in the Nursing Clinical Performance Appraisal (doc). It is expected that a student will receive a Satisfactory grade in each of the 4 evaluative areas. A student who receives a Needs Improvement in one of the first three areas (critical thinking, clinical nursing practice or communication) may pass the course.

A failing grade implies that the student has not satisfactorily met the performance criteria as described below:

A student will fail if s/he receives a grade of Unsatisfactory in any of the four evaluative areas.

A student will fail if s/he receives a Needs Improvement in more than one of the first three areas (critical thinking, clinical nursing practice and communication) and does not meet the criteria for a low pass designation described below.

A student must adhere to the first two criteria under professional/personal growth regarding safety, accountability and ethical behavior. Failure to meet these criteria will result in failure in the course and may lead to dismissal from the nursing program (as described in Addendum A of the Nursing Clinical Performance Appraisal).

A second low pass in any subsequent clinical course would constitute an F, would stop progression in clinical coursework and would necessitate a repeat of the clinical course in which it was received.
LOW PASS
A clinical instructor choosing to give a low pass to a student is required to clearly identify, using the Nursing Clinical Performance Appraisal (doc), 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 School of Nursing policies related to repeating coursework in the Academic Policies section of the Undergraduate Catalog. Notification of a low-pass grade is sent 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.

PASS WITH DISTINCTION
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.

Dean’s List
At the end of each semester, full-time, undergraduate degree students (12 credit hours or more, with a minimum of 12 letter graded credits (A-F), and excluding developmental credits (course numbers less than 100)), with grade point average of 3.4 or above will be placed on the Dean’s List. Students with incomplete or missing grades (I or MG) at the point when the Dean’s List is produced (35 days after the end of a fall or spring semester) will not be eligible for the Dean’s List. Those students on the Dean’s List whose names appear in the public directory of the University will have their names released to the news media. Students who attend both the fall and the spring semesters as part-time degree students and who meet the above full-time Dean’s List criteria when the fall and spring semesters are combined are eligible for the Dean’s list at the end of the spring semester. A notation will
be placed on the transcript of those who are placed on the Dean’s List.

**On-line Course Evaluations:** During the last week of classes, students will receive an email notice that asks you to complete your course evaluation online. This email will include a direct link to the course evaluation, and you will log-in by using your Mainestreet ID and password. Your ratings on the evaluation would be very useful to your instructor if you answer thoughtfully and honestly. The responses you give are confidential and will be collected by the Office of Academic Assessment. After the final grades are posted, your instructor will receive a summary report of the student responses. All student feedback is valued and is being used for course and program improvement purposes.

**Progression**

Please refer to the [Undergraduate Nursing Policies](#) for detailed information about the academic requirements and retention/progression policies of the School of Nursing. Undergraduate nursing students should pay particular attention to the following:

- Students must have a USM cumulative GPA of 2.75 in order to enroll in NUR 300/301 and 306/307. Transfer students: Please note that only courses taken at USM are included in the USM GPA.
- Students must have an overall GPA of 2.75 and a GPA of 2.67 in prerequisite science courses in order to start upper division clinical/theory courses that begin with NUR 323/325 Introduction to Adult/Older Adult Health Nursing lecture and clinical. The prerequisite nursing sciences are: Anatomy & Physiology I & II with labs, Chemistry for the Health Sciences, Microbiology and lab, Nutrition and Pathophysiology.
- Please note that the required sciences may be repeated only once. Please see the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) for additional information about repeating courses.
- In addition to the prerequisite sciences, students must successfully complete (with a grade of C or better) the following courses before enrolling in junior level clinical courses: College Writing, Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Psychology, Human Growth & Development. In addition, the following courses must be completed before starting junior level clinical courses with a minimum grade of C+ or better: NUR 100, NUR 300/301 and NUR 306/307.
- Students must pass all required CON courses (CON 252, CON 302, CON 321 CON 356) with a C or better.
- Students must pass all required NUR courses (NUR 100, 200, 211, 300, 306, 323, 330, 332, 421, 423, 424, 427, 470) with a grade of C+ or better.

- **USM nursing students must take all required NUR and CON courses at USM.**
- No more than one year may elapse between completions of NUR 300/301, 306/307, and/or CON 302 and starting NUR 323/325.
• Nursing lecture and clinical courses must be taken concurrently the first time a student is enrolled in each course. Lecture and clinical or lab courses must be taken on the same campus.

• A grade of C or below in a nursing lecture course or an F in a nursing clinical course (see low pass policy) will stop the student from registering for any other NUR clinical, NUR lecture or partnership course. In addition, students who receive a failing grade in a required lecture or clinical course which finishes partway through the semester (or students who withdraw from a required lecture or clinical course partway through the semester) will be withdrawn from all other concurrent lecture or clinical courses (required or elective). The student must achieve a grade of C+ or better, or a passing clinical grade in the course which is repeated before entering the next nursing lecture, clinical course or partnership. A course may be repeated only once.

• A student may repeat a maximum of two NUR or CON required courses, clinical or didactic, in which the student receives a grade of C (for NUR courses) or C- (for CON courses) or less. An unsatisfactory grade in a third CON or NUR required course will result in dismissal from the nursing program. If a student receives an F in an elective NUR clinical course, they may not register to repeat that clinical elective or enroll in any other NUR clinical elective without permission of the Director of the School of Nursing.

• Low pass (LP) grades are used in clinical and partnership courses to inform students whose performance is near failing. Students are held accountable to address the weaknesses identified in their performance appraisal with subsequent clinical and partnership faculty. A second low pass grade constitutes an F and stops progression in clinical, didactic and partnership coursework. A grade of F (fail) in a clinical course is considered the same as a grade of C or below in a theory course (according to the policies stated in the USM Undergraduate Catalog).

• The Undergraduate Admissions and Advancement Committee will review the academic record of any student who receives unsatisfactory grades in a given semester as follows:

1. Multiple unsatisfactory grades in prerequisite, nursing, and/or support courses;

2. A C*, C-, D, F or L in one or more prerequisite, nursing and/or support course(s) when repeating the course due to an unsatisfactory grade (*please note that the minimum passing grade in a required NUR course is C+);

3. An F in a nursing clinical or partnership course.

• Academic actions may include probation, suspension or dismissal from nursing and/or the University. Matters of personal concern to the student will be considered. The Committee will recommend to the Director a decision regarding progression or dismissal. Appeals may
be made to the Undergraduate Admissions and Advancement Committee. A request for exception to the policy must be initiated by the student.

**ATI Tests**

Nursing students are required to take specific tests from the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) when they are registered for courses which require these tests. This 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. Students in the traditional and accelerated baccalaureate programs take this exam in their final clinical semester at scheduled testing times.

Students who fail to take the required ATI exams by the end of exam week may 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.
Graduation

You must notify the Registrar’s Office when you are ready to graduate. Notification is done by processing an application for degree. Please log into MaineStreet, Choose: Student Self Service, then Student Center, Other Academic, Apply for Graduation, and follow the prompts.

Or

Print and complete an Application for Degree. This form may also be faxed to Gorham Registrar’s Office at 207-780-5517.

If you have any questions about Commencement, contact the Registrar’s Office at 207-780-5230.

Refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for graduation requirements. Regular undergraduate nursing students graduate in December or May. Graduation dates for other undergraduate students may vary. Caps and Gowns are ordered from the USM Bookstore.

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 convocation details. Tickets to Convocation are limited depending on how many students are graduating.

USM Commencement takes place in May, usually at the Cumberland County Civic Center in Portland.

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 and reviews the 2-part registration process with undergraduate students who are enrolled in NUR 470 (Leadership, Management and Ethics) each semester.
Part III Policies

USM Academic Integrity Policies
Please refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for comprehensive policy information.

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Harassment: Harassment is defined as looks, words or actions between unequals in social authority (e.g., professor/student) and/or between students and staff/peers that create a chilling environment for the student resulting in impaired work and/or learning. Students who feel they have been harassed should report the harassment to the Chairperson/Director of the Department offering the course, or to the Chairperson/ Director of the Department where the incident has occurred, as soon as possible. At the Chairperson/Director's request, students who report harassment should be prepared to provide, in writing, examples/incidences of behavior, which would support the perception of harassment. If the perceived harassment involves the Department Chairperson/ Director, the students should report the harassment to the Dean of the College. The Chairperson/Director or Dean will investigate the complaint, including talking to the involved parties separately. In the case of harassment based on any of the protected classes, see the University's Sexual Harassment Policy in the University's Undergraduate Catalog. Protected classes include race, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, physical and mental disability, and sexual orientation.

Student Appeals and Complaints-Undergraduate Policies

Student Administrative Appeals Policy (based on the USM Undergraduate Catalog)
Appeals of administrative decisions generally involve all matters affecting a student while at USM other than matters affecting grades. An administrative decision is any final decision made in an official capacity by any employee or group of employees of the University, including academic matters other than those affecting grades governed by the Student Academic Appeals Policy and violations of the Student Conduct Code. Decisions by a departmental, college or University faculty group making or changing policies are not final administrative decisions. Grading matters are appealed through the Student Academic Appeals Policy. To be considered, an administrative appeal must be initiated within 30 days after the decision is made.

In order to guarantee fair and equitable consideration of student administrative appeals, a student must first reduce an appeal to writing and meet and discuss it with the University employee whose actions gave rise to the appeal, in a good faith attempt to resolve any misunderstanding. If, after such a meeting, the student is not satisfied with the result, he or she may appeal to the head of the academic department or administrative supervisor of the employee.
The head of the academic department or administrative supervisor of the University employee receiving an administrative appeal shall interview the student, the employee, and any witnesses; review relevant written materials; and ascertain the facts of each case. For the individual receiving an administrative appeal to change a decision, there must be compelling evidence the University employee exceeded his or her authority or engaged in an arbitrary and capricious abuse of discretion unsupported by the record.

The individual deciding an administrative appeal shall issue a decision in writing to the student and the University employee within a reasonable period of time, normally not to exceed 14 days. Either the student or the University employee may appeal that decision to the head of the appropriate administrative division and, if not satisfied with the result, to the vice president for Academic Affairs or the appropriate vice president for the area involved. A decision by the vice president for Academic Affairs or the appropriate vice president for the area involved shall be final and not subject to further review.

No person shall present to any individual receiving a student academic appeal or student administrative appeal any oral or written communication not on the record relevant to the appeal. The substance of any prohibited communication shall be disregarded by the person receiving an appeal when making any official decision on that appeal.

**Student Academic Grade Appeal Policy (based on the USM Undergraduate Catalog)**

Public institutions of higher education function for the common good, not to further the interest of either the individual faculty member or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free expression. Academic freedom is essential for protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching, and the rights of the student to freedom in learning. Teachers must be accorded freedom of speech under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects. Controversy lies at the heart of free academic inquiry, and provocative teaching techniques are often effective. Rights carry corresponding duties; both faculty and students should exercise this freedom in a responsible manner.

In the School of Nursing, we recognize that students’ grievances in the area of academic affairs do occasionally occur. In an effort to ensure fairness for both student and faculty member as well as protect the rights of freedom of both, an appeal of a grade must be initiated within 30 days after the final grade is posted.

The student must first reduce an appeal to writing and discuss it with the faculty member whose actions gave rise to the appeal, in a good faith attempt to resolve any misunderstanding. If, after such discussion, the student is not satisfied with the result, he or she may appeal to the Director of the School of Nursing.

After receiving an academic appeal of a grade, the Director shall interview the student, the faculty member, and any witnesses; review the course syllabus and all graded assignments; and ascertain the facts of each case. Because the faculty member who issued the grade is in the best position to evaluate the performance of students enrolled in a course, the academic judgment used to determine the merits of the grade awarded shall not be reviewable. The Director may request a faculty member reconsider a student’s grade. A faculty member may decline to reconsider a student’s grade; reconsider a grade and
change it; or reconsider a grade and decide not to change it. There must be compelling evidence of unfair treatment for the Director to change a grade.

The Director shall issue a decision in writing to the student and the faculty member within a reasonable period of time, normally not to exceed 14 days. Either the student or the faculty member may appeal that decision to the dean of the school/college and, if not satisfied with the result, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Responses to these appeals shall be made in writing to the student and the faculty member within a reasonable period of time, normally not to exceed 14 days.