

MS IN NURSING (MSN) STUDENT HANDBOOK

Revised September 1, 2021



Master of Science in Nursing Program

College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS)

Island Hall-326A

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC)

<https://www.tamucc.edu/nursing-and-health-sciences>

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SECTION I

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATE DEAN

Welcome to graduate Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi! This handbook is a document developed for students to reflect on the mission of the College of Nursing as well as information on the **three program options offered (Nurse Educator, Nurse Leader in Nursing Systems, and the Family Nurse Practitioner)**.

This handbook is designed to serve as a resource to help with your questions about the graduate program. It is a companion for the catalog of the entry year: <https://catalog.tamucc.edu/> and in case of any contradiction, the graduate catalog of record is the true source of information, as well as the Graduate Studies handbook <https://www.tamucc.edu/grad-college/current-students/assets/documents/masters-student-handbook.pdf> . The Graduate Studies handbook provides university-wide information relative to student resources, academic policies, financial assistance, Information on coursework requirements, advising, financial aid, professional organizations and policies and procedures are included.

Students will also use this handbook in conjunction with the College of Nursing and Health Science (CONHS) website and current degree planners to facilitate progression in their respective program option within the MSN degree.

MISSION

The College of Nursing & Health Sciences positively impacts the health of the global population through the education of health care leaders and providers of tomorrow with innovative educational programs in the nursing and health professions. The College identifies, attracts, and graduates students of high potential, especially from groups who have been historically under-represented in the organization and provision of health care. This work is enhanced through faculty contributions to community service, leadership, practice, and research. These activities are fostered in a collaborative inter-professional and multicultural learning environment promoting a sense of community and caring.

SECTION II

PROGRAM COORDINATORS, FACULTY & STAFF

Note: CV's for graduate faculty are posted on the CONHS website (click on read more below name) Link: [CONHS Directory | Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi](#)

Program Coordinators:

1. Nurse Educator Program

Heather DeGrande, Ph.D., RN, CCRN-K, Assistant Professor, Office: Island Hall 333, Phone (361) 825-3696, heather.degrande@tamucc.edu

2. Leadership in Nursing Systems Program

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3. Family Nurse Practitioner Program

Elizabeth Loika, PNP-C, FNP-C, DNP, USAF, Lt. Col., (Ret.), Assistant Professor, Office: Island Hall, 343, Phone (361) 825-5280, Elizabeth.loika@tamucc.edu

Faculty:

Heather DeGrande, Ph.D., RN, CCRN-K; NE/LNS Program Coordinator
Elizabeth Loika, FNP-BC, PNP-C, DNP; FNP Program Coordinator

Kateljne Acker, Ph.D., RN
Dixie Adelman, FNP, DNP
Pam Green, Ph.D., RN, NEC
Yolanda Keys, DHA, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, EDAC
Kyoung Lee, WHNP, Ph.D., RN
Christina Murphey, Ph.D., RN
Gloria Park, FNP, Ph.D., RN
Miguel Perez, MSN, Ph.D.
Adrienne Platt, PNP, Ph.D., RN
Tammy Walker-Smith, MHA, FNP, DNP
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SECTION III

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Program Description

The Master of Science in Nursing degree enhances and expands the clinical competence of baccalaureate nurses. The focus of the degree is to prepare nurses for advanced nursing practice in nursing leadership, family nurse practitioners, or nurse educators. Emphasis is placed on facilitating health care delivery within a multicultural framework.

The graduate nursing curriculum includes four core courses and specific courses related to role specialization within the three degrees. Three minor areas of study are also available for students seeking to refine their skills as leaders/managers, practitioners, or educators. The variety of learning opportunities and the flexibility of options provided by the curriculum will accommodate the diverse clinical and functional interests of students who enroll in the program. Each degree provides a specialty area of study that includes courses with clinical laboratory components that whenever possible, can be completed in the communities where students reside. In some cases, students may have to travel to clinical agencies to access experiences essential to course objectives. The lecture component in all graduate nursing courses is offered online. See the semester class schedule for details.

Program Goals and Expected Outcomes

The Graduate Nursing Program aims to provide baccalaureate nurses with learning experiences that will increase the breadth and depth of the student's theory base for nursing practice, enhance and expand their competence, and prepare students for role specialization. Students may complete MSN degree in three different program specialties: Family Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Educator, and Leadership in Nursing Systems.

Emphasis is placed on facilitating health care delivery within multicultural communities. The curriculum has been designed to meet the diverse needs of the nursing community in South Texas. The knowledge is transferable to a variety of settings and provides a foundation for doctoral study.

Registered nurses who have earned a diploma or associate degree in nursing and who meet all other requirements for admission into the MSN degree program are eligible to apply for admission under the RN-MSN option. RN-MSN students need to fulfill additional requirements specific to the RN-MSN option and complete the standard coursework in the MSN program.

The expected outcomes of the MSN are as follows:

Graduates of this program will:

1. Critically analyze, interpret and integrate appropriate knowledge, research and theories to meet the health care needs of diverse populations.
2. Apply competent leadership and collaborative skills as members of a multi-professional healthcare workforce to promote high quality and safe patient care.
3. Design evidence-based plans to sustain quality initiatives that promote a transparent professional environment and contribute to the delivery of safe, high quality care.
4. Integrate research into professional practice through the implementation of translational processes.
5. Demonstrate competence and accountability as clinicians, educators, and leaders in advanced healthcare roles.
6. Model caring, sensitivity and respect in the delivery of health care to culturally diverse populations.
7. Operationalize principles of ethical, legal, financial and economic theories as applied to healthcare delivery systems.
8. Guide the adoption and use of information, communication technologies and resources to document patient care and improve patient outcomes.
9. Evaluate the effect of legal and regulatory processes on nursing practice, healthcare delivery, and outcomes using critical analyses of policies that influence health services.

Program Options

MSN Degree. Registered nurses who want to earn a Master of Science in Nursing degree may enter the graduate program through one of three entry options. These options include the BSN (also referred to as traditional), RN-Bridge, and RN-MSN options.

There is no required thesis or graduate advisory committee to complete the MSN. The thesis option is available for those students interested in pursuing scholarly investigation of a research proposal topic (NURS 5399 Thesis).

Applicants who have earned a BSN from an accredited program can start graduate course work upon admission to the MSN program.

Applicants who are registered nurses with baccalaureate degrees in disciplines other than nursing can enter the MSN program through RN-Bridge MSN option. Students must complete undergraduate level courses before they can begin graduate courses that lead to the MSN. The 18 hours of RN-Bridge undergraduate courses include:

NURS 3435 Health Assessment 4 sem. hrs.

NURS 4318 Nurse as Research Consumer 3 sem. hrs.

NURS 4560 Nursing Care of Community 5 sem. hrs.

NURS 4671 Leadership/Management 6 sem. hrs.

Articulation agreements exist between A&M- Corpus Christi and associate degree nursing programs to support student access to this MSN entry option. Registered nurses who have earned a diploma or associate degree in nursing from an accredited program and who meet all other requirements for admission into the MSN degree program are eligible to apply for the RN-MSN entrance option. **Students who enter the MSN program through this option will not earn a bachelor's degree in nursing at any stage of their course work.**

The RN-MSN student must complete 58 credit hours of designated general education and support courses in accordance with the A&M-Corpus Christi University Core Curriculum transfer policy requirements and the Bachelor of Science degree requirements for prescribed support courses, as specified in the Undergraduate Catalog. Equivalency tables are available showing which general education and nursing courses will be accepted for transfer to meet these required hours.

Prior to beginning master's level course work, the RN-MSN student must complete the following prescribed course work:

NURS 3435 Health Assessment (may complete through Challenge Examination) 3 sem. hrs.
NURS 4324 Nurse as Caregiver (may complete through Challenge Examination) 3 sem. hrs.
NURS 4560 Nursing Care of Community 5 sem. hrs.
NURS 4671 Leadership/Management 6 sem. hrs.
NURS 4318 Nurse as Research Consumer 3 sem. hrs.

Course work completed by students in the RN-MSN program may transfer to the undergraduate RN-BSN track when students decide they are unable to maintain the accelerated pace of the RN-MSN track. Students may not reenter the RN-MSN track once they have withdrawn from this option.

Post Masters Certification. Post-master's certification is available for students that have earned their MSN Degree. Certification will allow registered nurses to expand their scope of practice beyond the role or population focus associated with their current credentials. Post-Masters-Certification-Only students automatically will be considered to have completed the MSN core courses based on the completion of the master's degree. All progression requirements apply to students enrolled in this program. See Role Specialization Section for available list of minor or post masters areas of study.

Non-degree-seeking students. Non-degree status is designated for the student who wants to enroll in graduate course work to meet unique personal or career goals that donot lead to a graduate degree or certification. Colleges may place restrictions on the enrollment of students admitted in this status. Students must see a nursing advisor and the graduate nursing department chair to discuss their educational

SECTION IV

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

Program Admission and Degree Requirements

The following program requirements apply to all nursing graduate students upon admission and throughout program of study. Students must:

1. Have completed an undergraduate nursing program or earned a diploma from an NLNAC or CCNE accredited school of nursing.
2. Successfully complete (with a grade “C” or above) a course in statistics
3. Hold current unencumbered licensure as a registered nurse with authorization to practice in Texas.
4. Upon admission to the College, complete a criminal background check.
5. Complete a ten panel non-chain of custody urine drug screen.
6. Purchase professional liability coverage through the University. Fees for this coverage are included in the fees paid at the time of registration at the beginning of each academic year.
7. Meet Texas Department of State Health Services immunization requirements for students in health professions programs. Students must complete and present evidence that immunizations are complete and current prior to starting classes. Immunizations must remain current throughout the program. Students will not be allowed into courses or clinical laboratory agencies if evidence of compliance is missing. These requirements, as stated in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 97, Subchapter B, Rule 97.64.

Progression, Regression and Dismissal

All students must meet the standards for minimal performance and progression established by TAMU-CC Office of Graduate Studies. See catalog section on *Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements*.

1. When a grade lower than a C is earned the student:
 - a. Must repeat a course in which a grade of D, F, or W (Withdrawal) was earned.
 - b. May be placed on scholastic probation if the GPA falls below 3.0 because of the D, F, or W.
 - c. Will be removed from scholastic probation in accordance with university policy. *See Scholastic Probation and Enforced Withdrawal in the catalog.*

- d. May not progress to courses for which that course is a prerequisite when a grade of D, F, W or I (Incomplete) was earned.
2. If the student earns a third C or below in the program, the student cannot progress further and is required to withdraw from the program even when the GPA does not fall below 3.0. (Grades earned in the RN-Bridge or RN-MSN program count in the total number of grades earned in the program. Therefore, all grades below a B will be considered in progressions decisions.)
3. The student cannot progress to the next course after withdrawing from two courses in the program unless approved by the College of Nursing and Health Science's Academic, Progressions and Appeals (APAS) Committee. A plan to complete the program must be submitted to the Committee before a progression decision can be made. Admission to courses that need to be completed will depend on space availability.
4. The student may be dismissed from the program without previous warning for unsafe and/or unprofessional behavior identified by college administrators and faculty. The conduct of nursing students should meet ethical standards as defined by the American Nurses Association (ANA) in the *Code of Ethics*. Personal integrity is reflected in professional judgments. Consequently, the College reserves the right to dismiss students from the program for unprofessional or unsafe behavior.
5. Students admitted conditionally to the College must earn a B or better in each of the first four MSN courses to remain in the MSN program. If a grade of less than B is earned during the period the student is classified as a conditional student, the student will be prohibited from further enrollment in the MSN program. Students pursuing the RN-Bridge or RN-MSN options are not eligible for enrollment under the conditional admission status.

Students in the RN-Bridge and RN-MSN program must complete all of the undergraduate course work before beginning graduate classes. In order to progress in these entrance options, students must maintain a 3.00 grade point average. Students may earn credit for NURS 3435 and NURS 4324 through a challenge examination process when a score of 83% or better is earned on the examination. If the challenge examination results are not successful, the student may move to the RN-BSN track and take the course in question. The student may not reenter the RN-MSN track. The student may not progress through the RN-MSN track if the challenge exam score is less than 83% and the student does not want to enter the RN-BSN option.

Admission to the CONHS is highly competitive. Students who drop a course or do not enroll in a semester in which they are eligible to enroll will only have access to subsequent courses in their area of study when space is available. Therefore, it is highly recommended that students consult the graduate nursing academic advisor or the graduate nursing respective program coordinator before withdrawing.

Program Degree Requirements

The course of study for the **Nurse Educator MSN** program consists of the components listed below.

Nurse Educator track

	Sem Hrs
1. Core courses	12
2. Role specialization courses	25
	Total 37

The Core courses:

- NURS 5310 - Science in Nursing* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5314 - Research Methods in Advanced Nursing Practice* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5315 - Health Policy and Cultural Diversity* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5316 - Introduction to Advanced Practice Role Development* **3 sem. hrs.**
- Total: 12**

The student selects role specialization in Nurse Educator. The following courses constitute the respective specialty areas of study:

- NURS 5324 - Health Assessment for Advanced Practice* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5326 - Advanced Physiology with Pathophysiological Applications* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5351 - Advanced Pharmacological Concepts for Nursing Educators* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5352 - Nursing Curriculum Planning, Development, and Evaluation* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5353 - Theory and Concepts for the Nurse Educator* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5354 - Assessment, Measurement, and Evaluation in Nursing* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5355 - Instructional Teaching Strategies* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5459 - Education Practicum for the Nurse Educator* **4 sem. hrs.**
- Total: 25**

Degree Total: 37

The course of study for the **Leadership in Nursing Systems MSN** program consists of the components listed below.

Leadership in Nursing Systems track

	Sem Hrs.
1. Core courses	12
2. Role specialization courses	28

The Core courses

- NURS 5310 - Science in Nursing* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5314 - Research Methods in Advanced Nursing Practice* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5315 - Health Policy and Cultural Diversity* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5316 - Introduction to Advanced Practice Role Development* **3 sem. hrs.**

Total: 12

The student selects role specialization in Leadership in Nursing Systems. The following courses constitute the respective specialty areas of study:

- NURS 5163 - Project Management for Nurse Leaders (1)* **1 sem. hrs.**
 - NURS 5261 - Human Capital Management (2)* **2 sem. hrs.**
 - NURS 5331 - Nursing informatics* **3 sem. hrs.**
 - NURS 5360 - Health Care Financial Management* **3 sem. hrs.** This course is cross-listed with HCAD 5325 Health Care Financial Management*
 - NURS 5362 - Leadership Theories in Nursing Practice* **3 sem. hrs.**
 - NURS 5364 - Organizational Design & Behavior in Nursing Practice Environments* **3 sem. hrs.**
 - NURS 5365 - Quality and Outcomes Management* **3 sem. hrs.**
 - NURS 5469 - Patterns of Care Delivery* **4 sem. hrs.** (Capstone Course)
 - HCAD 5320 - Health Economics and Policy* **3 sem. hrs.**
 - HCAD 5330 - Health Law and Ethics* **3 sem. hrs.**
- Total: 28**

Degree Total: 40

The course of study for the **Family Nurse Practitioner MSN** program consists of the components listed below.

Family Nurse Practitioner track

	Sem. Hrs.
1. Core courses	12
2. Role specialization course	37
	Total 49

The Core courses

- NURS 5310 - Science in Nursing* **3 sem. hrs.**
 - NURS 5314 - Research Methods in Advanced Nursing Practice* **3 sem. hrs.**
 - NURS 5315 - Health Policy and Cultural Diversity* **3 sem. hrs.**
 - NURS 5316 - Introduction to Advanced Practice Role Development* **3 sem. hrs.**
- Total: 12**

The student selects role specialization in Family Nurse Practitioner. The following courses constitute the respective specialty areas of study:

- NURS 5322 - Advanced Pharmacological Concepts* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5323 - Finance for the Nurse Practitioner* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5341 - Wellness and Health Promotion* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5326 - Advanced Physiology with Pathophysiological Applications* **3 sem. hrs.**
- NURS 5624 - Advanced Health Assessment and Differential Diagnosis* **6 sem. hrs.**

NURS 5644 - Management of Acute and Chronic Illness I* **6 sem. hrs.**
NURS 5645 - Management of Acute and Chronic Illness II* **6 sem. hrs.**
NURS 5746 - Integrated Clinical Practice: FNP* **7 sem. hrs.**

Total: 37

Degree Total: 49

Minor Areas of Study

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences offers three minor areas of study that provide students with a secondary specialization focus. The courses that constitute the minors are taken in addition to the courses required for the role specialization.

[Nurse Educator Minor](#)

[Leadership in Nursing Systems Minor](#)

Nurse Educator Minor Required Courses

NURS 5352 - Nursing Curriculum Planning, Development, and Evaluation* **3 sem. hrs.**
NURS 5353 - Theory and Concepts for the Nurse Educator* **3 sem. hrs.**
NURS 5354 - Assessment, Measurement, and Evaluation in Nursing* **3 sem. hrs.**
NURS 5459 - Education Practicum for the Nurse Educator* **4 sem. hrs.**

Total: 13

Emphasis is on instruction in curriculum, program and course design, development, and evaluation. Focus is also placed on theory and concepts for the development of the nurse educator role. A laboratory experience consisting of teaching instruction in the academic or clinical area provides students with the opportunity to apply theory to classroom or clinical environments.

Leadership in Nursing Systems Minor Required Courses

NURS 5163 - Project Management for Nurse Leaders (1)* **1 sem. hrs.**
NURS 5261 - Human Capital Management (2)* **2 sem. hrs.**
NURS 5360 - Health Care Financial Management* **3 sem. hrs.**
NURS 5362 - Leadership Theories in Nursing Practice* **3 sem. hrs.**
NURS 5364 - Organizational Design & Behavior in Nursing Practice Environments* **3 sem. hrs.**
NURS 5365 - Quality and Outcomes Management* **3 sem. hrs.**

Total: 15

Graduate Requirements

<u>Course work</u>	<u>Semester Hours</u>
Core Courses	12
Nursing Specialty Courses	25-37

The TAMU-CC College of Graduate Studies Recency of Credit rule requires that all credit earned for a graduate degree must be completed within seven years of the first semester in which a student is enrolled in a graduate program. This requirement means that students are expected to complete their MSN program in seven years. In rare situations, an exception to this seven-year policy may be granted from the Dean for the College Graduate Studies when a student is unable to complete courses in this time period. The student must complete a request with an explanation as to why the exception should be made as soon as the student determines that courses will not be completed within this time frame. The request should be submitted to the Graduate Nursing Department Academic Advisor and the Graduate Nursing Department Chair.

Check the [College of Graduate Studies website](#) and the Graduate Catalog for the year you entered the program as well as the current Graduate Catalog for additional information that affects you!

Degree Plan

See the relevant section University Graduate Handbook. The degree plan must be completed before the student has completed 18 credit hours. Please contact the graduate academic advisor in the college about the degree plan.

Culminating Event/Exit Requirements

There is no culminating event for the MSN unless the student chose the thesis option. The culminating event for the Leadership in Nursing Systems Students is the capstone project.

Notification of Intent to Graduate

Graduation upon completion of the course requirements is NOT automatic. The semester before graduation is anticipated, students should obtain an application from the Office of Admissions and Records by the deadline date as indicated in the University Class Schedule. Deadline dates are also available on the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi website.

SECTION V

COURSE SEQUENCING

CORE COURSE DELIVERY FOR ALL MSN TRACKS

FALL	SPRING	SUMMER I
<u>Every Fall each year:</u> NURS 5310 Science in Nursing NURS 5314 Research Methods for Advanced Nursing Practice NURS 5315 Diverse Health Care Environment NURS 5316 Intro to Advance Practice Role	<u>Every Spring, each year:</u> NURS 5310 Science in Nursing NURS 5314 Research Methods for Advanced Nursing Practice NURS 5315 Diverse Health Care Environment NURS 5316 Intro to Advance Practice Role	<u>Every Summer, each year:</u> NURS 5315 Diverse Health Care Environment NURS 5316 Intro to Advance Practice Role

NURSE EDUCATOR TRACK

FALL	SPRING	SUMMER I
<p>Nurs 5324 Advanced Health Assessment</p> <p>NURS 5355 Instructional Methods/Strategies</p>	<p>NURS 5351 Advanced Pharmacology</p> <p>NURS 5326 Advanced Physiology with Pathophysiologic Applications</p> <p>NURS 5354 Assessment, Measurement and Evaluation in Nursing Education</p> <p>NURS 5459 Education Practicum for the Nurse Educator</p>	<p>NURS 5323 Nursing Curriculum Planning and Development</p> <p>NURS 5353 Theory and Concepts for Nurse Educator</p>

LEADERSHIP IN NURSING SYSTEMS TRACK:

FALL	SPRING	SUMMER I
<p>NURS 5365 Organizational Design and Behavior</p> <p>HCAD 5320 Health Economics and Policy</p> <p>NURS 5469 Patterns of Care Delivery</p> <p>NURS 5163 Project Management for Nurse Leaders</p>	<p>NURS 5360/HCAD 5325 Healthcare Financial Management</p> <p>HCAD 5330 Health Law</p>	<p>NURS 5261 Human Capital Management</p> <p>NURS 5362 Leadership Theories in Nursing Practice</p> <p>NURS 5331 Nursing Informatics</p> <p>NURS 5365 Quality and Outcomes Management</p>

FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER TRACK:

FALL	SPRING	SUMMER I
NURS 5322 Advanced Pharmacology	NURS 5322 Advanced Pharmacology	NURS 5323 Finance for the NP
NURS 5326 Advanced Pathophysiology	NURS 5326 Advanced Pathophysiology	NURS 5341 Wellness & Health Promotion
NURS 5624 Health Assessment and Differential Diagnosis	NURS 5624 Health Assessment and Differential Diagnosis	NURS 5644 Acute & Chronic I
NURS 5645 Acute & Chronic II	NURS 5644 Acute & Chronic I *NURS 5746 Integrated Clinical	

SECTION V

PROGRAM SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Program/College Awards

Every semester (including summer semester), graduate faculty can select an outstanding student as well as a research award from the graduating MS students (all tracks) for recognition within the college with a recognition certificate and monetary award.

Conferences to Attend

Attending or presenting at annual leadership, education or nurse practitioner associate conferences is encouraged. The university may provide limited travel funds for presentations at conferences or subsidize travel to regional conferences.

This handbook is intended to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog:
<https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate> and the College of Graduate Studies Handbook:
<https://www.tamucc.edu/grad-college/current-students/assets/documents/masters-student-handbook.pdf>