Master of Science (MSN)
Student Handbook

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Master of Science in Nursing Program College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS)
Island Hall 317
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC)
https://www.tamucc.edu/nursing-and-health-sciences

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SECTION I

MESSAGE FROM DR. CHRISTINA MURPHEY, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR NURSING

Welcome to the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Programs 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 and Health Sciences as well as information on the three program options offered (Nurse Educator, 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 programs. It is a companion for the University Catalog of the entry year and the overarching Graduate Student Handbook. The Student Handbook from the Office of Graduate Education provides university-wide information relative to student resources, academic policies, financial assistance, information on coursework requirements, advising, professional organizations, and policies and procedures.

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

VISION

Enriching lives, advancing healthcare, one Islander at a time.

MISSION

The TAMUCC College of Nursing and Health Sciences is committed to promoting a learner-centered and caring environment that facilitates student success and engagement in a global context. Delivering nationally recognized, evidence-based educational programs that serve a diverse student population, the college sets clinical standards of excellence in healthcare and actively advances scholarly research and leadership. The activities are fostered in a collaborative, inter-professional, and multicultural learning community.

SECTION II

FACULTY & STAFF

Academic Program Coordinators

MSN Nurse Educator & Nurse in Leadership Systems Programs

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

Family Nurse Practitioner Program & Clinical Coordinator

Araceli Hernandez, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, CVRN, Assistant Clinical Professor, Office: Island Hall, Phone (361) 825-3016, araceli.hernandez@tamucc.

Nursing Practice Interim Department Chair:

Cynthia DeLanie EdD, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor and Interim Department Chair, Department of Nursing Practice, Office: Island Hall 344, Phone: (361) 825.2476, cynthia.delanie@tamucc.edu

Faculty:

CONHS Faculty Directory

Staff:

Administrative Assistant:

Kirsten Meza, CONHS Department of Nursing Practice Administrative Assistant
Phone (361) 825- 2613, email: Kirsten.meza@tamucc.edu

Advising:

Last Names A-M
Angelica M. Santillan, Senior Academic Advisor, Phone (361) 825-3453, email: angelica.santillan@tamucc.edu

Last Names N – Z
Kristin Wilson, Academic Advisor II, Phone (361) 825-3453, email: kristin.wilson@tamucc.edu

CONHS Student Success Office:

Megan L. Kramr, Student Success Coordinator
Phone (361) 825-2569, megan.kramr@tamucc.edu

Ushma Saraf, Student Success Administrative Assistant
Phone (361) 825-2799, ushma.saraf@tamucc.edu

Bryana Cazarez, Data Entry Specialist
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SECTION III

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Program Description

The Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC), 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 as nurse leaders, family nurse practitioners, or nurse educators. Emphasis is placed on facilitating health care delivery within a multicultural framework. The curriculum includes four core courses and specific courses related to role specialization within the three programs. The variety of learning opportunities and the flexibility of the curriculum will accommodate students' clinical and functional interests. Each program 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.

All clinical education and training must be accomplished in the State of Texas.

Accreditation

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing/the master's degree program in nursing/Doctor of Nursing Practice program and/the post-graduate APRN certificate program at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.
(http://www.ccneaccreditation.org)
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi is accredited by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS -SOC)
The CONHS nursing programs are approved by:
The Texas Board of Nursing
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite #3-460, Austin, TX 78701-3944
Phone: (512) 305-7400
Fax: (512) 305-7401

MSN Program Goals and Expected Outcomes

The MSN Graduate Nursing Program aims to provide baccalaureate nurses with learning experiences that will increase the breadth and depth of the students' 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 (FNP), Nurse Educator (NE), and Leadership in Nursing Systems (LNS).

The student learning outcomes of the MSN programs are as follows:
Graduates of these programs will:

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

These outcomes are consistent with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Essentials.

Program Options

Applicants 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).

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

RN-Bridge: 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 4471 Leadership/Management 4 sem. hrs.

RN-MSN: Applicants who are registered nurses with associate degrees in nursing can enter the MSN program through the RN to MSN option. 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 up to 42 hours of undergraduate 'leveling' 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 4471 Leadership/Management 4 sem. hrs.
- NURS 4318 Nurse as Research Consumer 3 sem. hrs.

Post Masters Certification is offered in the FNP role specialization track. Post-master's certification is available for students who have earned their MSN. Certification will allow registered nurses to expand their scope of practice beyond the role or population of focus associated with their current credentials. Students admitted to the Post-Master's Certification 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.

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 do not lead to a graduate degree or certification. Colleges may place restrictions on the enrollment of students admitted in this status. Students must see the CONHS Graduate Advisor and the respective Academic Program Coordinator to discuss their related educational goals.

SECTION IV

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

Program Admission

Admission information and deadlines can be found on the website: https://www.tamucc.edu/nursing-and-health-sciences/nursing-practice/index.php under programs of study.

The MSN programs use a rolling admission process (applications are reviewed upon receipt or when there are an adequate number of applicants). We encourage students to apply early. This will allow enough time to also apply for and qualify for federal student aid and scholarships. Applications will not be reviewed until all required materials have been submitted and received.

The college reserves the right to defer admissions due to low enrollment. Students will be notified and given options if a selected track is not offered.

To apply for admission, students should complete application requirements as outlined in the posted Application Requirements section of the MSN webpage: https://www.tamucc.edu/programs/graduate-programs/nursing-msn.php

Additional Information:

- To be considered, students must have completed an undergraduate nursing program or earned a diploma from a National League for Nursing-Accreditation Commission, Accreditation Commission on Education in Nursing, or American Association of Colleges of Nursing Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education accredited school of nursing.
- Applicants who have not yet obtained a Texas nursing license may be conditionally admitted to the MSN Program but are required to obtain their Texas nursing license by the end of the first semester in the graduate program, with a waiver request.
- Students with a GPA of less than 3.00 may be considered for conditional admission with a waiver request.

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

1. Provide evidence they hold a current unencumbered license to practice nursing in the state of Texas throughout the program. Applicants license and disciplinary status will be verified through a primary source verification: https://txbn.boardsofnursing.org/licenselookup and https://www.nursys.com/. Evidence of a current, unencumbered license will be verified throughout the student's enrollment period.
2. Provide evidence that they have met the requirements for immunizations by uploading relevant documents to their account in the data repository maintained by the College. The data repository includes automated email messages to notify students when their immunizations have expired. Students must update immunizations while enrolled in the

program as needed. Students should contact the CONHS Data Entry Specialist for additional information about these requirements.

3. Hold current American Heart Association CPR Type C certification or Red Cross Healthcare Provider CPR. A copy of the student's current American Heart Association Health Care Providers card is required annually to the data repository.

- Complete a 10 panel non-chain of custody urine drug screen upon admission to the MSN program. The results of the screen must be submitted to the CONHS through the data repository maintained by the CONHS. Some agencies may require additional drug screens
- Complete a criminal background check after admission to the program. Generally, the background check is completed within the first semester of the program to meet the admission requirements. Occasionally, an agency will require students to complete another background check if the time between admission and a practice experience within the agency exceeds their time for background checks. The additional background check will be a condition of the student's access to the agency and cannot be waived by the College.

4. 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.

The Texas Department of State Health Services has specific immunization requirements for students enrolled in health profession programs, the CONHS follows the: Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 97, Subchapter B, Rule 97.64 and Rule 97.65 Texas Education Code in allowing for exceptions to the immunization requirements. Some agencies where students may choose to complete clinical practice experience may have stricter requirements than the state minimum standards. Students will have to meet agency requirements to gain access to these agencies.

Academic Advising for MSN Students

Academic advisement for students enrolled in the nursing programs at TAMU-CC is provided by the CONHS Graduate Advisor(s), MSN Program Coordinator(s), and the Associate Dean for Nursing.

Each student is responsible for awareness and successful completion of all degree requirements.

The following individuals will facilitate student progress in accomplishing the MSN program for student learning outcomes.

CONHS Graduate Advisor

- The advisor will assist students with class registration issues, course sequencing, graduation procedures, academic progression, navigating the Office of Graduate Studies procedures, and utilizing existing university facilities, such as financial aid.

- Each MSN student is responsible for meeting or holding a phone conference with the CONHS Graduate Nursing Academic Advisor prior to or during each registration period. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the student of current offerings in the nursing program and to review the student's progress in the degree plan.
- Students should consult the CONHS Graduate Nursing Advisor when events affect their ability to complete courses, progress through the program, or interfere with registration.
- The CONHS Graduate Advisor performs course inventories before graduation, and students should be guided by this review of graduation requirements.

MSN Academic Program Coordinator(s)

- The CONHS MSN Academic Program Coordinator(s) are entrusted with the overall leadership of the MSN program. They are responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of the MSN program, including the curriculum, oversight of clinical practice experiences, and compliance with national accreditation and certification standards.
- The MSN Academic Program Coordinator is responsible for administering MSN program policies and supporting students as they progress through the program.
- It is recommended that students seek assistance from course faculty as soon as they determine they are having difficulties in meeting course requirements, achieving course student learning outcomes, or meeting program student learning outcomes. Students are expected to contact course faculty, the CONHS Graduate Academic Advisor, the MSN Academic Program Coordinator(s), Department Chair, and Associate Dean for Nursing, following chain of command as needed, in the event academic difficulties occur that may impact program progression.

Progression

Admission to the CONHS MSN program is highly competitive. Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress and follow the prescribed degree plan. Students who deviate from the established degree plan, including those who experience a course failure or withdraw, may be considered for re-sequencing on a case-by-case basis. Re-sequencing is not guaranteed and is contingent upon program approval, available space, and a review of the circumstances surrounding the student's academic performance, including any ethical or professional concerns. Re-sequencing will delay program completion and graduation timelines.

Students are not permitted to progress in the curriculum with a course failure and must successfully repeat the failed course before advancing in the program. Approval to progress following a course failure is contingent upon review and approval by the program. In accordance with CONHS policy, students who incur two course failures will be dismissed from the MSN program.

Degree Plan

Degree plan development will be documented on the student's online Degree Planner by the academic advisor. Students should reach out to their academic advisor before the end of the 1st semester to document the degree plan.

Course Delivery & Sequencing

- Courses are delivered in a sequence that promotes the student's development of skills in the design of health services not acquired through baccalaureate-level nursing programs.
- Courses are arranged to support working registered nurses through a part-time program that can be completed in their home communities.
- Students will be required to travel to agencies they select for practice experiences.
- Students may choose to meet faculty or other resources on the TAMU-CC campus to facilitate their learning.
  - Students will be expected to attend periodic campus events. Students will be notified of the dates of events requiring an on-campus presence. Students are expected to discuss any barriers to participation in these events with the MSN Program Coordinator(s).
  - To progress, students must meet the prerequisites for each course. Course prerequisites are based on the sequencing of course content. Students who do not meet these requirements risk not successfully completing a course or slowing the degree progression.
  - Courses will be taught once a calendar year so students should consult the MSN Program Coordinator and the CONHS Graduate Advisor if they are unable to follow the current degree plan. An alternate degree plan may be approved depending on space availability.
  - Students can find course sequences in the Degree Planner for individual plans.

All students must meet the standards for minimal performance and progression established by TAMU-CC. See catalog section on Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements. Students must also adhere to the Graduate Student Handbook.

Courses within each graduate nursing program are offered in a designated sequence. Students who withdraw from a course or fail to enroll in an eligible semester will disrupt their planned program of study, delay progression toward degree completion, and extend their expected graduation date. Reentry into the course sequence may depend on course availability and space limitations. Therefore, students should consult the Graduate Nursing Academic Advisor and/or the appropriate Graduate Nursing Program Coordinator before withdrawing from a course or interrupting enrollment.

To ensure academic integrity and reduce conflicts of interest in graduate nursing programs, TAMU-CC CONHS faculty and staff seeking graduate nursing education cannot enroll in TAMU-CC CONHS programs.

Grading Scale

The CONHS letter grading scales for all programs consist of the following:

A - 90 to 100
B - 83 to 89
C - 75 to 82
D - 74 to 67
F - 66 and Below

All students must meet the standards for minimal performance and progression established by TAMU-CC Office of Graduate Studies.

If a student earns a grade of D, or F, or if the student seeks a W, the student:

- Must repeat a course in which a grade of D or lower was earned
- Must repeat a course in which a W was sought.
- May be placed on scholastic probation if the GPA falls below 3.0 because of the D, F, or W.
- Will be removed from scholastic probation in accordance with university policy. See Scholastic Probation and Enforced Withdrawal in the graduate catalog.
- May not progress to courses for which that course is a prerequisite when a grade of D, F, W, or I (Incomplete) was applied.

If the student:

  - Earns a grade of D, or F in the same course twice
  - Earns a second grade of D or below in any program course, regardless of GPA.
- Seeks a W in the same or any program course twice unless approved by the CONHS APC in coordination with the program coordinator and department chair.
- Earns a third C or below in 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 progression decisions.

The student is placed on enforced withdrawal (see below).

*The student cannot progress to the next course after withdrawing from two courses in the program

unless approved by the CONHS APC with oversight for academic progression. A plan to complete the program must be submitted to the committee before a progression decision can be made. Admission to courses that require completion will depend on space availability and program sequencing.

Conditional Admission Progression

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, and 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.

RN-Bridge/RN-MSN Progression

Students in the RN-Bridge and RN-MSN programs must complete the undergraduate course of work before beginning graduate classes. To progress in these entrance options, students must maintain a 3.00 grade point average. Students may earn credit for NURS 3435 (Health Assessment) and NURS 4324 (Nurse as a Caregiver) through a challenge examination when they earn a score of 83% or better. If the challenge examination results are not successful, the student may take the leveling NURS 3435 the next time it is offered, which will delay progression in the RN-MSN track.

Culminating Event/Exit Requirements for Graduation

The MSN curriculum is 37-40 semester credit hours. Course activities are both didactic and experiential. The didactic component of courses is delivered through the web-based, learning management system (LMS) at TAMU-CC.

There is no culminating event for the MSN unless the student chooses the thesis option. The culminating event for the Nurse Educator and Leadership in Nursing Systems students is the capstone project.

- An MSN student may receive a degree upon satisfying the requirements of the catalog under which the student enrolled in the program, provided the catalog is no more than seven years old when the degree is conferred, and the University still offers programs and required curriculum described in that catalog. A student may petition to graduate under a subsequent catalog under which credit was earned because of a preference to meet newer degree requirements.
- MSN students have a maximum of seven years to complete the program from the first semester start date.
- Students intending to have a degree conferred must notify the CONHS Graduate Advisor.
- Students who plan to participate in a graduation exercise and/or receive a diploma must complete an application for graduation by the deadline indicated in the Academic Calendar.

- An application for graduation must obtained through the student portal, S.A.I.L.
- Students participating in the graduation exercise will also be required to obtain an appropriate cap and gown.
- The graduation application is not transferable to a subsequent semester. If a student does not graduate, the application will be canceled. A new application must be obtained and processed through S.A.I.L.

More information about Commencement can be found here:
https://www.tamucc.edu/commencement/index.php

Academic Integrity & Student Conduct

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty is described in Article III of the Student Code of Conduct. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the university catalog and the *Student Code of Conduct*, which explain standards for academic integrity and academic honesty. Information on Academic Misconduct is available here.

Enforced Withdrawal

A student may be subject to enforced withdrawal from the MSN Program when continued enrollment is inconsistent with university graduate academic requirements.

Grounds for enforced withdrawal include:

- Failure to maintain graduate academic good standing as defined by the TAMU-CC Graduate Catalog.
- GPA falling below 3.0 and failure to return to good standing within the timeframe prescribed by University Policy.
- Earning a grade of D, or F in the same course twice
- Earning a second grade of C or below in any program course, regardless of GPA.
- Seeking a W in the same or any course twice unless approved by the CONHS APC in coordination with the program coordinator and department chair.

Students subject to enforced withdrawal may be eligible for future enrollment consistent with University and program requirements.

Dismissal

The TAMU-CC College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS) is committed to maintaining rigorous academic standards, patient safety, and professional integrity within the Master of Nursing Science Program. Dismissal from the program is a serious action that may occur for academic, professional conduct, compliance, or safety-related reasons.

Note: This dismissal policy is independent from the University's Student Grade Appeal Procedure. The CONHS adheres to the University's Student Grade Appeal Procedure.

Standard Dismissal

Standard dismissal can be academic, compliance, professional, or student misconduct related.

Standard dismissal is applicable in the following situations:

Compliance

- Failure to maintain a current, unencumbered Texas or multi-state RN or APRN license throughout enrollment.
- Failure to maintain required immunizations, CPR certification, drug screening, or criminal background check compliance.
- Revocation, suspension, or restriction of nursing licensure by the Texas Board of Nursing (TxBON) or any other licensing authority.
- Failure to meet any agency-specific requirements for access to clinical practice sites that cannot be waived.

Professional Misconduct

- Professional misconduct includes behavior inconsistent with the ethical, professional, clinical, and leadership standards expected of doctoral nursing students and licensed registered nurses. These standards are distinct from and may exist in addition to conduct governed by the University's Student Code of Conduct.
- Professional misconduct includes, but is not limited to:
- Violation of the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics (https://codeofethics.ana.org/home).
- Unauthorized disclosure of protected health information (PHI) in violation of HIPAA
- Violation of agency or clinical site policies resulting in removal from a practice experience site
- Social media conduct that violates patient confidentiality and/or, professional standards. Refer to the ANA Social Media Guide.
- Threatening, harassing, discriminatory, or otherwise unprofessional behavior toward patients, preceptors, clinical personnel, faculty, staff, peers, or community partners.

Student Misconduct

Student misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, fabrication, falsification of data, or unauthorized use of AI tools in the completion of coursework or clinical documentation (see Student Academic Misconduct Procedure) and (Student Code of Conduct)
- Falsification of clinical practice hours or portfolio documentation (Student Code of Conduct and https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex._occ._code_section_301.452).
- Threatening, harassing, or discriminatory behavior toward students, faculty, or staff as defined by the Student Code of Conduct.

Some cases of student misconduct will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for review,

otherwise, the full due process review procedure below is followed.

Interim Removal

Interim removal is an administrative action taken when the College determines that a student's continued participation may present an imminent risk to patient safety, public safety, or the learning environment.

Interim Removal is applicable when:

- Imminent patient or community safety risk
- Loss or suspension of nursing licensure
- Egregious professional or ethical violations (e.g., patient abuse, PHI breach, fraud)
- Interim removal is not a final determination and does not constitute dismissal from the program.

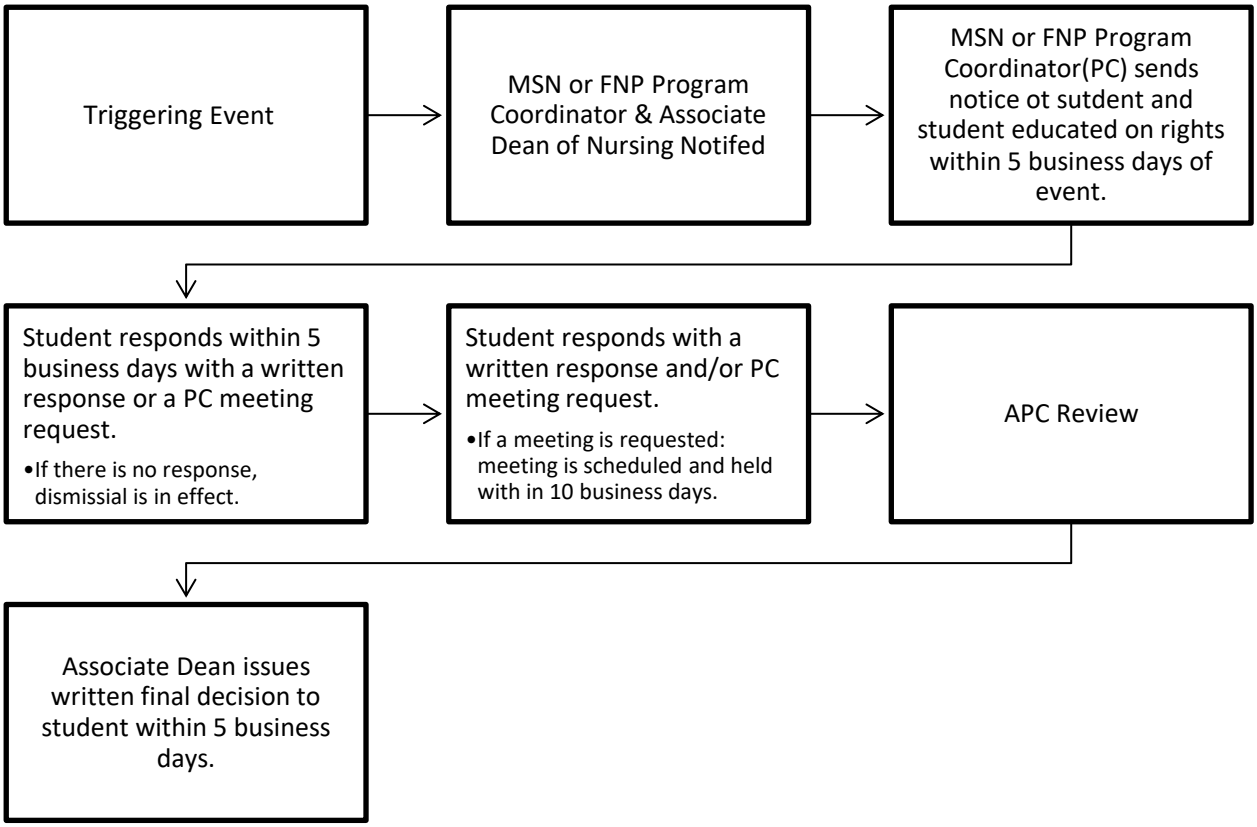
Students placed on interim removal retain all due process rights described below.

Resolution of Interim Removal

- If allegations are not substantiated, the student will be reinstated to the program.
- The College will make reasonable efforts to facilitate completion of missed clinical, practicum, or academic requirements, subject to course availability, clinical placement availability, and program progression requirements.

Due Process Review Procedure

The following procedure governs all dismissal actions. The steps are sequential and must be documented in writing at each stage.



Written Notice of Intent to Dismiss

The MSN or FNP Program Coordinator, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Nursing, will issue a written Notice of Intent to Dismiss to the student's official TAMU-CC Islander email address. The notice will include:

- The specific ground(s) for the proposed dismissal, with reference to the applicable handbook section(s)
- A summary of the relevant facts or conduct at issue
- The student's right to submit a written response
- The deadline for the student's written response (5 business days)
- The student's right to request a meeting with the PC
- Contact information for the CONHS Graduate Academic Advisor and the Dean of Students' Office.

Student Response and Meeting

Within 5 business days of receiving the Notice, the student may submit a written response addressing the ground(s) stated in the Notice and/or request a meeting with the MSN or FNP Program Coordinator and/or Associate Dean for Nursing. A meeting will be scheduled within 10 business days of the student's response, if requested. The student may be accompanied by a support advisor of their choosing. The advisor may not speak on the student's behalf or represent the student in a legal capacity during the meeting, but the student may confer with the advisor during the meeting.

APC Review and Recommendation

- Following receipt of the student's written response and/or completion of any requested meeting, the Admissions and Progression Committee (APC) will review the documentation and provide a recommendation to the Associate Dean for Nursing.
- The APC recommendation is advisory. Final authority regarding dismissal rests with the Associate Dean for Nursing.

Final Decision

Following review of the student's written response and/or meeting, the Associate Dean for Nursing will issue a written Final Decision within 5 business days. The decision letter will state whether dismissal is upheld, modified, or rescinded with rationale; and be copied to the MSN or FNP Program Coordinator and the CONHS Graduate Academic Advisor.

Student Right to Appeal

All students dismissed on academic or compliance grounds retain the right to appeal. A student who wishes to appeal must submit a written appeal to the Dean of the CONHS within 5 business days of receiving the Final Decision letter. The appeal must include:

- The student's full name, program, and student ID
- A clear statement of the grounds for the appeal (see permissible grounds below)
- Supporting documentation
- Permissible Grounds for Appeal

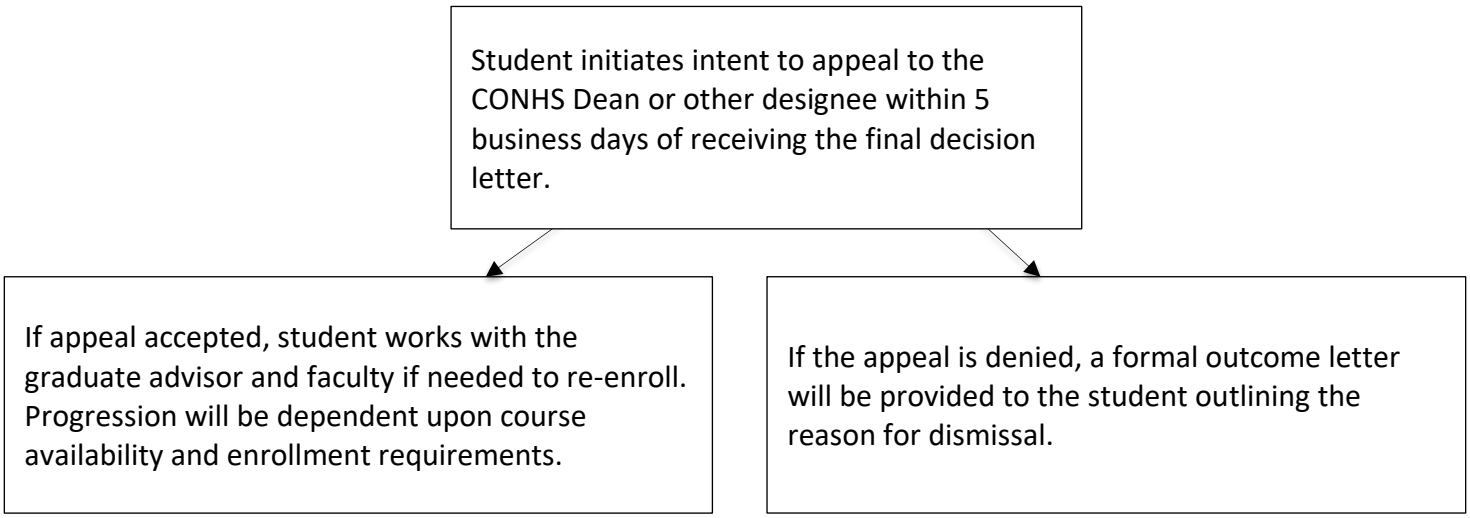
An appeal will only be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

- Procedural error: the dismissal procedure was not followed as described in this policy
- New supporting documentation: relevant information not reasonably available at the time of the original decision that would materially affect the outcome
- Disproportionate outcome: the dismissal sanction is clearly disproportionate to the established conduct

Disagreement with the decision alone, or dissatisfaction with the outcome, does not constitute grounds for appeal.

Appeal Review

The Dean of CONHS (or a designee who was not involved in the original decision) will review the appeal and may review the written record, request additional information, and/or meet with individuals as necessary before issuing a written decision within 15 business days. The Dean's decision constitutes the final institutional decision within the CONHS.



Documentation and Records

All documentation related to a dismissal action including the Notice of Intent to Dismiss, the student's response, meeting notes, the Final Decision, and any appeal records will be maintained in the student's file in accordance with FERPA and University record retention policies. The CONHS Graduate Academic Advisor is responsible for maintaining these records.

University Grievance Process

- The dismissal appeal process is separate from the University's grievance process.
- Students who wish to file a University grievance may do so through the Compliance Office using the applicable grievance procedures and forms.
- Information regarding grievance procedures is available through the Compliance Office: (https://www.tamucc.edu/institutional-excellence/compliance/services/complaints/index.php)

College of Nursing and Health Sciences Student Grade Appeal Process

The CONHS adheres to the University's Student Grade Appeal Procedure.

SECTION V

MSN PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Full Degree information can be located in the catalog: https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/nursing-health-sciences/masters/

Course Delivery

- Each MSN course can be accessed in a unique LMS shell through the TAMU-CC link. Course materials are organized within the shell. Links to support services including the library, tutorials, zoom presentations, and IT Help Desk are available in each shell. All course-related communication, including documentation of grades, clarification of assignments, and discussions should occur in the course shell.
- Generally, in-person, face-to-face activities between faculty and classmates will not be required to complete course-specific assignments.
- Coursework consists of a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities that support student learning. Faculty may use a variety of web-based technologies, such as YouTube videos or group conferencing, as well as the learning tools embedded in the learning management system (such as chats, discussions, and assignment management) to support student learning.
- Students are expected to maintain access to the Internet so that they can regularly participate in class activities.
- The TAMU-CC IT Help Desk maintains student support services seven days a week and can be reached by email or phone. Students should contact the IT Help services when they cannot access the course shell. Additionally, students should contact the course faculty as soon as possible when they have long-term access problems that will interfere with their access to course materials through the LMS.
- Each course will contain a class schedule, which will delineate deadlines for assignments and provide a framework for establishing a work plan to complete course requirements.
- Most courses include lessons presented through a a variety of methodologies. These lessons generally include references to material on sites outside of the course made available through links. The lessons supplement the required readings. Self-assessments are often used to help students evaluate their understanding of lesson material.
- Several courses will include activities completed in practice settings through practice experiences. These activities provide appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate their ability to implement the principles covered in a course and complete the practice hours required for the program. Students are expected to complete course assignments in a timely manner.

MSN Course Faculty

Course faculty are TAMU-CC CONHS faculty members responsible for the instruction, facilitation, evaluation, and oversight of student learning within assigned courses in the MSN program. Course faculty possess expertise in their respective content areas and are committed to supporting students in achieving course and program learning outcomes.

The faculty–student relationship is founded on mutual professionalism, respect, accountability, and shared responsibility for learning. Course faculty serve as educators, mentors, and professional role models who provide instruction, guidance, feedback, and academic support to facilitate student success. Faculty members balance responsibilities related to teaching, scholarship, service, clinical practice, and university engagement in addition to supporting students.

Students are expected to communicate professionally, actively engage in course activities, comply with course requirements and deadlines, be self-directed, take initiative with faculty – student communication and appointments, and seek assistance or clarification in a timely manner. Students are responsible for reviewing course materials, monitoring university communications, and managing their academic responsibilities to ensure timely completion of coursework.

Course faculty will make reasonable efforts to respond to student inquiries, evaluate assignments, and provide timely feedback. However, faculty members are not expected to be available on a 24/7 basis. Students should allow reasonable time for responses to emails, requests for meetings, discussion board questions, and assignment submissions. Course-specific expectations regarding communication, availability, office hours, grading, and response times will be outlined in the course syllabus.

Faculty reserve the right to establish and maintain professional boundaries that support an effective learning environment. Mutual respect, professional communication, and adherence to university and program policies are essential to fostering a positive educational experience and promoting student success throughout the MSN program.

Students should recognize that faculty availability may vary during university holidays, semester breaks, summer terms, and periods of approved leave or professional travel. Communication and feedback timelines may be adjusted accordingly. Except in emergency situations involving university operations, students should not expect responses outside normal university business hours. Respect for faculty work schedules, university holidays, and academic breaks contributes to a professional learning environment and supports healthy boundaries for both students and faculty.

Written Assignment Requirements

- Because this is a graduate level program, student performance will be assessed primarily through application activities that include the design, implementation, and defense of interventions that support quality health care. All assignments submitted to faculty must be submitted in the current APA format unless specifically instructed for that assignment. Any deviation from this requirement will be explicitly stated in a course syllabus.
- Students are required to purchase a copy of the current Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association and avoid relying solely on electronic templates. Using only electronic aids for APA formatting may create problems because electronic templates do not always work correctly when documents are transmitted electronically.

Social Media

Social media has become very popular for public communication. The student is referred to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) White Paper on Social Media 2024 for guidance in the use of social media in nursing. The MSN student will be held accountable to professional standards related to confidentiality in all activities related to program requirements.

Proctored Test Procedure

The TAMU-CC CONHS strives to create an environment that supports the University standards for academic integrity. The College may administer tests either at secure testing sites or using specific exam software, at the program's discretion. If a testing site is used, students can select a test site near their home from a list of approved sites: any testing fees (for either the testing site or the testing software) will be paid by the student directly to the test site or the software administrator.

To facilitate the use of test sites, course faculty work together to establish a test schedule for the academic semester. Students are expected to adjust their work schedules so that they can take the test when it is scheduled. Each course syllabus will outline the testing procedure in detail and delineate the class policy for rescheduling tests. Each faculty member has discretion to establish the course policy for rescheduling test dates.

Curricular Changes

The MSN curriculum was designed to support student acquisition of principles and competencies essential to professional practice at its highest level. The CONHS reserves the right to modify the curriculum when professional standards for doctoral education in nursing indicate a change is needed. The Associate Dean for Nursing, working with the MSN or FNP Program Coordinator and Graduate Academic Advisor, will notify students of impending changes as soon as possible.

Student Records

Student records are electronically maintained by the Graduate Academic Advisor in the College. The Open Record Policy is followed, and students can review their own records.

All nursing students are responsible for updating official changes in names and contact information (mailing address, phone number, email address) in the appropriate student database. They are also responsible for notifying the Graduate Nursing Academic Advisor and Registrar's of these changes. Students may not receive important information that affects progression through the program or eligibility for graduation if contact information is not current.

MSN Program Core Courses:

The MSN has four program core couses, with each specialty track with role specialization courses as outlined below with required semester credit hours (SCH) and clinical hours:

NURS 5310 - Science in Nursing	3 SCH
NURS 5314 - Research Methods in Advanced Nursing Practice	3 SCH
NURS 5315 - Health Policy and Cultural Diversity	3 SCH
NURS 5316 - Intro to Advanced Practice Role Development	3 SCH
	Total: 12 SCH

Nurse Educator Requirements

MSN Core courses (above)	12 SCH
Role specialization courses	25 SCH
Total Clinical Hours:	180 Clinical Hours
Degree Total:	37 SCH

For detailed course information and descriptions, please see the Catalog: Nurse Educator.

Leadership in Nursing Systems Requirements

Core courses (above)	12 SCH
Role specialization courses	28 SCH
Total clinical hours:	225 Clinical Hours (since 2017) *
Degree Total:	40 SCH

*Contact the MSN NLS Coordinator for clinical hours prior to 2017 matriculation

For detailed course information and descriptions, please see the Catalog: Nurse in Leadership Systems.

Family Nurse Practitioner

Core courses (above)	12 SCH
Role specialization course	37 SCH
Total Clinical Hours:	630 Clinical Hours
Degree Total:	49 SCH

For detailed course information and descriptions, please see the Catalog: Family Nurse Practitioner.

SECTION VI

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Professional Honor Societies

- The chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing (Sigma) at TAMU-CC is Eta Omicron Chapter. Sigma is the only international honor society for nursing and is a member of the Association of College Honor Societies. The Society recognizes achievement of superior quality, fosters high professional standards, encourages creative work, and recognizes the development of leadership qualities. The organization strengthens the individual's commitment to the ideals and purposes of professional nursing. Sigma Theta Tau is a scholarly professional nursing organization that promotes the best in nursing.
- TAMU-CC students who meet the eligibility criteria for membership as outlined in Sigma Theta Tau are eligible to join induction into Eta Omicron, TAMU-CC's founding chapter. Eligible students receive invitations to join the chapter via their Islander email account. Formal induction ceremonies are held twice annually.
- The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest all-discipline honor society — established its Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi chapter in 2014. The A&M University–Corpus Christi chapter is the 328th chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, which was founded in 1897 at the University of Maine. Graduate Students who meet the eligibility criteria will be invited by the chapter to join Phi Kappa Phi (no nomination letters needed). Graduate students must have completed 18 credit hours and rank in the top 10% of their class.

Professional Organizations

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). AACN is the national voice for baccalaureate and graduate nursing education. AACN works to establish quality standards for nursing education; assists schools in implementing those standards; influences the nursing profession to improve health care; and promotes public support for professional nursing education, research, and practice. (requires institutional membership).
- American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). The AANP is the national organization for nurse practitioners.
- American Colleges of Healthcare Executives. The American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) is an international association of healthcare executives often including high-level hospital administrators, CEOs, nursing executives, etc. Multiple local chapters exist throughout Texas.
- American Nurses Association (ANA). The American Nurses Association (ANA) is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.4 million registered nurses. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, bolstering the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating on health care issues that affect nurses and the public. ANA is at the forefront of improving the quality of health care for all.

- The American Organization of Nurse Leaders provides leadership, professional development, advocacy, and research to advance nursing practice and patient care, promote nursing leadership excellence and shape public policy for health care nationwide. AONL is a subsidiary of the American Hospital Association
- National League for Nursing. For more than 100 years, the NLN has been the premier organization for nurse faculty, schools of nursing, and leaders in nursing education. Currently, the NLN is comprised of 40,000 individual and 1,200 institutional members representing all types of nursing programs from LPN/LVN through doctorate education.
- National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties. The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) is specifically devoted to promoting high-quality nurse practitioner (NP) education. Today, the organization represents a global network of NP educators.
- Texas Nurses Association (TNA). TNA, along with the ANA, empowers nurses to advance the profession. TNA speaks out on crucial nursing issues such as workplace advocacy. Membership in TNA and ANA enables you to become a full participant in defining your profession now and into the future. Many of TNA's activities occur at the local — or district — level.
- Texas Nurse Practitioners (TNP). The primary mission of TNP is to serve as a voice of Texas Nurse Practitioners dedicated to improving patient access to quality health care. Please refer to the listing of affiliates in your area of the state.

This list is not exhaustive.

MSN LMS Organization Site

Current MSN User Guides, Documents, Tools and Resources, such as the ones identified in this Handbook are housed in the MSN Organization.

Program/College Awards

- Every graduation cycle, graduate faculty can select an outstanding student per track: NE, NLS, and FNP.
- Faculty may select a student to receive a scholarly work award from the graduating group of MSN students. The recipient of this award will have produced scholarly work above usual expectations, and the work has potential for reaching broader impacts.

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.

SECTION VII

GENERAL GRADUATE EDUCATION INFORMATION

This section of the handbook includes standardized information about rules and policies pertaining to graduate education at Texas A&M University. It is not intended to be comprehensive. You are strongly encouraged to read the sections of the catalog pertaining to graduate students, which will provide more detail and additional topics that may impact you. You will also find information about your program.

Graduate Admissions

To be admitted to a program of graduate study, an applicant must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or an equivalent foreign institution. (Note: The requirement to hold a bachelor's degree does not apply to students enrolling in the RN-MSN option in nursing. Decisions concerning admission to graduate study are based on all admission criteria. To be considered for a graduate program, a minimum of the last 60-hour GPA of 2.5 is required. Some programs may have higher GPA requirements; review specific program information in the graduate catalog or elsewhere in this handbook. All applications must be made through Apply Texas. For more information about the application process, visit the Application Process page or see the Graduate Admissions section of the catalog.

Graduate students should be aware of their enrollment status, as it may impact financial aid, veteran's benefits, or other important aspects of graduate life. In addition, international students have specific requirements about enrollment status. Enrollment status for graduate students is as follows:

Full-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 9 hours
	Combined summer terms = 6 hours
Three-quarter-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 7 hours
	Combined summer terms = 5 hours
Half-time graduate student:	Fall or spring term = 5 hours
	Combined summer terms = 3 hours

Continuous Enrollment

The University does not have a continuous enrollment policy for master's students. However, you should be aware of your own program's requirements, which may differ from general University requirements. Master's students should also know that if they do not attend for two years, they will be required to reapply to the University. Students should consider applying for a leave of absence (see below), especially if the time-to-degree and recency of credits requirements will be impacted by a needed absence.

Leave of Absence

Students experiencing life-changing or catastrophic events should consult with their program coordinator and/or department chair and request a Leave of Absence in writing from the Registrar's Office using the Request for Leave of Absence form. A student who is in good standing may petition for a leave of absence of no more than two full academic terms. The maximum number of leave of absence requests permitted in a program is two. A request for a leave of absence requires approval in advance by the CONHS Graduate Advisor and the respective Academic Program Coordinator.

Time Limit to Degree

The requirements for a master's degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within seven years subsequent to admission to the program. The seven-year period begins in the first semester of enrollment and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Credit that is more than seven years old will not be counted toward a master's degree. Exceptions will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as submission of a revalidation plan. Credits earned at another university are not eligible for an exception. Written approval from the major department chairperson, the dean of the college offering the degree, and the provost are required. See the revalidation process below.

Revalidation of Courses Beyond Degree Time Limit

To revalidate dated courses, students should carefully attend to information in the catalog (see Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog. Revalidation requests should be made using the Revalidation Request Form.
If your program has shorter time-to-degree limits, it may impact the recency of credit and other timelines. See program information in this handbook or seek information from your Program Coordinator.

Academic Requirements for Graduate Work

Good Standing. Graduate students, including degree-seeking, certificate-seeking, and non-degree-seeking students, are considered in "good academic standing" if they maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on all graduate course work and earn a grade of S (Satisfactory), IP (In Progress), or CR (Credit) on all course work that does not affect GPA. A higher GPA may be required by some programs. In such cases, the higher standard will be substituted for 3.0 in all other matters related to good academic standing. A complete discussion of academic requirements, including but not limited to scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal, may be found in the Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog. For information regarding the effect of scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal, see the Financial Assistance Suspension Policy in the Tuition, Fees, & Financial Assistance section of the catalog.

Additional Information

Information, policies, and procedures about tuition, fees, financial assistance, scholarships, and other topics important to graduate students can be found in the catalog. In addition to the catalog, web pages for offices and services on campus provide expanded information, forms, and contact names/phone numbers. Some of those webpages include the following:

Office of Graduate Education
Office of Student Financial Assistance
Office of International Education
Scholarships
GROW