

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

BLENDED LEARNING PROGRAM

Student Handbook 2023-2024



WORCESTER

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This handbook supplements the Worcester State University Graduate Catalogue and addresses issues that are unique to the Master of Science in Nursing Program. The handbook was prepared with information available at the time of preparation. Provisions of this handbook are subject to change by order of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education or the Worcester State University Board of Trustees. It is the policy of Worcester State University to provide advance notice of changes whenever it is reasonable and practical to do so.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the student with the current policies and procedures, and curricular information, as it relates to the Master of Science in Nursing Program. This information is valuable to the academic success of each student and will be referred to by the nursing graduate program faculty.

Introduction

The founding chair of the Nursing Department was Dr. Lillian R. Goodman. The program was initiated in 1974 as the first program designed specifically for Registered Nurses to earn their baccalaureate degree in nursing. The program for pre-licensure students was initiated in 1986. In 2001, under the leadership of Dr. Jean Campaniello, WSU began offering a Master of Science Degree in Community Health Nursing. In 2010, under the leadership of Dr. Stephanie Chalupka, the program became the Master of Science in Nursing program with two concentrations: Community and Public Health Nursing and Nursing Education.

Accreditation Status

The Master's degree program in nursing at Worcester State University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (ccneaccreditation.org). CCNE is an autonomous accrediting agency, contributing to the improvement of the public's health. CCNE ensures the quality and integrity of baccalaureate and graduate education programs preparing effective nurses. CCNE serves the public interest by assessing and identifying programs that engage in effective educational practices. As a voluntary, self-regulatory process, CCNE accreditation supports and encourages continuing self-assessment by nursing education programs and supports continuing growth and improvement of collegiate professional education.

THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Overview

Routes of Entry to the Master of Science in Nursing

Worcester State University offered three routes of entry for Registered Nurses seeking a Master of Science in Nursing degree. The Graduate Record Exam, generally required for admission to master's degree programs, is **NOT required** for admission. The pathways to the Master of Science Degree are:

- A. Traditional Entry:** For students with a BS degree in Nursing. Admissions to the blended learning Traditional Entry program ended in August 2020.
- B. Bridge Program:** For Registered Nurses with a Non-Nursing BA or BS degree. Admissions to the Bridge Program ended in August 2020.
- C. RN-to-MS Fast Track:** For associate-degree or diploma-prepared Registered Nurses seeking to proceed directly to the Master of Science in Nursing Degree from the BSN program. Admissions to the Fast Track ended in August 2020.

Mission

Department of Nursing Mission and Goals:

The mission of the Department of Nursing is to educate professionals who are prepared to meet the nursing needs of the citizens of Worcester, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the global community. The health promotion needs of individuals, families, groups, and communities are emphasized. The Department develops and disseminates knowledge, and contributes service related to the discipline of nursing. The faculty, administration, staff, and students of the Department contribute to the realization of the mission by assuring the following:

1. Provide access to education in nursing for students from diverse backgrounds.
2. Promote excellence and innovation in teaching, service and scholarship.
3. Provide public service related to nursing and public health.
4. Contribute to the economic development of the Commonwealth by helping to meet the health care industry's need for well-educated and highly skilled nurses.
5. Improve the quality of life of individuals, families and communities by fostering good health and by influencing health care policy.
6. Prepare graduates for participation in society as educated, socially responsible individuals.
7. Prepare graduates of the Bachelor of Science Program in Nursing for
 - entry into professional nursing practice
 - graduate level study in nursing
8. Prepare graduates of the Master of Science Program in Nursing for:
 - leadership roles as advanced public health nurses and nurse educators
 - doctoral level study in nursing

Department of Nursing Vision

To be a center for excellence in nursing education, research, and community service.

Graduate Program Outcomes

The WSU Graduate Program outcomes reflect the core knowledge for all master's programs in nursing as defined in The Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing (2011) by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. These Essentials are core for all master's programs in nursing and provide the necessary curricular elements and framework, regardless of focus, major, or intended practice setting.

Professional Behavior

Nursing students at Worcester State University are expected to model professional behavior as representatives of the nursing profession and the University. Consistent display of professional demeanor and appropriate interpersonal boundaries are expected with clients, staff, faculty, and peers in all settings.

Specific expectations are timeliness and adherence to identified clinical/practica hours, prompt notification to faculty, agency, and/or preceptor of any lateness or absence, adherence to the Department of Nursing and specific course dress code guidelines and autonomy in meeting learning needs. In addition, strict adherence to rules of patient confidentiality is expected in all settings.

As in all other areas of academic life, the use of technology, including but not limited to, hospital systems, personal computers, cell phones, should be undertaken in a manner consistent with high standards of professional conduct. In addition, the internet and electronic mail and texting may create additional challenges to health care professionals' responsibility for ensuring patient confidentiality. To protect this fundamental patient right, the nursing student should avoid using this medium to transmit information containing any patient information that may be used to identify individual patients.

When students are engaging in clinical/practica experiences, compliance with strict confidentiality rules and regulations is expected, and lapses are subject to disciplinary procedures.

Caution is recommended as well in using social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat. In the nursing program at Worcester State University, we believe students demonstrate that their behavior in person – both on campus and off – and in their electronic presence reflects the maturity and professionalism that are the necessary underpinnings of the profession. We uphold the ANA principles for social networking as cited on the ANA webpage link: <https://www.nursingworld.org/social>

Ongoing enrollment remains contingent on a continuation of this high standard of conduct. Any

activity on the student's part that represent unprofessional behavior including those that are posted on social networking sites reflect poorly on the student, Worcester State University and the profession as a whole. Such items may become public and could subject the student to unintended exposure and consequences.

Professional Behavior Policy

The faculty of the Dr. Lillian R. Goodman Department of Nursing at Worcester State University (WSU) believes that professional behavior is an integral part of each student's nursing education. The purpose of this policy is to clarify behavioral expectations for nursing students and professional nurses enrolled in all nursing programs at WSU.

Nursing is a profession that has earned the public's trust. The importance of student integrity, trustworthiness and honesty are very serious concerns due to the implications to patient safety. The Department of Nursing identifies unprofessional behavior as a cause for dismissal. A faculty member may refuse to have a student continue in their course, and the University may dismiss a student from the program, if the student's character does not uphold the professional standards of nursing (e.g., Positive drug screening test). This is a serious matter for both the University and the student.

The following professional guidelines serve as the basis for the Department of Nursing's expectations of professional behavior in both the classroom and clinical settings:

- Dr. Lillian R. Goodman Department of Nursing standards for academic integrity.
- The American Nurses' Association Code for Nurses
- Public Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice

*All students enrolled in all nursing programs are expected to maintain the following (but not limited to) **classroom professional behaviors**:*

- Students are required to abide by the Department of Nursing policies and procedure as stated in the MS student handbook, and the Department of Nursing Baccalaureate Program Student Handbook.
- Students are expected to exercise mature and responsible self-discipline, to behave with respect, civility, courtesy, and integrity.
- Students who exhibit disruptive behavior in the classroom may be dismissed from the class. Behavior is considered disruptive when it interferes with the opportunities of others to learn and of the instructor to teach. Examples of disruptive behavior include:
 - Talking to others while the instructor is delivering a lecture, when other students are presenting, or students are working in groups thus preventing others from benefiting educationally from the class.
 - Using profane or obscene language
 - Using inappropriate body language/signals that are offensive or create an atmosphere of hostility
 - Interrupting the educational process with inappropriate questions or comments in a way that interferes with other students' learning

- Being disrespectful, offensive, or threatening
- Becoming belligerent when asked about their behavior or to leave the classroom
- Persistently calling, emailing, texting or interrupting faculty during class and outside of the classroom
- Sending verbally or physically threatening emails, texts, voice mails or letters to faculty, staff, or other students
- Students must be on time for each scheduled class and leave when they are excused by the instructor.
- Use of lap tops or tablets in class will be for faculty approved learning activities only.

Failure to comply with this policy will affect the student's class participation grade and final course grade

- No cell phones should be out on the desk top during class.
 - Silence all mobile devices / cell phones (set to vibrate) prior to entering the classroom.
 - Remove all Bluetooth devices prior to entering the classroom.
 - Texting, Skyping, using Instagram, using Facebook, Snapchat, and all other social media communications are prohibited in the classroom
 - Failure to comply with this policy will affect the student's class participation grade and final course grade
- Recording of any class activities must be pre – approved by the instructor.

*All students enrolled in all nursing programs are expected to maintain the following (but not limited to) **clinical professional behaviors**:*

- Student behavior in clinical settings must be respectful of all individuals (patients, patients' families, members of the health care team, faculty, and other students) according to the patients' Bill of Rights, the ANA standards of care, the Lillian R. Goodman Department of Nursing standards for clinical performance, and the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses.
- Students must adhere to the Department of Nursing dress code, presenting at clinical settings with professional attire and behavior.
- Students will NOT smoke or chew gum while on the premises of any clinical agency.
- Worcester State University name badge will be worn at all times.
- Students will:
 - Silence all mobile devices / cell phones (set to vibrate) prior to entering the clinical setting.
 - Remove all Bluetooth devices prior to entering the clinical setting.
 - Texting, Skyping, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and all other social media communications are absolutely prohibited in the clinical setting
 - Failure to comply with this policy will affect the student's clinical participation grade and final course grade
- Students should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of their scheduled clinical/practica time.

- Students will give prior notification in writing or voice mail to the faculty (and preceptor if appropriate) when they are unable to meet clinical/practica commitments and detail how and when they will make up requirements.
- The faculty acknowledges that true life emergencies do exist and will work with students in these situations if they arise. Note: True life emergencies do NOT include:
 - Scheduling work or vacation during class or clinical or final exam times.
(Missing class in order to work is not an excused absence and will result in an alternate assignment as determined by course faculty. This will be noted in course syllabi.)
 - Documentation is required for missed classes. Students will be responsible to complete any missed coursework.
 - Non-emergent doctor or dental appointments.
 - Being fatigued due to your own actions.
 - Planning “special” events that interfere with class or clinical time.

Consequences of Unprofessional Behavior

When unprofessional or problem behaviors are identified, the involved faculty will:

- Issue a verbal warning that includes counseling the student regarding the unacceptable behavior, the type of behavioral change that is expected, and the timeframe in which the behavior change is expected to be made.
- The student’s unacceptable behavior and the specific counseling will be documented by the faculty in the student’s file. In addition, the involved faculty will notify the appropriate Graduate Coordinator and the Department Chair. The student will be given a copy of the documentation that was placed in his/her file.
- If the unacceptable behavior is a minor infraction such as continued disruption to the class that does not change within the given time frame, the faculty member will document the repeated incidents and attempted interventions and prepare a formal warning. In addition, the involved faculty will notify in writing the appropriate Graduate Coordinator, and the Department Chair. Failure to adhere to the above will result in course failure.
- If the unacceptable behavior is a major infraction that may affect the safety of patients, the student will be asked to leave the clinical setting. If the unacceptable behavior may affect the safety of the faculty member or other students, the student will be asked to leave the classroom, and if necessary, Campus Police will be called. The student is subject to course failure.
- Refer to Appendix E, drug screen policy.

Basis for the Master of Science in Nursing Curriculum

The nursing department derives and interprets its mission relative to the standards and values of the profession. The goals of the nursing education unit reflect awareness of the future health care needs of society and the richness of nursing’s historical past in order to prepare

undergraduate and graduate students to function in a broader and diverse society. Thus, the nursing department incorporates the American Nurses Association (ANA) standards, *Nursing: A Social Policy Statement* and the *ANA Code for Nurses* within the framework of Nightingale's beliefs about professional nursing practice.

Nightingale's Framework

The nursing department's application of Nightingale's framework extends from the undergraduate to the graduate program. Nightingale's theory, with its environmental focus, is a logical framework for and provides a sound linkage to advanced community and public health and nursing education. The graduate program provides experiences for students to develop a population-focused perspective of health care with a high level of expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of complex responses of individuals, aggregates, and communities to actual or potential health problems. The master's-prepared nurse partners with individuals, communities, and populations to reduce health risks and to promote, maintain, and restore health, advocating for system-level changes to improve health.

Admissions Requirements

A. Traditional Entry:

For students with a BS degree in Nursing

- Baccalaureate degree in Nursing
- Introductory or undergraduate courses in statistics and research
- Unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse in Massachusetts.

B. Bridge Program

For Registered Nurses with a Non-Nursing BA or BS degree. The seven (7) credit Bridge Program option which enables students to enter directly into the Master of Science in Nursing program. Admissions to the Bridge Program ended in August 2020.

- B.A. or B.S. degree in non-nursing discipline
- Introductory or undergraduate courses in statistics and research.
- Unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse in Massachusetts

C. RN-to-MS Fast Track

For Registered Nurses seeking to proceed directly to the Master of Science in Nursing Degree from the BSN program. Students will earn a BS in Nursing in prior to completing the MS in Nursing. Admissions to the Fast Track Program ended in August 2020.

- Associate of Science Degree in Nursing or Diploma in Nursing
- Unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse in Massachusetts

Please refer to the Undergraduate Nursing handbook. All requirements for the BS in Nursing must be completed with the following exception:

- NU 530 Social Policy and Economics of the Health Care Delivery System (3) *Satisfies NU 930 Requirement in the RN-to-MS Fast Track Program)*

- NU 951 Nursing Leadership and Administration (3) (*NU551 Nursing Leadership and Administration (3) Satisfies NU 951 Requirement in the RN-to-MS Fast Track Program*)

Course descriptions for all undergraduate courses may be found in the Worcester State University undergraduate catalog.

RN-to-MS Specialty Courses*

Professional Core

- NU 910 C/PH Professional Role Development (3 credits) OR NU 908 Professional Role Development: Philosophical & Curricular Development in Nursing Education (3 credits) for Nurse Educator program
- NU 920 Conceptual Foundations of Nursing Education (3 credits)
- NU 925 Research for Evidence-Based Practice (3 credits)
- NU 951 Nursing Leadership and Administration (3 credits)

Interdisciplinary Courses

- NU 930 Social Policy and the Economics of the Health Care Delivery System (3 credits)
- NU 936 Epidemiology (3 credits)
- NU 941 Program Planning and Evaluation (3 credits)
- NU 946 Biostatistics (3 credits)

Specialty Courses in Community/Public Health Nursing

- NU 961 Nursing Science I: Advanced Community/Public Health Leadership Theory and Practicum (6 credits)
- NU 966 Nursing Science II: Advanced Community/Public Health Theory and Practicum (6 credits)

Community/Public Health Nursing Program of Study

Community/Public Health Nursing Program of Study Overview:

The Department of Nursing offers a graduate program leading to a Master of Science in Nursing with a focus on advanced public health nursing practice. Graduates of this program are prepared to practice as expert clinicians in a community environment. Graduate study prepares the student to be an independent practitioner through immersion in course work, application of the research process and integration of acquired knowledge into fieldwork and internships. The curriculum provides the educational basis for graduates to provide quality service to residents of Massachusetts.

Master's degree program outcomes are formulated on the clear assumption that graduate education builds upon undergraduate education. Graduate education is an intensive and analytic expansion of knowledge, enabling the perception and development of new and more complex relationships that affect nursing. Graduate education provides and ensures further opportunity for our students to think conceptually, to apply theory and research to practice, and to develop in-depth knowledge in a specialized area of advanced nursing.

Outcomes for the Community and Public Health Nursing Specialty Track:

Upon successful completion of the Worcester State University Community and Public Health Nursing graduate program in nursing, graduates are prepared to:

- Integrate nursing, related sciences and humanities to analyze, design, implement, and evaluate nursing care across diverse settings at the Master's Level.
- Provide leadership in the delivery and evaluation of strategies for improving delivery of high quality and safe patient care by using ethics, critical decision-making, and effective working relationships from a systems perspective.
- Direct continuous quality improvement methods and initiatives to promote a culture of safety, professional accountability, and evidence-based patient care.
- Participate, leading when appropriate, in collaborative teams to improve care outcomes and support policy change through translational research and knowledge dissemination by generating meaningful evidence for nursing practice.
- Integrate emerging informatics, health care technologies, and related ethical principles into clinical decision-making processes.
- Advocate for policies that improve the health of the public and the profession of nursing.
- Participate, lead and coordinate when appropriate, inter-professional teams across care environments to reduce barriers, facilitate access, and improve health outcomes.
- Synthesize broad ecological, global, biological, and socio-cultural determinants of health to assess the profession's leadership role and accountability toward improving the population's health.
- Demonstrate Master's Level Professional Practice through the development of nursing

interventions and advocacy to implement safe, quality care to diverse populations in a variety of settings and roles.

- Integrate clinical prevention and population health concepts in the development of culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate health education, communication strategies and interventions.

Community Public Health Nursing: The Graduate Program in Community/Public Health Nursing is built upon the foundation of the American Nurses Association *Public Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (2nd Ed, 2013), and the 2018 Quad Council Coalition (QCC) Community/Public Health Nursing Competencies.

Guided by these standards, departmental and university mission and goals, the master's program provides advanced community/public health nursing education which focuses on:

- Population health and population-focused health promotion
- Management of health problems in collaboration with aggregates and communities
- Leadership in the profession
- Research utilization for practice and for effecting change

Community/Public Health Nursing Specialty Track:

The nursing graduate program (Community/Public Health Nursing Specialty Track) provides a course sequence that allows the student to develop a population-wide perspective of health encompassing knowledge and skills applicable to community or defined populations within the community. This graduate program educates nurses to use preventive and health promoting interventions, to counsel and communicate with communities and aggregate populations in a creative, collaborative practice within the community health environment/public health sector. Students apply theoretical knowledge to professional practice, incorporating areas of research, leadership, management and education. The graduate of this program will function as an *Advanced Public Health Nurse* who influences policies and standards that affect the delivery of care and ultimately human health and wellness.

The Community/Public Health Nursing curriculum is designed to meet the learning needs of students who are working full-time. Most courses are taught in the blended-learning format which combines the best of face-to-face and online learning. The blended-learning format significantly reduces the amount of time students spend on campus, while maximizing interaction with faculty members and fellow students.

A. Traditional Entry

Required Courses for the Master of Science Degree in Nursing Community/Public Health Nursing Specialty Track*

Professional Core Courses

- NU 910 Professional Role Development (3 credits)
- NU 920 Conceptual Foundations of Nursing (3 credits)
- NU 925 Research for Evidence-Based Practice (3 credits)
- NU 951 Administration and Leadership (3 credits)

Interdisciplinary Courses

- NU 936 Epidemiology (3 credits)
- NU 941 Program Planning and Evaluation (3 credits)
- NU 930 Social Policy and the Economics of the Health Care
Delivery System (3 credits)
- NU 946 Biostatistics (3 credits)

Specialty Courses in Community/Public Health Nursing

- NU 961 Nursing Science I: Community/Public Health
Leadership Theory and Practicum (6 credits)
- NU 966 Nursing Science II Community/Public Health
Leadership Theory and Practicum (6 credits)

* All Courses are offered in the blended-learning format.

Note: The Traditional Entry Program is usually completed in 3 years of part-time study or two years of full-time study.

B. Bridge Program

Required Courses for the Master of Science Degree in Nursing Community/Public Health Nursing Specialty Track*

Admissions to the Bridge Program ended in August 2020.

This program provides Registered Nurses, who hold a B.A. or B.S. in a discipline other than Nursing, with the opportunity to enter and complete the Master of Science in Nursing program at Worcester State University. The program prepares Bridge students for M.S. level work by assuring that they have achieved the educational outcomes of the B.S. in Nursing Program.

Bridge Core

- NU 900 Individual Assessment (1 credit) (6 weeks blended format-summer)
- NU 901 Community Health and Health Policy (3 credits) (6 weeks blended format-summer)
- NU 902 Transition to Advanced Nursing (3 credits) (6 weeks blended format-summer)

Professional Core

- NU 910 Professional Role Development (3 credits) (Fall)
- NU 920 Conceptual Foundations of Nursing (3 credits)
- NU 925 Research for Evidence-Based Practice (3 credits)
- NU 951 Administration and Leadership (3 credits)

Interdisciplinary Courses

- NU 936 Epidemiology (3 credits)
- NU 941 Program Planning and Evaluation (3 credits)
- NU 930 Social Policy and the Economics of the Health Care Delivery System (3 credits)
- NU 946 Biostatistics (3 credits)

Specialty Courses in Community/Public Health Nursing

- NU 961 Nursing Science I: Community/Public Health Leadership Theory and Practicum (6 credits) (Fall)
- NU 966 Nursing Science II Community/Public Health Leadership Theory and Practicum (6 credits) (Spring)

* All courses are offered in the blended-learning format.

Bridge students must:

1. Complete NU 900, NU 901, and NU 902*.
2. May be taken prior to matriculation OR must be completed during first and second summer after matriculated enrollment.
3. Meet with their assigned graduate program advisor to plan a course of study that bridges BS expectations and entry into graduate nursing studies.
4. Compile a portfolio of their professional activities according to the guidelines and submit it to the appropriate course faculty. The portfolio will be evaluated and an individualized educational plan will be developed to support the student in the achievement of all baccalaureate level competencies.

Note: The Bridge Program is usually completed in 3 years of part-time study or two years of full-time study. This course sequence includes three summer courses.

* All courses are offered in the blended-learning format.

C. RN-to-MS Fast Track Program

Required Courses for the Master of Science Degree in Nursing Community/Public Health Nursing Program of Study

Admissions to the RN-MS Fast Track ended in August 2020

The *RN-to-MS Fast Track Program* provides an opportunity for associate degree and diploma-prepared nurses to obtain the Master of Science in Nursing degree. The *RN-to-MS Fast Track Program* curriculum is characterized by flexibility and recognition of the diversity of the students who enroll.

The *RN-to-MS Fast Track Program* allows students to work toward their Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing degrees in one integrated program. Six (6) graduate credits (500 Level) taken while completing the undergraduate senior year count toward both degrees *only when the RN meets the criteria for the Fast Track program, completes an application to the Graduate Nursing Program through the Graduate School, and is accepted into the RN-to-MS Fast Track Program during the first semester as a student in the RN-to-BS Program.*

Students can typically complete the *RN-to-MS Fast Track Program in nine part-time semesters.* Only course grades of B- or above can be counted toward the Master of Science in Nursing degree.

Fast track students must take courses in the M.S. program the semester after completing the requirements for the B.S. degree. Otherwise 500 Level courses taken in the senior year will count only towards the RN-to-BS degree unless they are in excess of the credits required for the B.S. degree.

Admission Process

Students interested in applying to the RN-to-MS program are advised to contact the RN-to-BS Coordinator.

Please refer to the Undergraduate BS handbook. All requirements for the BS in Nursing must be completed with the following exceptions:

- **NU530 Social Policy and the Economics of the Healthcare Delivery System (3 credit) Satisfies NU 930 requirement.**
- **NU551 Nursing Leadership and Administration (3) Satisfies NU 951 (3 credit)**

Course descriptions for all undergraduate courses may be found in the Worcester State University undergraduate catalog.

RN-to-MS Specialty Courses Professional Core*

- NU 910 Professional Role Development (3 credits)
- NU 920 Conceptual Foundations of Nursing (3 credits)
- NU 525 Research for Evidence-Based Practice (3 credits)
- NU 551 Nursing Leadership and Administration (3 credits)

Interdisciplinary Courses

- NU 930 Social Policy and the Economics of the Health Care Delivery System (3 credits)
- NU 936 Epidemiology (3 credits)
- NU 941 Program Planning and Evaluation (3 credits)
- NU 946 Biostatistics (3 credits)

Specialty Courses in Community/Public Health Nursing

- NU 961 Nursing Science I: Advanced Community/Public Health Leadership Theory and Practicum (6 credits)
- NU 966 Nursing Science II: Advanced Community/Public Health Theory and Practicum (6 credits)

* All courses offered in the blended-learning format.

Clinical Practica for Community Public Health Nursing Program of Study

1. The student may begin to satisfy the **250-hour** clinical requirement of the program upon completion of two graduate courses with the approval and direct supervision of the Graduate Coordinator or appropriate WSU faculty member. The student must submit an updated resume to the Coordinator before the practicum arrangements begin.
2. Preceptors should be RN's who are Master's-prepared in Nursing.
3. The student shall propose all clinical experiences using the forms provided in the *Community/Public Health Practicum Manual*
4. For experiences anticipated to be less than 20 hours (one- or two-day professional development programs or conferences, etc.), a copy of the program flyer, brochure, or online description should be attached. The form may be submitted after the student has begun discussions with a potential preceptor; however, all clinical experiences must be approved prior to starting clinical hours. Allow a minimum of two weeks for approval to be received.
5. The Graduate Coordinator will contact the preceptor to finalize the anticipated clinical experience. The preceptor must provide a current resume or curriculum vitae to the Graduate Coordinator. A practicum contract will be signed by both the Graduate Coordinator and the preceptor/agency. The Graduate Coordinator and/or practicum course faculty member may make a site or agency visit at any time. The

student must maintain clinical documentation as outlined in the ***Community/Public Health Practicum Manual*** for each of each clinical course.

6. Evaluation of the student will be completed by the preceptor and submitted at the end of the experience as specified in ***Field Supervisor's Guide to a Successful Practicum***

Master of Science in Nursing Course Descriptions

* Course descriptions for all undergraduate courses may be found in the Worcester State University undergraduate catalog.

NU 900: Individual Assessment (1 credit) (6-week course-summer only)

Bridge Program students only

The RN with a B.S or B.A. degree in a discipline other than nursing identifies individual learning outcomes in their Master's program of study.

NU 901: Community Health and Health Policy (3 credits) (6-week course- summer only)

Bridge Program students only

This course analyzes the development of policy and its impact on the health of populations. Students apply epidemiology and public health science to population-based nursing practice.

NU 902: Transition to Advanced Nursing (3 credits) (6-week course-summer only)

Bridge Program students only

Designed for registered nurses with bachelor's degrees in areas other than nursing, provides a common knowledge base including the community perspective as a foundation for graduate study in nursing. The realities of modern nursing practice are examined.

NU 910: Professional Role Development (3 credits)

The role of the advanced public health nurse is analyzed in terms of professional scope of practice, standards of practice and components of the role. This course provides a framework for advanced nursing practice.

NU 920: Conceptual Foundations in Nursing (3 credits)

This course concentrates on the philosophical basis of theory development and application. Students are introduced to the levels of theory building, concept formation and the elements of a model while considering the values and goals of nursing actions.

NU 925: Research for Evidence-Based Practice (3 credits)

Students build upon previous learning of research design, methods and process. The critical relationship of research to nursing as a science, as well as its development as a professional discipline is emphasized.

NU 930: Social Policy and the Economics of the Health Care Delivery System (3 credits)

Provides the student with the knowledge necessary to comprehend the political, economic and social elements that affect health and health services. The student develops an understanding of the regulatory environment and its impact on the delivery of nursing care.

NU 936: Epidemiology (3 credits)

Evaluation of epidemiological principles and techniques of investigation; measures of incidence and prevalence applied to health risk, morbidity and mortality in specific populations.

NU 941: Program Planning and Evaluation (3 credits)

Program Planning and Evaluation is an interdisciplinary course to facilitate student learning in the design, development and monitoring of multi-level strategies that promote movement toward optimal health and social justice for diverse ethnic populations and communities.

NU 946: Biostatistics (3 credits)

This course links statistical methods to epidemiology and ultimately, to practice issues in diverse cultural populations and communities. Students draw upon knowledge acquired from the physical science to interpret and summarize statistical data in meaningful ways.

NU 951: Nursing Leadership and Administration (3 credits)

Provides the student with the necessary skills to integrate appropriate business, economic, financial, leadership and management concepts into effective strategies to effect change in community/public health agencies and healthcare organizations.

NU 961: Nursing Science I: Community/Public Health Leadership Theory and Practicum I (6 credits)

This course provides the community/public health nurse graduate student with opportunities to synthesize their clinical knowledge and expertise with theory to improve health outcomes of all populations. By addressing current public health issues through the application of system-level approaches and selected clinical practicum experiences, students will develop a mastery of population assessment, prevention strategies, health policy & advocacy, and interprofessional collaboration.

**NU 966: Nursing Science II: Community/Public Health Leadership Theory and Practicum II
(6 credits)**

This course provides the community health graduate nursing student with the opportunity to evaluate the various processes which are utilized to address multiple determinants of health and participate in the in the challenges of attaining and maintaining population health. Selected clinical practicum experiences encourage the student to utilize theory, research, and information technology to manage and evaluate program effectiveness and provide leadership for emerging advances in population health and health care. Students will be prepared to lead the delivery and evaluation of high quality, evidence-based, and population-centered care.

Major Themes

Major themes flow throughout the programs offered by the WSU Department of Nursing. The same themes are consistently carried through the undergraduate programs including the pre-licensure and RN-to-BS baccalaureate tracks and the Master of Science in Nursing program.

Themes include NURSING PROCESS, COMMUNICATION, PROFESSIONALISM, RESEARCH, THEORY, and CULTURAL DIVERSITY. POPULATION-FOCUS and ENVIRONMENT have been added to major themes to reflect the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's *Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing* (2011). The integration of these themes into the graduate program courses is illustrated in the following table.

Integration of Major Themes into Nursing Graduate Courses

THEMES	COURSES
Professionalism	NU 901; NU 902; NU 910; NU 920; NU 930; NU 936; NU 941; NU 946; NU 951; NU 961; NU 966
Research	NU 901; NU 902; NU 910; NU 920; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 941; NU 946; NU 951; NU 961; NU 966
Theory	NU 901; NU 910; NU 920; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 941; NU 946; NU 951; NU 961; NU 966
Nursing Process	NU 901; NU 910; NU 920; NU 925; NU 936; NU 941; NU 946; NU 951; NU 961; NU 966
Cultural Diversity	NU 901; NU 902; NU 910; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 941; NU 946; NU 951; NU 961; NU 966
Communication	NU 901; NU 902; NU 910; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 941; NU 946; NU 951; NU 961; NU 966
Population-Focus	NU 901; NU 910; NU 920; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 941; NU 946; NU 951; NU 961; NU 966
Environment	NU 901; NU 910; NU 920; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 946; NU 961; NU 966

Responsibilities of the Student

Students of the Master of Science in Nursing program are responsible for knowing and fulfilling program and university requirements and for following the policies and procedures as delineated in this handbook. Specific responsibilities include the following:

1. The student will register for courses in the recommended sequence as advised by the Master of Science in Nursing Program Coordinator.
2. The student will schedule and meet with the Master of Science in Nursing Program Coordinator for assistance with academic planning as needed throughout the program.
3. The student will petition, by writing a letter addressed to the Graduate Coordinator, to receive approval before pursuing any deviation from any stated policy, curriculum sequence, or program requirement.
4. The student will provide proof of current unencumbered license to practice as a registered nurse in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, professional liability insurance coverage, immunization status, CPR certification, and physical exam upon entrance to the program. A copy will be provided to the Administrative Assistant and Clinical Resource Coordinator in the Nursing Department, upon admission to the Master of Science in Nursing program.
5. The student will submit *Intent to Graduate* form and required fees to the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education. Detailed information about deadlines for filing and fees are available in the Worcester State University Catalogue.
6. The student will behave in a professional manner in his/her interaction with faculty, peers, and members of outside community.
7. The student is responsible for obtaining and maintaining a Worcester State University email account. **THIS IS THE ONLY RECOGNIZED EMAIL ACCOUNT.** The student is further responsible to check the account daily. The WSU email account is the only acceptable account to be used for course communication.

Responsibilities of the Program

The Master of Science in Nursing program has a commitment to excellence graduate nursing education. The Master of Science in Nursing Program is responsible for maintaining and promoting the professional, curricula, and ethical standards listed below.

1. In the process of recruiting and advising students, the program will be represented accurately.
2. A learning environment will be provided which is safe and conducive to learning.
3. Curriculum will be consistent with the current practice standards and philosophy as defined by the *ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* (ANA, 2015), *Scope and Standards of Practice: Public Health Nursing, 2nd edition* (ANA, 2013), *Scope and Standards of Practice: Nursing* (ANA, 2021), *Community/Public Health Nursing [C/PHN] Competencies* (Quad Council Coalition, 2018) and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation standards and the standards of Worcester State University.
4. The program will attempt to respond to changing patterns and concepts in health care delivery, public health, and nursing education, while adhering to its stated philosophy.
5. The faculty will be competent educators in their discipline.
6. Procedures used to evaluate students will be fair and clearly presented to the student at the beginning of each course and throughout the program.
7. Grade appeal procedures for students follow the process described in the current Worcester State University Catalogue.

Master of Science Programs: Nursing Policies

Academic Dismissal Appeal Procedure

If dismissed for academic deficiency, students may appeal for reinstatement. Appeals must be made in writing to the Chair of the Graduate Education Council and must be submitted within ten working days following notification of dismissal. Students will be notified in writing of the decision of the Council.

- a. A student's written appeal to the Council must include: the student's name/identification number/program; a discussion of the circumstances contributing to the academic deficiency; and permission for Graduate Education Council to review academic records.
- b. The Graduate Council will consider the appeal at its next scheduled meeting.
- c. In a written response to the student, the Council will outline the conditions rationale of its action:
 - i. If the appeal is granted, Council will outline conditions of reinstatement and time frame for program continuation/completion.
 - ii. If the appeal is denied, the student is administratively withdrawn from the program; they may not re-apply to the same program; and cannot apply for re-admission to another program for 12 months.
- d. A second dismissal for academic deficiency is not subject to appeal.
- e. Evaluation of academic standing will take place after each semester/session.

Non-Academic Dismissal Appeal Procedure

After the Dean has sent the decision of the Graduate School as to dismissal for non-academic reasons, the student may appeal using the following process. A student dismissed for non-academic reasons may appeal the decision of the Graduate School to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. This appeal must:

- a) Be in writing,
- b) Be submitted within 10 business days of receiving the Graduate School's decision,
- c) The decision of the provost is final.

Address appeal to:

Provost
Worcester State University
486 Chandler Street
Worcester, MA 01602

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to maintain standards of honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic careers. Academic dishonesty violates the very nature of our profession. Its scope includes plagiarism, lying, tampering and falsifying reference materials, and theft. Plagiarism and cheating consist of any attempt by a student to represent the work of someone else as his or her own. It includes, but is not limited to submitting, copying, or substantially restating the work of another person or persons in an oral or written work without citing the appropriate source; collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging that contribution; and copying the answers of another student in an examination; purchasing written documents and representing them as your own. Worcester State University will not tolerate plagiarism or cheating in the classroom in any fashion. The penalties for academic deceit are severe and unawareness is not an acceptable justification. The instructor may fail the student or enforce another appropriate penalty concerning academic dishonesty. Safe Assign reports $\geq 30\%$ will not be accepted. Students will be required to resubmit assignment. Student may incur point deductions.

Academic and Professional Integrity

Students are expected to have high standards of integrity in both the academic and clinical settings. Integrity reflects the respect that one holds for oneself and others. It is reflected by student behavior in the school, clinical setting, and other environments. Unprofessional conduct is considered serious and may result in dismissal from the graduate nursing program.

Expected ethical behavior in clinical practicum situations is based on the American Nurses' Association Code for Nurses. Students are expected to protect patients' confidentiality, and to be honest in any documentation regarding the patient's condition and their own assessments and interventions. Students are expected to maintain high professional standards, including being physically, intellectually, emotionally, and academically prepared when caring for patients.

Academic Progression

Academic Standing Matriculated students will be dismissed from their graduate program if they do not maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0, or if they receive two grades of C+ or lower. In addition, grades below a B- are not acceptable for degree credit. Dismissal requires absence from the College for one semester, pending action on an appeal, if submitted.

Appeal: A student may appeal any action concerning academic probation or dismissal by petitioning the Graduate Admissions and Progression Committee within the Department of Nursing. Approval of petitions is not guaranteed.

Academic Probation: Academic Probation: Students with 15 or fewer credits and no failing grades (C- or below) who fall below a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or who fail to complete more than one of the courses that they take are placed on academic probation. While on probation, students must meet with their advisor to create a plan for improved performance and degree

progression, and monitor satisfactory progression on that plan on a monthly basis. Registration in future nursing courses must be approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Academic Support

A Writing Center is located on campus, which is available for students needing writing assistance. The Writing Center is staffed by WSU graduate assistants as well as two peer tutors. For students who need assistance from the Writing Center during off-campus hours, online help is available. The Writing Center has a wide collection of resource material on a wide range of technology-based subjects.

Admission Criteria

In addition to Worcester State University Graduate admission criteria, applicants to the Master of Science Program must:

- Have achieved a GPA of 3.0 in undergraduate study. Applicants may seek conditional admission with a GPA of 2.5 if they have demonstrated substantive growth as a professional nurse.

(Admissions to the Traditional, Fast Track, and Bridge Tracks ended in August 2020.)

Advising

At the time of admission to the Master of Science in Nursing program, the program coordinator/academic advisor will meet with the student to review the program and required courses. Program coordinators/academic advisors will assist students in preparing their Program of Study and selecting courses for each semester of study.

Each student should meet with their program coordinator/academic advisor for academic advising every semester to plan a course of study and to review academic progress.

Faculty will address problems that arise within their own courses. If the problem persists a meeting will be arranged for the student, faculty member and Graduate Program Coordinator. Documentation of any meeting will be kept in the student's file.

Attendance

The Master of Science in Nursing Program at Worcester State University utilizes a blended learning format which combines the best of face-to-face instruction with online learning. Therefore, students **are expected to attend all scheduled face-to-face and synchronous online classes**. The faculty has the responsibility of creating an environment that is maximally conducive to academic success. Attendance directly correlates with successful course completion. It is expected that students attend class. In the event of absence from class, progress and continuation in the course will be considered on an individual basis.

Consideration will be based on the reason for the absence, academic performance of the student, the past record of absenteeism, and other relevant factors. Students are required to provide notice to faculty if absent from class or from practicum/fieldwork. If reasons prevent the student from providing prior notice, the student must inform the faculty member or

department secretary on the same day.

The student is also responsible for the material presented. Each course syllabus and course website may contain specific policies related to attendance for any particular course. The course faculty may request documentation (e.g. note from health care provider, etc.).

Background Search:

Most hospitals and many community/public health fieldwork/practica sites require background checks to be obtained prior to the start of experiences. Students are expected to complete this process in order to participate in key portions of the curriculum. Depending on the results of the student's background search, participation in a specific academic clinical or practicum may be denied. Students, who have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor involving an act likely to affect professional practice, should meet with the Department Chair immediately.

Prior to your first clinical practicum, contact the Clinical Resource Coordinator, AOPcoordinator@worchester.edu for further instructions regarding CORI and Nationwide background screens.

CORI:

- Every student must complete a CORI search through WSU. This is a local search not included in the nationwide search (to keep the cost of the nationwide search down). There is no fee for the CORI through WSU. You must complete the CORI form that can be accessed using the link in the MS Practicum Checklist and submit to Gina Fleury (ST-223 B) **along with a copy of your government issued ID (driver's license or passport).**
- These documents must be hand-delivered. Scanned or faxed CORI's and ID's are not permitted.

Nationwide Background Screen: (\$33.25)

- This is a comprehensive background screen that includes searches in nationwide county criminal databases and the national sexual offender registry, as well as a FACIS search (fraud & abuse). This is separate from the WSU CORI (our local search)

Blood Borne Pathogen Policy

All Worcester State University (WSU) nursing students must be in compliance with health policies as required by the Department of Nursing. The student is responsible for providing the Department with evidence of immunity, health status, and acknowledgement of the Department's universal precautions and reporting requirements for any exposure incident (*Appendix B*).

Rationale:

WSU Department of Nursing students have clinical experiences in settings involving patient care, increasing their risk for both exposure to and transmission of communicable diseases and blood borne pathogen (BBP). BBP includes but is not limited to Human Immunodeficiency Virus

(HIV), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) which can be transmitted via exposure to infected blood or body fluids.

These policies are needed to:

- Protect the patients and other health care providers with whom students interact
- Decrease the health risks to students
- Comply with Department of Nursing agency contracts, OSHA regulations and CDC guidelines

Procedure:

1. All students will demonstrate compliance with the mandatory immunization requirements as noted in the Student Hand book entitled “Agency Health Requirements for Clinical Placement”.
2. All students will be educated regarding current OSHA guidelines regarding the prevention of occupational exposure to BBP and the use of universal precautions during orientation. In addition, the use of universal precautions and personal protective equipment (PPE) is presented and reinforced throughout the curriculum. The use of PPE and universal precautions is mandatory for all students.
3. Documentation of student exposure to BBP and actions taken must be recorded on a WSU Department of Nursing Incident Report form. This form will be filled out by the student and clinical instructor. Copies of the incident form will be forwarded to the course coordinator and Nursing Department Chairperson within 24 hours of the incident (Appendix A).

**Procedure for Blood Borne Pathogen Exposure Reporting
Exposure Response**

Eye Splashes	Splashes on Oral or Nasal Mucosa	Skin Exposure or Needlestick injury
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Remove Contacts● Immediately flush with cold water for 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Flush vigorously with cold water for 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Immediately flush wash thoroughly with soap and water

NOTIFY - AFTER INITIAL FIRST AID IS ADMINISTERED

1. IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY your preceptor and WSU Faculty.
 - The student notifies the agency at the time of the occurrence and follows agency protocols.
 - DO NOT WAIT TO HEAR BACK FROM WSU FACULTY- PROCEED DIRECTLY TO EMERGENCY ROOM or EMPLOYEE HEALTH!

GO

- 2. Non-Hospital Event:** Immediately go to the nearest Hospital Emergency Department
Hospital Event: GO to Employee Health (during the day) or the Emergency Department

IDENTIFY

- 3.** Identify yourself as a WSU Nursing Student who has been exposed to BBP
 - CDC guidelines recommend Rapid HIV test and labs within **2 hours** of exposure
 - Baseline labs include: HIV antibody, HBV, HCV, and a pregnancy test (for women)
- 4.** Identify the source
 - Faculty/Preceptor will assist the student in determining the source of exposure, including contact with the source, testing the source and notifying the source's health care provider in cooperation with the facility or agency in which the exposure occurred and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

STOP

- 5.** Before leaving the facility, obtain copies of the following:
 - Facility incident report from preceptor or Charge nurse
 - Lab results
 - Emergency room discharge paperwork

FOLLOW UP

- 6.** Complete the WSU Department of Nursing Incident report form and submit it to your Faculty member along with the facility incident report (Appendix A).
- 7.** Follow up health services as instructed by Employee Health/Emergency Department. Follow up can be done with your primary care health provider or arranged with WSU Student Health Services.
- 8.** Completed Incident Report forms will be kept in a locked cabinet in the Nursing Department.

Cell Phones

Out of respect for faculty and fellow students, please turn off your cell phones in class/clinical. If you need to be available in case of personal or professional emergencies, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Put your phone on a vibrate setting
- Sit near the door
- If you receive a call, immediately exit the classroom and answer the call well out of earshot of classrooms and offices.

Course Repeat Policy

Students in the Master of Science in Nursing program are allowed to repeat and pass only one failed nursing course. The course must be repeated at WSU. A second failure in that course, or a failure in any other course, will result in dismissal from the program.

Students who wish to repeat a course must file a course repeat form. These forms are available in the Graduate and Continuing Education Office. Only the higher of the two grades is computed in the cumulative GPA. A course may be repeated only once. Both the old and the new grade will appear on the transcript.

An exception to the course repeat policy is in force for any graduate student in violation of the drug screening policy (refer to Appendix E). The graduate student will NOT have an opportunity to repeat the course associated with the drug screening violation. Furthermore, the graduate student will be dismissed from the WSU Graduate Program.

In the event that a student wishes to appeal the Course Repeat Policy, the student would petition the nursing faculty by writing a letter to the program coordinator requesting an exception to the policy. The petition should contain a statement of any extenuating circumstances, and a short explanation of how the student plans to complete the remaining requirements for the degree (i.e., which courses during which semesters).

CPR/BLS Certification

One of the following is required:

American Heart Association BLS for Healthcare Providers course OR American Red Cross CPR/AED for Professional Rescuers course. The front AND back of the card must be submitted at the same time and the "Holders Signature" line must be signed. eCard is also acceptable and if submitted eCard does not have to be signed. Temporary approval will be granted for 30 days with the submission of either a certificate of completion, or letter stating course completion from the provider. A new requirement will be created for you to upload your certification card within 30 days.

Email

The student is responsible for obtaining and maintaining a Worcester State University email account (www.worcester.edu). There is no charge for the account. Your admission packet from the Graduate School will contain information regarding your email account. The Nursing Department and faculty will use this account as a primary means of communication. It is the student's responsibility to check this account and ensure it is in working order. **Personal email accounts, other than WSU, will not be used to communicate with students.**

Exams and Quizzes

Students are responsible for taking all tests, quizzes, and examinations when they are given and have no automatic right as students to be given a make-up examination. Therefore, students should pay special attention to the announced dates and double check the time, date, and place of the final examination.

Exit and Alumni Surveys

Every year, the Department of Nursing evaluates data obtained from two surveys. In their last semester, students are expected to evaluate the curriculum of the Master of Science Program in the Exit Survey. They are also asked where they will be employed, clinical area of practice, professional activities and career goals upon graduation. Much of the same information is requested in the Alumni survey, which is sent to students who have already graduated from the program. Both surveys provide information to help the plan for future students and strengthen the program.

Fieldwork/Clinical Practicum Requirements

Master of Science in Nursing Degree students must comply with college health services policies and, in addition, upload a copy of the following to the CastleBranch tracking system prior to beginning NU 961 and/or NU 966:

- *Copy of unencumbered MA RN License*
- *Copy of professional liability insurance*
- *Required immunizations (See Health Examination & Immunizations Section)*
- *Proof of CPR Certification (Health Care Provider)*
- *Current History and Physical*
- *CORI*

Please note the Sexual offense-(SORI) and drug screening may be required at a later date by clinical agencies. Refer to the section on student professional behavior policy)

It is the responsibility of the student to comply with all health and clinical practicum agency requirements. See the MS practicum readiness document and checklist below.

Practicum Readiness: MS Tracks

Please note, as per the Student Handbook, **all** students must complete, at minimum, the clinical requirements via CastleBranch (health/ immunization requirements and nationwide background screen) as well as a WSU CORI (explained below). Dependent upon the clinical practicum site, some students may need to complete additional requirements specific to the assigned Health Care organization.

CastleBranch (myCB) Tracking System: DUE 1 month prior to beginning each practicum course

This is an online repository that holds your nursing department required health records and professional documents so that you can access them at any time. **Please do not mail any of these forms to WSU.** There is a one-time fee of \$30.00 required at time of registration. Please note, if you have entered the program via the RN-MS Fast Track and you already have an online tracking account, you **do not** need to purchase another account. Please continue to update your current one.

Creating and account/ ordering packages though CastleBranch:

Immunization Package: \$38.00

- Follow this link to go directly to the MS Immunization tracker package:
<https://portal.castlebranch.com/WO63/spif/WO75/WO75im>

- Read information on this page, then check the box "I have read this information" box on the bottom of the page
- A green continue tab will appear (check "continue") and bring you to the next page (Terms & Conditions
- Read the Term & Conditions of Use, check the acknowledgment box Complete "Place Order" form; follow instructions for creating an account.

Once you have an account, you will be able to view a comprehensive "To-Do List" that explain what requirements are due and what documentation is acceptable. You will also be able to access their Help link in which you can speak to, or chat live with, a customer service representative for assistance. Castle Branch will send you an email when your documents need updating. If you try to upload a document before it has expired, the system will not let you do so. Each document must be dated and your name must be on them. Upload all forms separately to the individual tabs. **It is your responsibility to update your account to maintain compliance throughout the entirety of the program.** There is a free camera scanning app for the iPhone/iPad/Android called Cam Scanner that can convert a document to a PDF and send to your email. There is a printer/copier on the first floor of the Ghosh ST building that can scan documents to your email.

Our Clinical Resource Coordinator tracks the documentation that you upload into your CastleBranch account and is able to write letters of attestation that you have completed your health requirements, to your practicum site supervisors.

If you have any issues with your CastleBranch account, and you have already contacted their customer service department for assistance without resolution, please contact AOPcoordinator@worchester.edu

Drug Screen Policy:

Refer to Appendix E

Facility-Specific Documentation/ Requirements:

Each student will work with their course faculty to identify a placement site. Once identified, please email our Clinical resource Coordinator to ensure there is a current affiliation agreement on file as well as determine what, if any, additional requirements will be needed. Many health care organizations have additional requirements that students may need to complete in addition to the above referenced requirements. Some healthcare agencies and clinical practicum sites may have additional immunization requirements (i.e. influenza vaccination). In order to be eligible for clinical placements, students must meet ALL university immunization requirements and any additional requirements imposed by the clinical agency to which the student is assigned.

Centralized Clinical Placement (CCP) tickets/ facility-specific documents: Many HCO's participate in this online system and require students to create an account (no charge) and complete a CCP ticket and facility specific documents as part of the onboarding process. Follow the link below then choose "online orientation" from the box on the left.

<https://www.mass.edu/mcncps/welcome.asp>

All students must get pre-approval for practicum. To get pre-approval, email AOPcoordinator@worchester.edu and provide the following information:

- You name/contact info (email, phone number)
- Name of supervising nurse/ contact info
- Unit/department

- Anticipated start & end dates
- Approximate; number of hours a week

Please note, even if you currently work at a facility, you must complete the same on-boarding process as all other students. Once approved, you will receive instructions to complete the CCP (Centralized Clinical Placement) documents, ID badge forms, etc.

Drug Screen Testing (only complete if instructed by the clinical coordinator):

Through CastleBranch (additional \$30)

<https://portal.castlebranch.com/WO63/spif/WO75/WO75zdt>

Writing for Graduate Coursework:

All writing assignments are required to incorporate the most current APA (American Psychology Association) format. When a student does not follow these guidelines, a faculty member may either reduce the grade or not accept the assignment. Additionally, all safe assign submissions must be <30% for graduate work. Safe assign reports >30% will be returned to the student for revisions. Resubmissions are subject to point deduction as indicated by course syllabus and/or faculty.

MS PRACTICUM CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/>	Identified practicum placement, with input and approval of course faculty instructor.	DATE DUE
		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Notified clinical placement coordinator (via email) of anticipated placement. Provided coordinator with name/ location of placement, supervisor's name contact information, start/ end dates of placement, anticipated number of hours per week. Clinical Resource Coordinator: AOPcoordinator@worchester.edu	DATE DUE
		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Online tracking account is in compliance: CastleBranch (MyCB) https://portal.castlebranch.com/WO63/spif/WO75/WO75im Or Verified Credentials (if previously purchased this tracking system)	DATE DUE
		4 weeks prior to start date
		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed BOTH background checks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationwide via CastleBranch (completed online using link below) https://portal.castlebranch.com/WO63/spif/WO75/WO75bg • WSU CORI (return to Clinical Coordinator with copy of ID) https://webcdn.worchester.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Worcester-State-University-CORI-Policy-and-Fillable-Request-Form.pdf 	DATE DUE
		4 weeks prior to start date
		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed additional HCO requirements (if instructed to do so by clinical coordinator). Additional requirements may include: Centralized Clinical Placement (ticket & documents) https://www.mass.edu/mcncps/welcome.asp Select "Online Orientation" icon under the green "Welcome" box on the left, for instructions Drug screen testing: Through CastleBranch (additional \$30) Only order if instructed by clinical coordinator https://portal.castlebranch.com/WO63/spif/WO75/WO75zdt	DATE DUE
		4 weeks prior to start date
		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/>		DATE DUE

Grading

The grading system for graduate studies employs the letter grades A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, U (unsatisfactory work no credit awarded), W (withdrawn), and I (incomplete).

Quality of achievement is represented by the following grades:

<u>Letter Grades</u>	<u>Number Grades</u>	<u>Quality Points</u>
A	95-100	4.0
A-	90-94	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	84-86	3.0
B-	80-83	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	74-76	2.0
C-	70-73	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	64-66	1.0
D-	60-63	0.7
U	59 or less	0.0

All courses in the program of study must be completed with a “B-” or above. A “B-” is 80-83. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained in order to progress to the next semester.

Grade Appeals

The Nursing Department adheres to the Graduate School wide appeal procedure outlined in the Graduate School catalogue. If a student is experiencing academic difficulty in any course, the first step should be to request a meeting with the course faculty to discuss the problem and explore possible solutions.

Graduate Grade Appeal Procedure

Prior to invoking the use of the graduate grade appeal procedure, individuals should exhaust all informal means available to resolve questions concerning specific grades. The graduate grade appeal procedure is designed to resolve questions regarding student grades when one or more of the following is at issue:

1. There is reason to believe that a mechanical error in calculating a grade has occurred;
2. There is reason to believe that a grade has been calculated in a manner which is inconsistent with the stated grading policy.

The appeal procedure may not be used to challenge a grade which results from a faculty member exercising usual and customary professional judgment in the evaluation of student work.

Step 1

Within ten working days of the availability of the grade in question, the student shall request in writing a meeting with the instructor. In the case of an end-of-semester grade, the student shall request such a meeting no later than ten working days after the beginning of the next semester. The instructor shall arrange to meet with the student within ten working days of the receipt of the request.

Step 2

If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student at Step 1, then, within ten working days of the meeting in Step 1, the student shall file a written request to review the matter with the appropriate Department Chair.

Step 3

If, within ten working days of the receipt of the request in Step 2, the Department Chair is unable to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all parties, then either party may, within ten working days, file a written request to review the matter with the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education.

Step 4

If, within ten working days of the receipt of the request in Step 3, the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education is unable to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all parties, then either party may, within ten working days, file a written request to review the matter with the Academic Vice President.

Step 5

Within ten working days of the receipt of the request in Step 4, the Academic Vice President shall inform the student, faculty member, Department Chair, and Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education of the results of the Vice President's review. The appeal process ends at this point.

Change of Grade

Once a grade has been posted to a student's transcript, that grade may be changed if, and only if, an error has been made in the calculation or transcription of the original grade. Under no circumstances will a change in grade for a student be allowed because of the submission of additional work after the course has ended. No grade change may be made after the conclusion of the semester following the semester in which the grade was originally submitted.

Graduate Assistantships

The Graduate School provides graduate nursing students with the opportunity to apply for graduate assistantships. These graduate assistantships provide students with the opportunity to collaborate with faculty in research and scholarly activities.

Responsibilities are designed to give graduate students an opportunity to work with a mentor and to develop a college/colleague relationship. Therefore, appropriate professional level responsibilities such as teaching support, research, clinical work, or administration will be

assigned. Criteria for selection include proposed assignment, quality of student, and outcome of the project. Financial need is not a factor in the selection process.

A student must apply for a graduate assistantship through the Graduate School. Application forms ask the student to describe the proposed project and outcomes. The faculty mentor with whom the student is working, is asked to comment on the intended project. The department chair will be asked to comment on the appropriateness of the project for the academic department. Completed applications must be turned into the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education by the specified deadline.

Complete application information, including application deadlines, is available through the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education and at <http://www.worcester.edu/Graduate>.

Graduation

Students must complete all specified course work within 6 years of matriculation and have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to graduate from the program.

All requirements for a graduate program must be completed within six years of the effective term of admission to a program.

Candidates eligible for graduation must:

- Signify their intention by completing and submitting an Intent-To-Graduate form to The Graduate School*
- Complete the Graduate Student Portfolio and submit it to the Graduate Program Coordinator 2 weeks before the end of classes.
- .

*The Graduate School traditionally sends out a reminder to file the Intent to-Graduate Form early in the spring semester. However, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to file this form.

Health Services Requirements- Examination and Immunizations

In accordance with WSU policy and the records of the University Health office, all full-time students, **part-time health majors, graduate students enrolled in 6 or more credits**, and any students attending on a student visa are required to submit a health history form and proof of immunization to Worcester State University Student Health Services. Please note this is separate from the Department of Nursing requirements.

*** Health requirements for the nursing tracks must be met additionally to any University requirements. (see Practicum readiness and checklist)**

HIPAA

All students must be trained in and comply with the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996*, the federal law that addresses patient rights and ethics by mandating the confidentiality and privacy of patient information.

Independent Study

No more than three semester hours of credit in independent study may be applied to the satisfaction of requirements of any graduate degree program. It is the student's responsibility to complete independent study contracts (available in the Office of Graduate Studies), along with required signatures and file with the Registrar by the last day of registration for a semester. Independent studies are granted only in extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the Course Professor.

Incomplete Grades

When circumstances prevent a student from completing a course on time (e.g., illness), the student is responsible for requesting an "incomplete." The professor *may* grant an incomplete provided the student had completed a *substantial portion* of the course requirements. The student must make arrangements with the professor to complete the course within six weeks of the beginning of the next semester.

The official calendar for the year indicates the date to resolve incompletes from the previous term. If the requirements are not met within the appropriate period, the incomplete will automatically become a "U," and is so recorded on the student's permanent record. An extension of an incomplete for one semester may be granted if circumstances still prevent the student from completing the course. In such cases, the student is responsible for obtaining the approval of the professor who must notify the Registrar in writing of his/her approval prior to the end of the initial six-week period. With regard to the extension of an incomplete grade, the required course work must be completed by the student prior to the beginning of the final examination period of the semester immediately following the one in which the incomplete was originally issued. The instructor will then have five working days within which to submit a final grade to the Registrar.

Leave of Absence

Matriculated students may request a leave of absence for up to one year by completing a leave of absence request form available in the Office of Graduate Studies. In extenuating circumstances, at the discretion of the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education, a student may be granted an extension. Approved leave time is not counted against allowable program length. Students found in violation of drug screen policy (see Appendix E) do not qualify for a leave of absence.

Professional Liability Insurance and Licensure

Prior to participating in fieldwork/clinical practica, graduate students are required submit evidence of current unencumbered licensure to practice as a registered nurse in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and documentation of current professional liability insurance.

Portfolio for Masters of Science in Nursing Degree

Students will be required to develop a professional portfolio. This portfolio may be used for subsequent employment interviews, as well as in the application process for a doctoral program.

The portfolio is a purposeful collection of a student's work that illustrates efforts, progress, and achievement in one or more areas over time. Students are encouraged to develop an electronic portfolio that uses digital technologies. This will allow them to collect and organize portfolio artifacts in many media types (audio, video, graphics, text).

The standards-based portfolio should clearly show the relationship between standards or goals, artifacts, and reflections. The learner's reflections are the rationale that specific artifacts are evidence of achieving the stated standards or goals. The working portfolio will be a collection of evidence indicating how learning or skills acquisition is taking place throughout the program of study.

The student will be responsible for maintaining the portfolio throughout their tenure in the program. The student, their advisor, and course faculty will formatively assess student progress toward the achievement of professional goals. The portfolio is a reflective tool that demonstrates growth over time. Refer to your specific program of study for portfolio requirements.

Presentations

Throughout the nursing graduate curriculum, students will be asked to "present professionally" before their peers and faculty. Professional presentations provide a practice forum for presentation of a nursing issue and also give the student an audience of peers before which to practice public speaking. Students are required to meet with the course faculty before finalizing the topic and content of their presentations, in order to ensure the accuracy and validity of their arguments.

Professional dress and demeanor for formal presentations is required and will be considered in grading criteria.

Program of Study

The Program of Study is completed by the student and the Master of Science Program Coordinator before the student registers for classes (usually immediately upon admission). The Program of Study defines for the student and the Graduate Admissions and Progression Committee the plan to complete the academic requirements for the Master of Science in Nursing degree. The official Program of Study reflects the course work which contributes to the student's knowledge base for advanced nursing practice. A copy is kept on file in the student's records in the Department of Nursing.

Punctuality

Punctuality is expected of students for all classes and clinical experiences. Tardiness will not be tolerated as it impacts adversely upon the student's educational experience and is disruptive to other students and faculty. If a student must be late for class or clinical experience due to

unforeseen circumstances, it is expected that the student will notify the faculty member or the department secretary.

Registration

Registration for graduate nursing classes is accomplished online, by fax, mail and in person through the Department of Graduate and Continuing Education (DCGE) during the time periods indicated by DCGE. It is essential that students register for courses in a timely fashion to ensure that desired courses are available and because undersubscribed courses will be cancelled.

A schedule of classes for the next semester will be posted on the DCGE system. Students are advised to refer to the current *Graduate Catalog* and to consult with the appropriate Master of Science in Nursing Program Coordinator in order to plan appropriately.

Statute of Limitations

All requirements for a graduate program must be completed within six years of the effective term of admission to a program.

Student Complaint and Resolution Request Policy

WSU Nursing Department offers students a prompt and equitable seeking of resolutions by either informal or formal means. Grade appeals should follow the Graduate *Grade Appeal Procedure*.

Student Resolution: A student may seek resolution of concerns either by speaking with their advisor or a faculty member through an informal or formal process:

- An *Informal process* is a series of conversations to resolve a concern with a student's advisor or faculty member.
- A *formal process* is one that is typed and submitted via email or as a hard copy letter by the student to their advisor or faculty member. The first line of the letter or subject line of the email should indicate that the student is seeking formal resolution for a concern. In the letter or email, the student shall include: (1) student name, date, email address, phone number; (2) a detailed description of the concern (3) the specific resolution that they are seeking.

Resolution Procedure

Informal

- Step 1: The student is strongly encouraged to attempt to resolve the concerns on an informal basis by meeting with the individual involved (instructor, faculty, chair, etc.). Many problems can be resolved by having an open discussion.
- Step 2: If the matter is unresolved with the informal process, the student may proceed to the formal resolution process.

Formal

- Step 1: The student, within 10 days of the concern, will submit the formal request of resolution to the Chair of the department.

- Step 2: If resolution is not achieved at step 1, the student then has 10 days to submit a formal request of resolution to the Dean of the School of Science, Technology, and Health.

Student Contact Information

It is the responsibility of graduate students to keep a **current address and telephone number** on file with the department administrative assistant, graduate advisor, and the Department of graduate and Continuing Education. It is important that students receive mail from both the department and graduate office. If students do not notify the department of a change of address, **they are responsible for any errors due to not receiving mail.**

Students with Disabilities

Any student with conditions listed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), will be considered for the following policy and procedure. Students with disabilities must present clinical documentation in order to receive special services. Once documentation has been filed with the Student Accessibility Services Office, that office will advise the student of services available on campus. The Student Accessibility Services Office will also advise faculty of conditions and accommodations, which should be allowed. Students with disabilities who are challenged by traditional teaching styles are expected to make themselves known to their advisors and/or individual course faculty. Faculty members are expected to assist such students in adapting class assignments and examinations, if appropriate. Without notification from the Student Accessibility Services Office, no faculty member is required to make accommodations for a student.

Recording and Photography

Recording devices and camera use must be approved by the faculty member prior to use in the classroom setting. Verbal consent must be obtained prior to photographs or video recording.

Transfer Credit

Only credits for which students have earned a grade of "B-" or higher within a two-year period immediately prior to the effective term of admission are transferable from an accredited institution, including credits earned at Worcester State University. A maximum of 12 such graduate credits may be accepted. Courses which will most likely be transferable are: *Social Policy and Economics of the Healthcare System, Epidemiology, Program Planning and Evaluation, and Biostatistics.*

Acceptance of transfer credits is the responsibility of the Master of Science in Nursing Program Coordinator in conjunction with the Graduate Education Council. Except in very rare instance, **no transfer credits** will be allowed after matriculation in the Master of Science in Nursing Program. Any courses proposed to replace courses offered at Worcester State University must be approved by the appropriate Master of Science in Nursing Program Coordinator. Any petition for transfer credit approval by the Department of Nursing must be submitted with a copy of the syllabus from the course to be considered.

Visitors in the Classroom

Visitors must be approved by the faculty member prior to the class.

Written Course Work

Course work is to be submitted at the times specified on the course syllabus or course guidelines. Faculty, at their discretion, may allow an extension of the time. Unless additional time has been granted by faculty for the completion of an assignment, a maximum achievable grade will be calculated upon receipt of the late assignment. Refer to course syllabus for written work guidelines.

All written assignments required for graduate nursing courses will be completed according to the most recent edition of the *American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual*. *APA Publication Manuals* are available for purchase in the University Bookstore. Students are required to purchase an *APA Publication Manual*. All written work must be submitted as a Word document unless the course faculty specifically indicates otherwise.

General Information

Nursing Honor Society: Sigma Theta Tau International

The mission of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International is to support the learning, knowledge, and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide.

The vision of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International is to create a global community of nurses who lead in using knowledge, scholarship, service and learning to improve the health of the world's people.

Membership is by invitation to baccalaureate and graduate nursing students who demonstrate excellence in scholarship, and to nurse leaders exhibiting exceptional achievements in nursing.

The *Iota Phi Chapter-At -Large of Sigma Theta Tau International* is comprised of members from the following higher education institutions Central Massachusetts:

- Worcester State University
- Anna Maria College
- University of Massachusetts, Worcester, Graduate School of Nursing
- Assumption College

The eligibility committee of the Iota Phi Chapter-At -Large of Sigma Theta Tau International invites applications for membership each year from those students who have demonstrated academic excellence. If invited to join Sigma Theta Tau, International, it is the student's responsibility to complete the application process and return it in a timely fashion. Specific membership criteria are available from Prof. William Chadbourne wchadbourne@worchester.edu.

A new member induction ceremony is held annually in the spring. For more information about membership in the Iota Phi Chapter-At-Large, contact Professor William Chadbourne wchadbourne@worchester.edu.

Important Telephone Numbers

Academic Success Center	(508) 929-8111
Bookstore	(508) 929-8591
	(508) 754-3448
Bursar	(508) 929-8051
Campus Police Department	(508) 929-8044
Emergency	(508) 929-8911
Information	(508) 929-8886
Counseling/Career Services	(508) 929-8072
Financial Aid Office	(508) 929-8056
Graduate and Continuing Education	(508) 929-8127
Health Services	(508) 929-8875
University Technology Services	(508) 929-8856
Learning Assistance Center	(508) 929-8530
Registrar/Student Records	(508) 929-8035; (508) 929-8036
Student Accessibility Services*	(508) 929-8733
Writing Center	(508) 929-8112
Worcester Area Cooperating Libraries	(508) 929-8544; (508) 754-3964

**If students have any special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and need assistance/ accommodation, they must register with Student Accessibility Services.
Reasonable effort will be made to accommodate special needs.*

Writing Support

Peer tutors are available to help you brainstorm, improve organization and increase awareness of grammatical accuracy during any step of the writing process. Peer tutors will not correct your work but will offer you a much more enriching experience through active listening and feedback. Contact your course Professor for writing resources.

Appendices

Appendix A:	Incident Report Form
Appendix B:	Blood Borne Pathogens Acknowledgement Form
Appendix C:	WSU Professional Competencies Contract
Appendix D:	Handbook Acknowledgement Form
Appendix E:	Drug Screen Testing Policy

Appendix A

Worcester State University Department of Nursing Incident Report Form

STUDENT NAME	
ADDRESS	
BIRTH DATE	
E-MAIL	
PHONE	
PROGRAM (BSN/RN-BSN/GRAD)	

Date of Incident: ___/___/___ Time: ___/___ AM PM

Location/Facility Name: _____ Department/Unit _____

Site Preceptor _____ Work Phone & Cell # _____

Site contact for follow-up: _____ Title _____ Phone _____

Type of Incident

- Sharps injury Type of needle _____ was the needle/syringe equipped with a safety device? _____
- Other sharp object
- TB exposure

Type of Exposure

- Body fluid splash Blood Urine Saliva Wound drainage
- Mucous membrane Eye Mouth Nose
- Broken skin Location _____
- Intact skin
- Inhalant
- Animal/human scratch
- Animal/human bite
- Other _____

Other Incident (describe) _____

Who witnessed the incident? _____

When was WSU faculty notified? _____

Was an incident report created by the site? _____ (Please attach copy)

Where you treated for the exposure? Facility name: _____

Please attach a copy of the Emergency Center report.

Were baseline labs obtained from the source or source patient? If no, why?

Follow up planned with who and where? _____

FULLY describe the incident/injury/exposure and explain in detail what you were doing when the incident/injury/exposure occurred, including the use of tools, equipment or materials.

Please use additional sheets if necessary.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

To be completed by WSU Nursing Clinical Faculty:

Date & Time you were notified of event: _____

Faculty Report:

Faculty Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix B

BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT FORM

Each student must sign and return this form prior to any fieldwork/practicum placement affiliated with their educational preparation at Worcester State University Nursing Program. The policies have been developed for your safety and that of the clients for whom you care. You are in also following requirements put forth in the Department of Nursing, the Department's contracts with clinical agencies and Occupational Health and Safety rules. If you have questions, please schedule an appointment with your academic advisor to discuss them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

I have been provided a copy of the Worcester State University Department of Nursing Blood Borne Pathogen Policy for my current and future reference. This policy has been explained to me and I have had an opportunity to ask questions about this information. I have read the policy and shall retain it for future reference.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Email address: _____

Appendix C

Worcester State University Master of Science in Nursing Program

Professional Competencies Contract

COMPETENCIES: All students taking nursing courses are expected to adhere to the following *Essential Professional Competencies* in both clinical and/or didactic settings.

1. Demonstrates effective affective responses
2. Assumes responsibility for own actions and outcomes
3. Demonstrates acceptance of limited knowledge and experience
4. Follows through on commitments, is dependable and punctual
5. Demonstrates self-direction in seeking learning opportunities
6. Shows respect for others in the classroom.
7. Accepts constructive feedback when offered
8. Seeks validation of clinical judgments with faculty and/or preceptor
9. Able to separate personal issues from professional responsibilities
10. Keeps the patient/client/resident as the priority
11. Respects cultural and personal differences of others; is not judgmental about patients', clients', or residents' lifestyles
12. Sets priorities and reorganizes as necessary
13. Projects professional image/demeanor

GRADING: Grading of the Essential Professional Competencies is Pass/Fail. Successful demonstration of these competencies is essential for passing any clinical or didactic course. **Any student who is not demonstrating these competencies by the conclusion of the semester will fail the course.** Warnings may be given at any point throughout the semester.

CONTRACT: "I have read the 13 professional competencies that are required for all nursing courses. I agree that successful demonstration of these competencies is essential for my passing any graduate nursing course at Worcester State University."

Student Name (Please Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Acknowledgement Form

**Graduate Student Policy Handbook
Worcester State University
Master of Science in Nursing Program**

I, _____ have received a copy of the Master of Science in Nursing Graduate Student Handbook for the 2023-2024 academic year. I understand that I am responsible for the information in the Handbook and will adhere to the policies and procedures. I also understand that these policies and procedures may change and I am responsible for the new material that will be given to me in writing.

IMPORTANT

Please initial that you have read and understand the Graduate Appeal Procedure as written in the Student Handbook. _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Email: _____

Appendix E

DRUG SCREEN TESTING POLICY

The Department of Nursing is committed to educating professional nurses and is obligated to provide safe and effective care to the clients we serve. We also have an obligation to those agencies with whom we contract, to comply to various clinical requirements. These requirements include, but are not limited to, student health status, specific immunizations, BLS certification, completion of online orientation, criminal background searches, and drug screening.

Agencies have the prerogative to add any additional requirements during the school year, therefore, you may be subject to random drug screening or other requirements.

The bulleted items reflect the drug screening policy for the graduate program. The nursing program is not responsible for alternate clinical placements for students who cannot be placed in an agency related to drug screening results or refusal to submit to a drug screening. Failure to pass a drug screen or refusal to submit to screening will make the student ineligible to remain in the Nursing Program. Failure and/or refusal for drug screening are grounds for immediate removal from the Nursing Program. All screening will be at the student's own expense.

Procedure:

Initial testing

- The Department of Nursing will send an email to students with instructions on how to order the drug screening and the time frame the drug screening must be completed. After notification of initial drug screening the student has one week (7 days including weekend days) to complete testing (i.e provide specimen).
- Drug screening is ordered online through CastleBranch at students' expense. When you register for testing you will be given a location of a QuestLab that is closest to the address (zip code) you provide on the order form. Within 24 - 48 hours after you place your order the electronic chain of custody form (echain) will be placed directly into your CastleBranch account. You will receive an email that your chain of custody form is ready to print. You will need to print the echain and take with you to do the test. Testing must occur at the facility designated by Castlebranch.
- Students must provide a viable urine specimen to be tested for substances consistent with industry standards in the health care field.
- Refusal to provide a specimen during the prescribed time will be considered a failure and subject to program dismissal.
- If a student provides a specimen that is rejected, the student must stay at the testing site to complete the test requirement.
- The specimens will be sent to the laboratory for testing. The laboratory will test the primary specimen for Drugs, and if it tests positive based on cut-off levels established by the lab. If the test is positive, the lab will report the positive test result to the Medical Review Officer (MRO) describing which Drugs were detected. The MRO will contact the Student who tested positive, and the Student may provide an explanation for the positive test result. The MRO may request verification for any prescription medications. If the Student declines the opportunity to discuss a positive test result with the MRO or fails to contact the MRO within three days of notification,

the MRO may report the Drug test as positive to the Department of Nursing. If a student provides an explanation for a positive Drug test result, the MRO will determine whether a valid medical explanation exists. If a determination is made in the MRO's discretion that there is a legitimate medical explanation, the Drug test results will be recorded as negative and reported to the Department of Nursing. If the MRO determines that there is not a legitimate medical explanation, the Drug test results will be recorded as positive and reported as such. By participating in the Drug screening process, the Student is authorizing release of the Drug test results in accordance with this policy.

- Your drug screening results will be posted to your CastleBranch account. The Department of Nursing will have access to the results.
- When final report is posted to your CastleBranch account the results must be negative. Drinking large amounts of water may cause a dilute negative result. If you have a dilute negative result you will be required to retest. You will need to order another drug screening and pay an additional fee to retest.

All fees associated with drug screening will be at the expense of the student.

Review of Results:

Please note, CastleBranch notifies students via email the day results are posted. It is the students' responsibility to log into their CastleBranch account to view results at the time they are notified. Retesting timeframes are based on CastleBranch notifications (timestamped and recorded electronically).

Negative Test Result:

If the drug test is negative, and pending all other requisite acceptances and approvals, the student will be allowed to participate in clinical activities.

Positive Test Result:

Any student who tests positive for drugs, or who does not comply with any notice, request, or procedure provided for hereunder, shall be withdrawn from all clinical courses and dismissed from the Program, on the basis that the student is not able to meet course objectives for classroom and/or clinical requirements.

Result other than Positive or Negative:

If the student's drug screen results in a result that is neither positive nor negative, then the test must be repeated (at the students' expense). A test result that is neither positive nor negative includes but is not limited to a Dilute negative, Positive Dilute, Positive No Contact, or Cancelled.

Retesting:

- DILUTE NEGATIVE is treated as a positive result and the student will have 48 hours from the time initial results are posted to complete a second test. Students will need to refer to original instructions for ordering a drug screen. Retesting must occur at the facility designated by CastleBranch and at student's expense.
- Dispute Testing of Positive Results: Students have the right to dispute positive results. CastleBranch will create a new package and contact students for consent and payment for dispute testing, at the students request. The original specimen is retested. Currently the cost for dispute testing is \$250 and is incurred by the student. Requests and payment for dispute testing must be completed within 48 hours of notification of initial test results.

All testing fees and expenses are the student's responsibility.

It is understood that there are circumstances where students may need to take medications due to medical conditions which may possibly impair their performance. Students in a clinical setting are required to be aware of the effect that all medications may have on performance and must notify their instructor and receive confirmation of approval to attend clinical assignments prior to attendance in the clinical setting.

Effective: January 1, 2020

**Worcester State University
Lillian R. Goodman Department of Nursing
Acknowledgement and Consent - Drug Testing Policy**

By signing below, I (print) name _____ acknowledge that:

- I have received a copy of the WSU Dept. of Nursing Drug Testing Policy which explains that a drug test is required to be negative before commencement of clinical activities in the nursing program.
- I agree to be tested for drugs as set forth by the WSU Dept. of Nursing Drug Testing Policy: I understand that Initial Screening, Retesting and Random screening will be a cost to me. I understand that I may be screened if I exhibit behaviors that give cause for reasonable suspicion of drug/alcohol use (for cause) and I will be responsible for the cost of this screening.
- In order to be eligible to participate in practicum courses, my drug screen must be negative; and;
- If my drug test result is positive or if I refuse to screen, I will be dismissed from the graduate program.

Student's Signature:

Date: (mm/dd/yy) _____

Print Name: _____