Handbook for Bachelor of Science in Nursing

2026-2027 Academic Year
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Mission

The mission of the nursing program at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is to offer nursing education to the registered nurse on the baccalaureate level, to serve the diverse population of Central Texas, which includes the military and their families. The nursing faculty strive to prepare excellent nurses to practice in acute care settings, outpatient services or continue in the pursuit of advanced degrees.

Goals

The goals of the nursing program are concurrent with the goals of the university:

1. Educate registered nurses on the baccalaureate level to advance in their career and/or attend graduate nursing programs.
2. Utilize Innovative web-based course delivery and evaluation methods
3. Encourage the use of high quality evidence to inform practice and improve the health of individuals, communities and organizations.
4. Promote service to individuals, the community and the profession of nursing through learning activities in practicum-based courses

Responsibility

Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the policies and information contained in this handbook. Every effort has been made to make this publication as complete and accurate as possible, but changes may occur at any time.

Accreditation

Texas A&M University-Central Texas is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award baccalaureate, master's, and specialist degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of A&M-Central Texas.

The baccalaureate degree in nursing at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) (http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation).

Curriculum Delivery

The BSN program is delivered in a 100% online format. Selected courses contain practicum experiences requiring in-person attendance.

Student Learning Outcomes

The curriculum is guided by: American Association of Colleges of Nursing, (2021). The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Education. Washington, DC. [https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/AcademicNursing/pdf/Essentials-2021.pdf]

The curriculum is also guided by: The Texas Board of Nursing, (2021). Differentiated Essential Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs.

Student Learning Outcome Mapping

PSLO	Essential	DEC
Integrate knowledge and skills in the provision of patient-centered care from liberal education base.	Domain 1- Knowledge for Nursing Practice. Domain II- Person-Centered Care Domain IV-Scholarship for Nursing Practice Domain X-Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development	Member of the Profession Provider of Patient-Centered Care
Integrate the necessary knowledge and skills in leadership, quality improvement and patient safety necessary to provide high quality health care.	Domain 1- Knowledge for Nursing Practice. Domain II- Person-Centered Care Domain V-Quality and Safety Domain VI-Interprofessional Partnerships Domain III- Population Health	Provider of Patient-Centered Care Patient Safety Advocate Member of the Health Care Team

	Domain X-Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development	

Student Learning Outcome Mapping

Integrate best practices in scholarship for translating evidence into practice.	Domain 1- Knowledge for Nursing Practice. Domain IV-Scholarship for Nursing Practice Domain V-Quality and Safety Domain X-Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development	Member of the Profession Provider of Patient-Centered Care Patient Safety Advocate Member of the Health Care Team
Evaluate the use of nursing informatics from multiple perspectives with nursing practice.	Domain 1- Knowledge for Nursing Practice. Domain VIII-Information and Healthcare Technologies Domain V-Quality and Safety	Member of the Profession Patient Safety Advocate Member of the Health Care Team
Identify means by which professional nurses affect quality of health care delivery based on political, legal, ethical, and policy issues.	Domain 1- Knowledge for Nursing Practice. Domain II- Person-Centered Care Domain V-Quality and Safety Domain VI-Interprofessional Partnerships Domain III- Population Health Domain X-Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development	Member of the Profession Member of the Health Care Team
Analyze the role of the nurse in interprofessional communication and collaboration to improve patient outcomes.	Domain 1- Knowledge for Nursing Practice. Domain II- Person-Centered Care Domain V-Quality and Safety Domain VI-Interprofessional Partnerships	Member of the Profession Provider of Patient-Centered Care Patient Safety Advocate Member of the Health Care Team
Select appropriate models and theories of clinical prevention and population health to perform nursing actions which optimize health of a target population.	Domain 1- Knowledge for Nursing Practice. Domain IV-Scholarship for Nursing Practice Domain III- Population Health	Member of the Profession Member of the Health Care Team

Student Learning Outcome Mapping

Student Learning Outcome Mapping

Analyze professional nursing from historical and contemporary perspectives, including the philosophy and theoretical foundations that define professional nursing practice.	Domain 1- Knowledge for Nursing Practice. Domain II- Person-Centered Care Domain VII- Systems-Based Practice Domain IV-Scholarship for Nursing Practice Domain V-Quality and Safety Domain X-Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development	Member of the Profession Provider of Patient-Centered Care Patient Safety Advocate Member of the Health Care Team

Student Learning Outcome Mapping		
Synthesize knowledge at the level of a baccalaureate prepared nurse pertaining to membership in the profession, provision of patient care and advocacy through reflection and/or application.	Domain 1- Knowledge for Nursing Practice. Domain II- Person-Centered Care Domain VII- Systems-Based Practice Domain V-Quality and Safety Domain VI-Interprofessional Partnerships Domain X-Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development	Member of the Profession Provider of Patient-Centered Care Patient Safety Advocate Member of the Health Care Team

Essential Competency Requirements of the Nursing Student

All students accepted into the Nursing Program are expected to have the following six competencies in order to effectively and safely perform the responsibilities of a nursing student.

A. Motor Skills: Candidates should have sufficient motor function so that they are able to execute movements required to provide general care and treatment to patients in all health care settings.

B. Sensory/Observation: A candidate must be able to acquire the information presented through demonstrations and experiences in the basic and nursing sciences. He or she must be able to observe a patient accurately, at a distance and nearby, and observe and appreciate non-verbal communications when performing nursing assessment and intervention or administering medications. The candidate must be capable of perceiving the signs of disease and infection as manifested through physical examination. Such information is derived from visual images of the body surfaces, palpable changes in various organs and tissues, and auditory information (patient voice, heart tones, bowel and lung sounds).

C. Communication: The candidate must communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, patients, family, and other professionals. He or she must express his or her ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively in oral and written forms.

D. Cognitive: A candidate must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize in the context of undergraduate nursing study. The candidate must be able to quickly read and comprehend extensive written material. He or she must also be able to evaluate and apply information and engage in critical thinking in the virtual classroom and clinical setting.

E. Behavioral/Emotional: A candidate must possess the emotional health required for the full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all assignments. In addition, s/he must be able to maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff and other professionals under all circumstances including highly stressful situations. The candidate must know that his or her values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and experiences affect his or her perceptions and relationships with others. The candidate must be able and willing to examine and change his or her behavior when it interferes with productive individual or group relationships. The candidate must possess skills and experience necessary for effective and harmonious relationships in diverse academic and working environments.

F. Professional Conduct: Candidates must possess the ability to reason morally and practice nursing in an ethical manner. Candidates must be willing to learn and abide by professional standards of practice according to the Nurse Practice Act. S/he must possess attributes that include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, honesty, responsibility and tolerance. Candidates must be able to engage in patient care delivery in all settings and be able to deliver care to all patient populations including but not limited to children, adolescents, adults, developmentally disabled persons, medically compromised patients, and vulnerable adults.

Admissions

General Education Course Requirements

Texas A&M University-Central Texas is an upper-level university; therefore, the core curriculum/general education courses and

nursing Field of Study prerequisites must be taken at another institution. Core curricula may also be accepted from other institutions. Students may enter the nursing program with up to six (6) semester credit hours of courses remaining.

Admission to the University

All students must be admitted to the University according to applicable policies at the time of application found in Undergraduate Catalog Admissions Requirements.

Admission to the Nursing Program

The Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing has additional entry requirements separate from general admission to the university. To be eligible to declare Nursing as a major and begin nursing courses, students must meet the below requirements:

Nursing Program Admission Requirements

- Meet minimum university admission requirements
- Have a current unencumbered Texas Registered Nurse's (RN) license or of a Compact State*
- Have earned a grade of "C" or higher in all courses leading to a BSN degree

*Nursing students in their last year at a community college who 1). Meet general admission standards and 2). Have earned a grade of "C" or higher in all courses leading to a BSN degree may apply for conditional admission to the BSN program.
**Due to regulatory requirements of the state boards of nursing in Alaska, Washington DC, Guam, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Indiana, Maryland, Tennessee, The Virgin Islands, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming; the TAMU-CT RN to BSN program cannot enroll students who are licensed/practicing in these states.*

*Nursing students in their last year at a community college who 1). Meet general admission standards and 2). Have earned a grade of "C" or higher in all courses leading to a BSN degree may apply for conditional admission to the BSN program.

Application to the Nursing Program

Nursing majors typically apply for admission to the Nursing program during the initial advising session prior to their first semester at A&M-Central Texas. The Nursing Department highly encourages Nursing majors to visit with their academic advisors to review program application timelines and requirements. Students must complete the below steps to apply for the Nursing Program.

- Gain admission to A&M-Central Texas
- Declare nursing as your major (completed during initial advising session)
- Submit online nursing program application

Conditional Admission Policy

Nursing students conditionally admitted to the Nursing Program may enroll in the NURS 3300 and NURS 3317 courses. Upon successful completion of the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) and NCLEX examination, conditionally admitted students must provide proof of license to the Nursing Department to gain full program admission. Students unable to provide license or who do not pass the NCLEX exam will not be eligible to progress in the Nursing Program.

Progression Policy

Nursing students are provided a Student Education Plan upon admission to guide program progression. Students may progress in the program when the following conditions are met:

- *All nursing and prerequisite courses must be completed with a minimum grade of C. Students who earn a grade below a C in one or more nursing courses within the same semester may request re-enrollment in those courses. If readmitted, the student must earn a grade of C or higher in the repeated courses and in all subsequent courses in future semesters to remain in the program. Students who earn a grade below a C in courses during more than one semester will be dismissed from the nursing program and will be ineligible for readmission.*
- Transfer students from other programs must complete a minimum of 30 hours from A&M-Central Texas.
- Maintenance of an unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse in the state of Texas (or Compact State) through the duration of the program.

Readmission Policy

- Students who have an interruption--as defined as an inability to achieve a passing grade, withdrawal, or non-enrollment--must gain permission before taking any nursing course.
- The Division of Student Affairs, along with the Nursing Program Director, evaluates the student's request for readmission or to retake any nursing course.

- The student's general academic history, nursing course grades, and potential for success will be considered. Readmission or permission to retake any course is based on professional judgment and space availability.
- Students who withdraw from a course or courses or receive a grade below a "C" should follow the procedure in the Progression Policy.
- After lapse of one long semester, students wishing to return to the program:

A. Must notify the Nursing Program Director

B. Must submit a physician's clearance in order to return to classes if the absence was due to a health problem

C. Must meet with a nursing faculty member prior to registering to develop a degree completion plan

D. If the student has been out two long semesters or more, the student must also:

1. Submit an updated Application to the Nursing Program
2. Adhere to the most current catalog requirements
3. Fulfill any requirements specified by the Nursing Program Director
4. Complete the Nursing Program within five (5) calendar years from their initial enrollment

Degree Requirements

All students are required to meet the General Education Core Requirements of the University. Refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for specific General Education Core Requirements. The Nursing Department has specific requirements designs to meet the Texas Common Core as well as Field of Study for Nursing required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. . Students should meet with a Department Advisor to determine Degree Plan that will meet the requirements. Requirements and recommended courses are outlined below. Courses with an asterix (*) are required for Nursing Field of Study.

Course Requirements for BSN

Course Requirements for BSN	
Course Options/Requirements	Credit Hours
COMMUNICATION (010)	6 SCH
ENGL 1301*	
ENGL 1301 or ENGL 2311*	
MATHEMATICS (020)	3 SCH
MATH 1342 – Statistics*	
LIFE & PHYSICAL SCIENCES (040)	6 SCH
BIOL 2401 – Anatomy and Physiology (4)*	
BIOL 2402 – Anatomy and Physiology (4)*	
LANGUAGE, PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE (040)	3 SCH
CREATIVE ARTS (050)	3 SCH
AMERICAN HISTORY (060)	6 SCH
GOVERNMENT/POLITICAL SCIENCE (070)	6 SCH
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES (080)	3 SCH
PSYCH 2301 General Psychology*	
INSTITUTIONALLY DESIGNATED OPTIONS	6 SCH
SOCIO 1301 – Introduction to Sociology	
Any speech course	
ADDITIONAL FIELD OF STUDY REQUIREMENTS	7 SCH
BIOL 2421 or BIOL 2420 – Microbiology (4)*	
PSYCH 2314 Lifespan Growth and Development (3)*	
TRANSFER NURSING COURSES BY ARTICULATION/VALIDATION	minimum of 30 SCH

Course Requirements for BSN	
NURS 3300 Professional Transition & Informatics for the RN	3
NURS 3307 Health Assessment for the RN	3
NURS 3304 Nursing Research In Evidence-Based Practice (WI)	3
NURS 3317 Pathophysiology/Pharmacology for the RN	3
NURS 4312 Professional Practice Issues for the RN (WI)	3
NURS 4305 Care of Individuals & Families for the RN	3
NURS 4306 Community Health Nursing for the RN I	3
NURS 4307 Community Health Nursing for the RN II	3
NURS 3330 Care of the Older Adult for the RN	3
NURS 4310 Leadership and Management for the RN	3
GENERAL ELECTIVES *Students who have taken BIOL/NUTR 1322 (Nutrition) and General Chemistry will have those hours applied to fulfill this requirement	As required to reach 120 SCH
Total Hours Required for Degree Completion	**120**
***All NURS courses are offered online, some courses do have an additional practicum component**	

Course Descriptions

NURS 3300 Professional Transition and Informatics- Nursing is defined, especially as it relates to promotion and restoration of health. Roles of the nurse are explored. Professional nursing is examined from historical and contemporary perspectives, including the philosophy and theoretical foundations that define professional nursing practice. Students will examine personal, professional and cultural values as influences upon nursing practice. The process of critical thinking and the use of nursing informatics is examined from multiple perspectives. Prerequisite: Admission to the Nursing Program, ENGL 1302 or 2311

NURS 3304 Nursing Research in Evidence Based Practice- This introductory nursing research course focuses on improving nursing practice based on evidence discovered in the research process. Methods of data collection and analysis, and the interpretation and use of study findings will be evaluated. The importance of scientific integrity and maintaining ethical standards are highlighted. Pre/Co-requisite (s): NURS 3300, MATH 1342

NURS 3307 Health Assessment- This Health Assessment Course introduces the concepts and techniques of health and cultural assessment of individuals and families across the life span, for use with the nursing process. Emphasis is on history/data collection and critical analysis in situations of health and deviations from health. Practicum experiences enable student's practice of clinical assessment skills, analysis, and decision-making for nursing practice. Prerequisite or Corequisite(s): NURS 3300

NURS 3317. Pathophysiology/Pharmacology for the Registered Nurse. The focus of this course is to understand the pathophysiological basis for disease processes in adults and children. Central concepts will address symptoms, treatment, and prognosis. The major direction of this course will be on clinical application of findings that underlie pathogenesis and pharmacology that provides a basis for evidence-based practice. The course is specifically designed to meet the needs of nursing students. Prerequisite(s) or Corequisite(s): NURS 3300.

NURS 3330 Care of the Older Adult- Focus is on risk reduction, disease prevention, and strategies for health promotion, restoration, and maintenance in a vulnerable older population. Emphasis is placed on integrating assessment, data analysis, therapeutic communication, and critical thinking skills to direct culturally sensitive care of older adults. Prerequisite(s): NURS 3307

NURS 4305 Care of Individuals and Families- In this course students are expected to synthesize knowledge from previous courses as care is provided to people with complex, unpredictable, or chronic health needs. The student will be self-directed in development of learning objectives and in using the nursing process for knowledge-based nursing interventions, evaluation of outcomes, and revisions in nursing care to maintain, restore, and promote health of individuals and families or to achieve a peaceful death. Individual clients

may be children or adults whose care occurs within the context of a family. Emphasis is placed on application of research findings for critical thinking in case management, integration of pathophysiology, psychosocial and cultural concepts and professional values to coordinate care in a variety of settings, with quality and continuity. Pharmacology, pain management, crisis intervention and discharge planning are included. Prerequisite(s): NURS 3300, NURS 3304 SOCI 1301 or equivalent

NURS 4306 Community Health Nursing I. In this course, students are introduced to public/community health nursing practice and the role of systems in the care of culturally diverse populations. The role of the professional nurse as part of an inter-professional team in health promotion, disease prevention, and management of chronic health problems in community settings is explored. Students apply critical thinking and information technology skills to develop and implement evidence-based projects that positively impact the quality of life of identified populations.
Prerequisite(s): NURS 3300, NURS 3304

NURS 4307 Community Health Nursing II. This course will focus on applying concepts learned in NURS 4306 in a 45-hour practicum in a community setting. Issues of health promotion, interprofessional education and teamwork, primary disease prevention, and management of chronic health problems in community settings will be assessed. The student

will use research findings to determine interventions for community settings, the environment of care, and the needs of vulnerable populations in the community settings. Prerequisite(s): NURS 4306, NURS 3304, NURS 3300.

NURS 4310 Leadership and Management for the RN- The focus of this course is on the concepts of leadership and management, and their implications for delivery of professional nursing care. Assessment and analysis of a real work problem, assessment of the work environment, and development of a proposed solution, as well as principles of client education are included. Prerequisite(s): NURS 3300, NURS 3304, lower level speech course

NURS 4312 Professional Practice Issues for the RN- An online course that explores political, legal, ethical, and policy issues affecting the quality of health care delivery and of nursing practice. The responsibility and means by which professional nurses can affect quality are included. Prerequisite(s): NURS 3300, NURS 3304 GOVT 2305/24306 or equivalent

Student Services

All student services available through Texas A&M University-Central Texas are available to nursing students. These can be found in the 2025-2026 University Catalog . The following list is not all-inclusive.

Bookstore

The main entrance of Founder's Hall houses the bookstore.

- Phone: (254) 200-1447.
- Email: tamuct@bkstr.com.
- https://www.bkstr.com/tamuctstore/home/

COUNSELING SERVICES

- Warrior Hall Room 207L
- Phone: (254) 501-5956 (Monday-Thursday 8 am - 5 pm)
- Fax: (254) 519-8703

Many employees and students encounter a variety of personal, social, and academic issues that may call for assistance beyond advice provided by friends and family. The Counseling Center provides confidential counseling and education to all A&M-Central Texas employees and currently enrolled students at no additional cost, in order to facilitate the retention, adjustment, and development of members of the university community. Counseling can assist in achieving personal and educational goals and provide an opportunity to have a professional counselor listen empathically, help clarify ideas and concerns toward resolving new or long-standing problem situations, as well as provide useful learning and self-management skills, and improve relationships. Services include individual, group, and relationship counseling, crisis and consultative sessions, and informational presentations about health issues. There are no additional fees for employees and currently enrolled students. The Counseling Center also serves the campus community through consultation and outreach services. Counseling is also available to family members of students and employees as well as community members through the counseling services practicum-training clinic, The Community Counseling and Family Therapy Center. The practicum clinic offers low sliding-scale fees for counseling offered by graduate-level practicum students who are supervised by licensed faculty members. Please contact counseling services for further information regarding this clinic.

Financial Aid

A&M-Central Texas University offers student financial aid in the form of loans, grants, work opportunities, and scholarships. For more information regarding financial assistance, please contact our Financial Aid staff.

Library

- Warrior Hall 1001 Leadership Place, Killeen, TX 76549
- Phone: (254) 519-5798
- Website: http://tamuct.libguides.com/index

Professional librarians and staff are available to assist students with the use of library resources and services.

STUDENTS' ROLE AND PARTICIPATION IN INSTITUTIONAL DECISION MAKING

Students provide input into the decision-making process through the Student Government Association. Student representatives may serve on standing university committees. Various advisory groups and committees, many of which include students, are formed to address specific issues. In addition, the university encourages students not serving on formal bodies to express their ideas and suggestions so that they may be considered in the making of policy decisions. Contact the Department of Student Affairs to join the

Student Government Association. Student representatives will be appointed or elected to serve on university committees.

Nursing student representatives are nominated by faculty and elected by the student body each fall for a one-year term to represent the nursing students. They attend a portion of faculty meetings and are given an opportunity to offer suggestions. They are also involved with pinning ceremonies.

Requirements for serving as a nursing student representative align with the university student government requirements:

- Actively registered student
- Undergraduates must maintain at least a cumulative 2.0; graduate students must maintain a cumulative 3.0
- Good standing with institution (though includes GPA, also includes conduct/behavioral)
- Represent the university in a professional and ethical manner
- Serve on one SGA or university committee
- Active participation and attendance

Student Responsibilities and Policies

When providing care to clients, students are held to professional standards for registered nurses. This includes but is not limited to adherence to the Texas Nurse Practice Act (NPA), university and agency policies, and the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics.

General

- Students are responsible for adhering to all the requirements in both the Texas A&M University-Central Texas Student Handbook and in the Texas A&M University-Central Texas Nursing Student Handbook.
- Students must remain in good standing with the Board of Nursing sufficient to maintain licensure as a Registered Nurse in Texas or a Compact state for the duration of their time in the program.
- Students are responsible for reading the syllabi and guidelines for each nursing course and seeking clarification from the course instructor. Students are responsible for following course guidelines.
- Students are expected to be prompt for any synchronous online meetings and are responsible for all material presented and assigned.
- Assignments will be posted on the date due unless prior arrangements are made with the appropriate instructor. If a paper is submitted late, points will be deducted from the grade of the paper. If a paper is deemed incomplete by the instructor, the paper may be returned to the student to correct; late points will be deducted as indicated.
- It is the student's responsibility to discuss questions concerning grades on written assignments or examinations with the appropriate instructor.
- Each student is responsible for having a personal computer that meets university technical standards and reliable internet access.
- Each student is responsible for information posted on Canvas. Communication from course instructors, and other students may be posted at any time and should be checked daily. All assignments will be submitted via canvas in the appropriate

assignment unless otherwise instructed by the instructor.
- Students are held to the university's expectations of Academic Integrity.

Department Policy on Artificial Intelligence

The ethical utilization of AI is permitted unless notified by the course instructor. While original thinking must originate from students, AI may be utilized to enrich ideas and facilitate critical evaluation of AI-generated outcomes. Assignments may be provided to assess accuracy in response to specific prompts. AI tools will be employed to augment some learning objectives.

The following general guidelines should be followed to ensure fair and transparent use of AI tools such as ChatGPT. By following these guidelines, students can ethically and responsibly use AI tools in their writing and ensure that their work reflects their own intellectual efforts and ideas.

- AI tools may be used as aid in the writing process, but not as a substitute of your original work. Always clearly acknowledge the source of any information or text generated by the tool.
- Refrain from plagiarizing or presenting AI-generated text as original work, even if it has been modified or edited.
- Protect personal information and privacy when using AI tools. Be aware of the data being shared and the potential for this information to be used or shared in ways that may not align with personal values or beliefs.
- Take accountability for the content generated by AI tools, including the accuracy and bias of the information. It is important to critically evaluate the output and make any necessary corrections or adjustments before using it in written work.

(Adapted from ChatGPT information)

Specific Requirements for Use of AI in Course Activities and Assessments

- Review assignment instructions carefully. Assignments will vary in regard to whether and to what extent the use of AI tools is allowed. Allowable proportions of AI-generated content vs. original work will be clearly specified in the instructions for each individual assignment.
- If you utilize an AI tool for an assignment, you must:
    - Cite the program utilized
    - Specify the date it was accessed
    - Include the prompt that was used
    - Clearly indicate which portions of the work were generated using AI
    - Optional (?): provide a brief reflection on how the tool was used and the way you have modified or enhanced the AI-generated text
- The student responsible for any errors in AI-generated work and points may be deducted accordingly.

CLINICAL/PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

Background Checks

Because health care providers are entrusted with the health, safety and welfare of patients, have access to controlled substances and confidential information, and operate in settings that require the exercise of good judgment and ethical behavior, criminal background checks are required.

The Texas Board of Nursing (BON) has initiated a process for nursing school applicants to complete background check requirements for licensure. Verification of licensure by the school is conducted as a condition of admission. For pre-licensure students, license must be obtained prior to progression as outlined above. An additional background check conducted by university may be required for certain clinical agencies. Students will be notified in writing at the start of the semester in which a background check is required. Background check results will be kept in the student's confidential department file, not with academic records. The cost of background checks is the responsibility of the student.

Professional Liability Insurance

All nursing majors in clinical settings must be covered by Professional Liability insurance. Professional liability limits should include occurrence-based professional liability insurance, in amounts of at least $1,000,000 per occurrence and $3,000,000 aggregate. Students are responsible for purchase and providing proof of professional liability insurance by the end of the first semester of attendance, and maintaining coverage throughout practicum experiences.

Vaccine Policy

Affiliated clinical agencies may require proof of immunizations prior to completing educational activities within their organization. Students are expected to comply with and provide proof of immunizations to the department of nursing upon request. Students will be notified in writing of clinical agency requirements.

Dress Code for Community Agencies

There may be times when you interact with members of the community in order to complete class projects. During these times, business casual professional dress is required. Examples include:

Blouses/shirts without messages (no T-shirts or tank tops)

Dresses or long pants/slacks (no shorts, short skirts)

Closed-toed shoes (no flip-flops)

You could wear your work scrubs but remove the work place badge/ID card (for your privacy and to avoid representing your individual work place)

Grading and Evaluations Grading

A four-point (4.0) grading system is utilized in Nursing. The grading scale is as follows:

- A: Excellent, Four grade points per credit hour 90 - 100
- B: Good, Three grade points per credit hour 80 - 89
- C: Fair, Two grade points per credit hour 70 - 79
- D*: Poor, One grade point per credit hour 60 - 69
- F*: Failure, No grade points Below 60
- I: Incomplete, No grade points
- NR: Not Reported
- W: Withdrawn

* There will be no rounding of final grades to the next letter grade.

* Minimum academic requirements for retention in the program are a grade of "C" in all nursing courses. A grade of "D" is considered a failing grade in the Nursing Program. Refer to the progressions section for further information.

An "I" must be completed before the end of the subsequent semester in which the "I" was given. The grade of "I" will automatically become an "F" if not removed within the prescribed time limit; however, an extension may be requested by the instructor when the request for an Incomplete Grade form is submitted with the submission of grades, provided that a definitive time frame for completion is presented. An extension will be granted only for circumstances beyond the control of the student.

A grade of incomplete will be marked on the grade roster at the end of the term. It is the responsibility of the instructor to initiate and complete a Change of Grade form. The instructor will complete a Request for an Incomplete Grade form that is filed with the Registrar's Office, which includes a statement of the instructor's reason for giving an incomplete and a statement concerning the remaining work to be completed in a specified time frame. A copy of the form will be sent to the student.

Use of Standardized Testing

The Department of Nursing may utilize computerized exams throughout the program as a component of course grades and for program evaluation. Remote proctoring through the learning management system allows students to take exams off campus.

Students are expected to comply with the requirements and standards of the remote proctoring service regarding exam security. Violations of security as reported by remote proctoring services will be investigated by course faculty and submitted to student conduct if warranted.

Progression Policy

Students may progress in the program when the following conditions are met:

1. A minimum grade of C in all required nursing courses.
2. Students must complete a minimum of 30 hours from A&M-Central Texas.
3. Maintenance of an unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse in the state of Texas (or Compact State) through the duration of time in the program.
4. Students must request permission to repeat a nursing course due to failure or withdrawal.
    A. A letter of petition must be written to the Nursing Department Chair and must include:
        i. The reason for withdrawal or failure to successfully complete the course.
        ii. Steps, which the student will take to ensure successful completion of the course when repeated.
        iii. Date corrective steps will be completed.
    B. The department chair will take into consideration:
        i. The student's overall academic performance, GPA on required courses, and review the transcript for a pattern of withdrawals, and the number of repeated courses.
        ii. The student's plans for corrective action and reasons for failure. The feasibility of the plan is also assessed.
        iii. The student file, to determine adherence to the program standards and performance in the present or previous courses.
    C. If permission is granted to repeat a course, it will be on a space available basis.
    D. Students who earn below a grade of C on any two courses in the nursing program will not be eligible for progression.
5. Students must complete the Nursing Program within five (5) calendar years.

Absence Policy

Class attendance, whether online or face to face, is an important factor for academic success and each student should accept the responsibility for regular attendance. Texas A&M University-Central Texas recognizes each student as an adult with adult attitudes and responsibilities and further recognizes the unique relationship between faculty and students and the responsibility each has toward the other.

The following guidelines have been structured for implementation of Texas A&M University-Central Texas's student absence policy:

> Student absences are considered by the university to be a matter strictly between the individual student and faculty member. The faculty member has the responsibility and authority to determine if make-up work can be done due to absences. Students may request make-up consideration for valid and verifiable reasons such as illness, death in the immediate family, legal proceedings or participation in sponsored university activities. It is the responsibility of students who participate in university-sponsored activities to obtain a written explanation for their absence from the faculty/staff member responsible for the activity.

EVALUATION OF FACULTY, COURSES, AND PROGRAM

- Student participation in faculty, course, and program evaluations is both the student's right and responsibility. The process of evaluation is viewed as the student's opportunity for input into curriculum development and the assessment of faculty effectiveness and student learning needs. Students are therefore encouraged to participate in all evaluations which will be completed at the end of each semester.
- The evaluations are anonymous.
- Students are asked to complete a RN-BSN HESI examination at completion of the program. This is used to measure effectiveness of the program. It is not utilized for student grades, and there is no cost to students. These exams are proctored and may be taken at several testing centers in the area.

Disciplinary Guidelines

Any of the following disciplinary actions may be utilized with students in an effort to correct academic deficiencies and/or unprofessional conduct. Professional conduct is marked by honesty and ethical behavior, accountability, confidentiality, professional conduct and courtesy, safety, responsibility within the academic institution and clinical agency, and competency and growth. The disciplinary actions which are invoked will depend on the severity of the infraction (an act of omission or commission) and potential result of the student's actions(s). The disciplinary action taken will also depend on whether there is a pattern of behavior

demonstrated.

Students in the nursing program are subject to the student code of conduct and to disciplinary action as described in the undergraduate student handbook. In addition, students who engage in conduct which is unprofessional or violates the student code of conduct may be dismissed from the nursing program.

The nurse practice act also has statements referring to professional conduct (***§213.27. Good Professional Character***.) and affirmative duty to report unprofessional conduct. All sources will be used in evaluating instances of student misconduct Information from the nurse practice includes:

§213.27. Good Professional Character.

(a) Good professional character is the integrated pattern of personal, academic and occupational behaviors which, in the judgment of the Board, indicates that an individual is able to consistently conform his or her conduct to the requirements of the

Nursing Practice Act, the Board's rules and regulations, and generally accepted standards of nursing practice including, but not limited to, behaviors indicating honesty, accountability, trustworthiness, reliability, and integrity.

(b) Factors to be used in evaluating good professional character in eligibility and disciplinary matters are:

(1) Good professional character is determined through the evaluation of behaviors demonstrated by an individual in his or her personal, academic and occupational history. An individual's education, and experience necessarily affect the nature and extent of behavioral history and, therefore, shall be considered in each evaluation.

(2) A person who seeks to obtain or retain a license to practice professional or vocational nursing shall provide evidence of good professional character which, in the judgment of the Board, is sufficient to insure that the individual can consistently act in the best interest of patients/clients and the public in any practice setting. Such evidence shall establish that the person:

(A) is able to distinguish right from wrong;

(B) is able to think and act rationally;

(C) is able to keep promises and honor obligations;

(D) is accountable for his or her own behavior;

(E) is able to practice nursing in an autonomous role with patients/clients, their families, significant others, and members of the public who are or who may become physically, emotionally, or financially vulnerable;

(F) is able to recognize and honor the interpersonal boundaries appropriate to any therapeutic relationship or health care setting; and

(G) is able to promptly and fully self-disclose facts, circumstances, events, errors, and omissions when such disclosure could enhance the health status of patients/clients or the public or could protect patients/clients or the public from unnecessary risk of harm.

Adapted from Texas Board of Nursing: Rules and Regulations

In addition, the nurse must conduct themselves with civility, kindness, and respect for colleagues, co-workers, employees, students, and others.

Adopted form the American Nurse's Association Code of Ethics for Nurses.

Written Warning

- A faculty member will meet with the student to discuss an area of concern. The concern and corrective action, if needed, is documented and signed on a Faculty/Student Interaction Form (Appendix C).
- The original of the interaction form is kept in the student's file. A copy will be given to the student and the faculty member. The Nursing Program Director and course leader will be notified of the written warning.

Contract

- When a corrective action is indicated, a written contract will be formulated.
- The contract will include a description of the concern and a plan of action to correct the problem(s) and/or requirements to be met, as well as the expected time period/limit for the plan of action.
- The contract will also state the consequences for failure to meet the stipulations and/or further violation of professional standards, which may include course failure and inability to progress in the program.
- Follow-up will take place at the end of the period specified on the contract. The faculty member and student will meet to evaluate the disciplinary action. The results will be stated in writing on the interaction form.

Referral to Student Academic and Student Affairs

Disciplinary Action is addressed in the A&M-Central Texas Student Handbook and is to be followed by students in the Nursing Program.

Disposition of Student Conduct Referrals allows for administrative Disposition or a Formal Hearing as outlined in the Conduct Process. An appeal procedure is available for students. The formal appeal procedure is outlined in the A&M-Central Texas Student Handbook. In order to appeal, a formal written request must be made to the Director of Student Affairs and the Associate Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs within 48 hours after the disciplinary decision has been rendered.

Grievance Procedures

Prior to filing a formal grievance, students are encouraged to attempt to resolve the concern directly with the individuals involved. Students will find that most situations can be effectively addressed in this manner. In general, students wishing to review the action of an individual or department should direct their questions to the persons responsible for the individual or department. Students are provided opportunities to address complaints and grievances through established university procedures for the following: sexual harassment, employment, admissions to the university, disciplinary action, parking citations, academic matters (including grade disputes), and disability accommodations, etc. Procedures for handling specific concerns should be followed.

- Any student wishing to file a grievance shall notify the Associate Director of Student Conduct of that complaint in writing.
- The written notice should state specifically what the grievance is, giving the name, address and telephone number of the student, specific date(s) and, if possible, of any other persons allegedly involved either as witnesses or participants. The student should also state specifically what remedy the student seeks.
- The written grievance must be signed by the student, hereinafter referred to as the complainant, and filed within 30 university working days of the alleged incident. Determination as to whether complaints filed after this deadline will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- An investigation, as may be appropriate, shall follow the filing of the grievance. In most instances, the investigation shall be conducted by the Associate Director of Student Conduct. These rules contemplate informal but thorough investigations, affording all involved parties an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the grievance. The investigation process generally is completed within 30 university working days from the time the written allegation is filed.
- A written determination as to the validity of the grievance and a description of the resolution, if any, shall be issued by the investigator and a copy forwarded to the complainant.
- The investigator shall maintain all files and records relating to the grievances filed for one calendar year.
- The right of a student to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint so filed shall not be impaired by the student's pursuit of other remedies, such as filing of a complaint with the responsible federal department or agency.

Principle of Equal Education Policy

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, A&M-Central Texas has an abiding institutional commitment to the principle of diversity in all areas. In that spirit, admission to A&M-Central Texas and any of its sponsored programs is open to all qualified individuals without regard to any subgroup classification or stereotype. These benefits include such matters as financial assistance, recruitment, and any type of personnel service.

Graduation and Pinning

Graduation

To receive a Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University-Central Texas, a student must complete the following requirements:

- The student must complete all of the requirements for a degree as set forth in the University catalog at the time of admission to the nursing program.
- Residency Requirement
- Writing Proficiency Requirement

- GPA Requirement
- Core Curriculum Requirements
- The student must complete all the degree requirements within five (5) years from admission to the nursing program.
- The student must complete all courses required for the Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing with a minimum grade of "C".

Application for degree and commencement participation must be completed by the published deadline. Regalia may be purchased from the university bookstore.

Pinning/Recognition Ceremony

The pinning ceremony is a traditional part of the rite of passage in the nursing profession.

- The details of the pinning ceremony will be decided by student representatives and a designated faculty member.
- Special recognition and awards may also be delivered at this time.
- The pins are purchased much like a class ring and are made available for the ceremony.
- The ceremony will be held before graduation.

Appendix A: Faculty/Student Interaction Form

Texas A&M University-Central Texas
Nursing Department
Faculty/Student Interaction Form

Student: _____ Date: _____

Concern:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Contract: ___N/A

_____

_____

_____

By Date: _____

Consequences:_____

_____

_____

Follow-up Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Student

_____Date: _____
Faculty Member

_____ Date: _____
Director