

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING ONLINE**  
**Student**  
**Handbook**  
**2025-2026**



**WORCESTER**  

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**UNIVERSITY**

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# **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the student with an overview of the mission and goals of the Graduate Department of Nursing as well as a curricular overview of the Master of Science in Nursing Accelerated Online Program (AOP). This handbook also delineates relevant policies and procedures related to the AOP. In addition, an overview of campus resources is provided. At the end of this handbook is a copy of appendices A-E that are referenced throughout this document. 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. In Fall 2021, the Master of Science in Nursing program started offering fully online options: Nurse Educator and Population/Public Health.

## **Accreditation Status**

The Master's degree program in nursing at Worcester State University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) ([ccneaccreditation.org](http://ccneaccreditation.org)). CCNE is an autonomous accrediting agency that contributes 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**

## **Mission**

### **Department of Nursing Mission and Goals:**

The mission of the Department of Nursing is aligned with the Worcester State University mission, with emphasis on academic excellence to develop the professional nurse who incorporates person-centered care, values diverse social justice perspectives, and lifelong learning. The Department of Nursing promotes the professional growth of students through varied active learning strategies embedded in scholarship, current research, and service to our communities.

### **Department of Nursing Vision**

The vision of the Department of Nursing at Worcester State University is to be a center for excellence in nursing education, preparing professionals to meet the nursing needs of the diverse populations of Worcester, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the dynamic global community.

### **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 practicum 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 client/student confidentiality rules 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, and cell phones, should be undertaken in a manner consistent with high standards of professional conduct. In addition, the internet, electronic mail, and texting may create additional challenges to health care professionals' responsibility for ensuring confidentiality. To protect this fundamental patient right, the nursing student should avoid using this medium to transmit information containing any patient/student information that may be used to identify individual patients/students.

When students engage in practicum experiences, compliance with strict confidentiality rules and regulations is expected, and lapses are subject to disciplinary procedures.

Caution is also recommended when 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 and electronic presence reflect 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 represents unprofessional behavior, including those posted on social networking sites, reflects poorly on the student, Worcester State University, and the profession as a whole. Such items may become public, subjecting 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 integral to each student's nursing education. This policy aims 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 practicum settings:

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

*All students enrolled are expected to maintain the following (but not limited to) **professional behaviors**:*

- Students are required to abide by the Department of Nursing policies and procedures as stated in the MS student handbook and the Department of Nursing Master's Program Student Handbook.
- Students are expected to exercise mature and responsible self-discipline and to behave with respect, civility, courtesy, and integrity.
- Students who exhibit disruptive behavior may be removed from the online classroom. Behavior is considered disruptive when it interferes with the opportunities for others to learn and for the instructor to teach. Examples of disruptive behavior include:
  - 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
  - Sending verbally or physically threatening emails, texts, voice mails, or letters to faculty, staff, or other students

**Failure to comply with this policy will affect the student's final course grade**

Please refer to Appendix C (Worcester State University Master of Science in Nursing Program Professional Competencies Contract) for additional information.

### **Online Netiquette Professionalism**

#### **1. Written communication**

- Be professional and respectful. Social cues such as facial expressions and body language are often missing in the online learning environment, so be careful not to use sarcasm or humor that may be perceived as hurtful or offensive.
- Faculty should be addressed by their appropriate title, i.e., "Professor" or "Dr."
- Avoid the use of text or chat language.
- Always show respect toward others and their opinions.



2. Ensure you have the appropriate technology to support the class sessions, including a reliable, high-speed internet connection.

3. When meeting online with faculty, staff, peers, or preceptors:

- Ensure you have a quiet, private workplace
- Preferably in a room by yourself
- Try not to have anyone come on camera
- Coordinate your personal responsibilities to eliminate interruptions or distractions while in meetings
- Shut the door and place a sign on the door saying you are in a meeting. Ask people not to enter or knock on the door.

Check your background

- Remove unmentionables
- Rid the space of any clutter or distractions
- Keep it simple

Be mindful of your background lighting

- Double check the lighting once your video has started so you are easily seen

Check your camera framing

- You should be easily seen in the camera frame
- Any discussion in the chat feature should be professional and relate to course content. This is not a place for snide remarks, comments, or jokes.

*All students enrolled are expected to maintain the following (but not limited to) **practicum professional behaviors**:*

- Student behavior in practicum settings must be respectful of all individuals (patients, patients' families, members of the health care team, faculty, and other students) according to the patient's Bill of Rights, the ANA standards of care, the Lillian R. Goodman Department of Nursing standards, and the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses.
- Students must adhere to the Department of Nursing dress code and present in practicum 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.
  - Failure to comply with this policy will affect the student's practicum grade and final course grade.
- Students should arrive at least 15 minutes before their scheduled practicum time starts.
- Students will give prior notification in writing or voice mail to the preceptor when they are unable to meet 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 should they arise. Please note: True life emergencies do NOT include scheduling work or vacation during class, practicum or exam times, or lack of preparation.
  - All coursework is due by the assigned due date. Extensions may be granted by course faculty at their discretion. It is strongly advised that students communicate any issues before missing the assigned due date rather than after it has passed.

### ***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 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 the appropriate graduate coordinator and department chair in writing. 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, preceptors, or students, the student will be asked to leave the practicum setting. If necessary, Campus Security or 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**

#### **(Education and Public/Population Health)**

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 healthcare 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) *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements (2015)* 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 diagnosing and treating 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.

## 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 908; NU 920; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 937; NU 938; NU 943; NU 946; NU 951; NU 952; NU 953; NU 954; NU 955; NU 956; NU 957; NU 958; NU 959; NU 962; NU 963; NU 964
Research	NU 908; NU 920; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 938; NU 939; NU 941; NU 942; NU 943; NU 946; NU 951; NU 952; NU 953; NU 954; NU 955; NU 956; NU 957; NU 958, NU 959; NU 962; NU 963, NU 964
Theory	NU 908; NU 920; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 938; NU 941; NU 942; NU 943; NU 946; NU 951; NU 952, NU 953, NU 954; NU 957; NU 958; NU 961; NU 962; NU 963; NU 964
Nursing Process	NU 908; NU 920; NU 925; NU 936; NU 937; NU 943; NU 946; NU 951; NU 952; NU 953; NU 954; NU 956; NU 957; NU 958; NU 962; NU 963; NU 964

Cultural Diversity	NU 908; NU 925; NU 930; NU 937; NU 938; NU 939; NU 943; NU 946; NU 951; NU 952; NU 953; NU 954; NU 958; NU 959; NU 962; NU 963; NU 964
Communication	NU 908; NU 925; NU 930; NU 937; NU 942; NU 943; NU 946; NU 951; NU 952; NU 953: NU 954; NU 956, NU 958; NU 961; NU 962; NU 963; NU 964
Population-Focus	NU 908; NU 920; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 942; NU 943; NU 946; NU 951; NU 952; NU 953; NU 954; NU 958; NU 959; NU 961; NU 962; NU 963; NU 964
Environment	NU 908; NU 920; NU 925; NU 930; NU 936; NU 937; NU 946; NU 952, NU 953; NU 954; NU 958; NU 961; NU 962; NU 963; NU 964

## Nursing Department Faculty & Staff

<i><b>Faculty</b></i>	<b>Phone</b>	<b><u>Email</u></b>
<b>Dr. William Chadbourne</b> Department Chair, Assistant Professor	508-929-8685	wchadbourne@worchester.edu
<i><b>Staff</b></i>		
<b>Dr. Catherine Thomas</b> Associate Dean of Nursing	508-929-8192	<a href="mailto:cthomas15@worchester.edu">cthomas15@worchester.edu</a>
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<b>Cara Cohen</b> Coordinator and Student Advisor for Master's in Nursing Educator		<a href="mailto:ccohen2@worchester.edu">ccohen2@worchester.edu</a>
<b>Serena Torres</b> Online Graduate Nursing Clinical Resource Coordinator	508-929-2483	<a href="mailto:AOPcoordinator@worchester.edu">AOPcoordinator@worchester.edu</a>
<b>Amy Poehler, Administrative Secretary</b> Administrative Resource Person	508-929-8192	<a href="mailto:apoehler@worchester.edu">apoehler@worchester.edu</a>

## Responsibilities of the Student

Students of the Master of Science in Nursing programs are responsible for knowing and fulfilling program and university requirements and following the policies and procedures 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. Students should not take more than two courses in a single term (e.g., Fall 1); in extenuating circumstances, a student may be permitted to register for more than two courses in a term, but this must be approved by the Program Coordinator before registration.
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, professional liability insurance coverage, immunization status, CPR certification, and physical examination. A copy will be uploaded to Castle Branch prior to beginning their first practicum course.
5. The student will submit an Intent *to Graduate* form and required fees to the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education. Detailed information about deadlines for filing and fees is available in the Worcester State University Catalog.
6. The student will behave in a professional manner in their interaction with faculty, peers, and members of the 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 for checking the account daily. The WSU email account is the only acceptable account to be used for course communication.
8. The student is responsible for identifying appropriate preceptor(s) who meet WSU's requirements and are willing to precept the student. Submit the required Practicum Application with preceptor information at least 14 weeks prior to beginning each practicum course. WSU provides support in helping students identify appropriate preceptors. Students who need support should contact the Clinical Resource Coordinator ([AOPcoordinator@worchester.edu](mailto:AOPcoordinator@worchester.edu) or 508-929-2483). Additional information about practicum can be found in the Practicum Handbook.

***The student is expected to review the Practicum Handbook (including immunization and health requirements, as well as background check requirements) at least 14 weeks before their first practicum course.***

## **Responsibilities of the Program**

The Master of Science in Nursing program is committed to excellence in 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 that is safe and conducive to learning will be provided.
3. **Population/Public Health Nursing Specialty Track:** The 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.

**Nurse Educator Specialty track:** The curriculum will be consistent with the current American Association for Colleges of Nursing (AACN) *Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing* (2011), the *ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* (ANA, 2015), *Scope and Standards of Practice: Nursing* (ANA, 2021), *The Scope of Practice for Academic Nurse Educators, 3rd Edition (NLN, 2019)*, 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.

Grade appeal procedures for students follow the process described in the current Worcester State University Catalogue.

# **Population/Public Health Program of Study**



### **Population/Public Health Nursing Program of Study Overview:**

The Department of Nursing offers a graduate program leading to a Master of Science in Nursing focusing on advanced public/population 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 coursework, 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 the greater community.

Master's degree program outcomes are formulated on the 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, more complex relationships that affect nursing. Graduate education provides and ensures further opportunities for our students to think conceptually, apply theory and research to practice, and develop in-depth knowledge in a specialized area of advanced nursing.

### **Outcomes for the Population/Public Health Nursing Specialty Track:**

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

- Integrate knowledge from the science of nursing and other disciplines to achieve the highest quality professional nursing practice.
- Provide evidence-based, person-centered care that focuses on persons as holistic beings. Person-centered care emphasizes the individual's unique needs, values and preferences and promotes mutual collaboration, active engagement, and empowerment.
- Collaborate with communities, public health agencies, practice partners, and other stakeholders to promote wellness, prevent disease, address social determinants of health, and ensure equitable health outcomes for diverse populations.
- Integrate the best available evidence into nursing practice in academic, clinical, and/or research settings to advance health through the delivery of expert nursing care to diverse populations.
- Analyze performance metrics to enhance nursing practice through the application of safety principles and improvement science on individual and systems levels.
- Collaborate as a key stakeholder in an interprofessional environment to effectively impact resource allocation, institutional support, and successful partnerships across different cohorts or settings.
- Coordinate resources that ensure the delivery of safe, high-quality, and equitable care to diverse populations within complex systems of healthcare.
- Use technology and informatics to improve care, gather data, and make decisions to support professional growth and ensure adherence to standards for safe, high-quality healthcare delivery.

- Establish a professional nursing identity characterized by competence, accountability, collaboration, and behavior aligned with core nursing values.
- Engage in practices that promote personal wellbeing, reflection, lifelong learning, and development as a nurse leader.

**Population/Public Health Nursing:** The Graduate Program in Population/Public Health Nursing is built upon the foundation of the *Scope and Standards of Practice: Public Health Nursing, 2nd edition* (ANA, 2013) and *Community/Public Health Nursing [C/PHN] Competencies* (Quad Council Coalition, 2018)

Guided by these standards, departmental and university mission and goals, the master's program provides advanced Population/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

### **Population/Public Health Nursing Specialty Track:**

The nursing graduate program (Population/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 the 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 to 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 Population/Public Health curriculum is designed to meet the learning needs of the students who are working full-time. All courses are conducted online; each course is seven weeks asynchronous. The online platform does not require campus interaction with faculty or fellow students.

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

NU 952	<i>Public and Population Health Nursing Theory and Practice</i>
NU 953	<i>Public and Global Health Policy, Politics, and Progress</i>
NU 954	<i>Essentials of Evidence-Based Practice in Public and Population Health</i>
NU 955	<i>Epidemiology and Population Health</i>
NU 956	<i>Informatics and Data Science for Population and Public Health</i>
NU 957	<i>Public and Population Health Nursing Leadership</i>
NU 958	<i>Global Perspectives on Health and Environment</i>
NU 959	<i>Genetics and Genomics in Public and Population Health</i>
NU 962	<i>Program Planning and Evaluation for Public and Population Health</i>
NU 963	<i>Population-Based Public Health Nursing Interventions</i>
NU 964	<i>Applied Project in Public and Population Health</i>

*Note: NU 963 and NU 964 are the last two courses in the program.*

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

## **Clinical Practicum for the Population/Public Health Nursing Program of Study**

Please refer to the ***Population/Public Health Online Practicum Handbook***. This handbook also includes information on required background checks, health clearances, other requirements, and associated fees.

# **Nurse Educator Program of Study**

## **Nurse Educator Program of Study Overview:**

Nurse educators are the key resource in preparing a nursing workforce that will provide quality care to meet the healthcare needs of our population. They practice in academic and clinical settings and must be competent clinicians. However, while being a good clinician is essential, it is not sufficient for the educator role.

The Nurse Educator Specialty track is designed to expand the knowledge base of registered professional nurses to prepare them for the role of nurse educator in four areas:

- Higher education
- Vocational education
- Staff education
- Patient Education

The program will provide theoretical and practical knowledge in the areas of curriculum development, instructional design, advanced teaching methods, and program evaluation.

## **Outcomes for the Nurse Educator Program of Study:**

Upon successful completion of the Worcester State University graduate program in Nursing Education, graduates are prepared to:

- Integrate knowledge from the science of nursing and other disciplines to achieve the highest quality professional nursing practice.
- Provide evidence-based, person-centered care that focuses on persons as holistic beings. Person-centered care emphasizes the individual's unique needs, values and preferences and promotes mutual collaboration, active engagement, and empowerment.
- Collaborate with communities, public health agencies, practice partners, and other stakeholders to promote wellness, prevent disease, address social determinants of health, and ensure equitable health outcomes for diverse populations.
- Integrate the best available evidence into nursing practice in academic, clinical, and/or research settings to advance health through the delivery of expert nursing care to diverse populations.
- Analyze performance metrics to enhance nursing practice through the application of safety principles and improvement science on individual and systems levels.
- Collaborate as a key stakeholder in an interprofessional environment to effectively impact resource allocation, institutional support, and successful partnerships across different cohorts or settings.
- Coordinate resources that ensure the delivery of safe, high-quality, and equitable care to diverse populations within complex systems of healthcare.
- Use technology and informatics to improve care, gather data, and make decisions to support professional growth and ensure adherence to standards for safe, high-quality healthcare delivery.

- Establish a professional nursing identity characterized by competence, accountability, collaboration, and behavior aligned with core nursing values.
- Engage in practices that promote personal wellbeing, reflection, lifelong learning, and development as a nurse leader.

In addition to the knowledge and practice components of the outcomes listed above, the behavior of graduate students should reflect an internally consistent value system. Graduates are expected to value scientific inquiry as a basis for professional practice and seek to increase their contributions to the nursing profession.

**Nurse Educator Program of Study:** The Nurse Educator Specialty curriculum is based on the practice dimensions of the nurse educator role, recommendations of the National League for Nursing (NLN), and the AACN Essentials of Master's Education (2011). Graduates of the Nurse Educator Specialty track are eligible to sit for the NLN Certified Nurse Educator®. Graduates of the Nurse Educator Specialty track are eligible to sit for the National League for Nursing Certified Nurse Educator Novice, Certified Nurse Educator, and Certified Academic Clinical Nurse Educator certification examinations. With appropriate experience, graduates are also eligible to sit for the Nursing Professional Development Certification (NPD-BC) examination.

The curriculum includes coursework related to patient simulation strategies, as well as other emerging technologies and related teaching methodologies to improve education outcomes.

## **Nurse Educator Program: Required Courses for the Master of Science Degree in Nursing**

*To be taken at the beginning of the program*

NU 908 Professional Role Development: Philosophical & Curricular Development in Nursing Education

*Additional required courses*

NU 920 Conceptual Foundations of Nursing

NU 925 Research for Evidence-Based Practice (must take NU 946 before taking NU 925)

NU 951 Nursing Leadership and Administration

NU 930 Social Policy and the Economics of the Health Care Delivery System

NU 946 Biostatistics (this must be taken before NU 925)

NU 937 Advanced Health Assessment

NU 938 Advanced Concepts in Physiology and Pathophysiology

NU 939 Advanced Concepts in Pharmacology

*To be taken at the end of the program*

NU 942 Practicum in Teaching and Learning I – 60 practicum hrs. (4 credits)

NU 943 Practicum in Teaching and Learning II - 65 practicum hrs. (4 credits)

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

## **Clinical Practicum for Nurse Educator Program of Study**

Please refer to the Nurse Educator Online Practicum Handbook. This handbook also includes information on required background checks, health clearances, other requirements, and associated fees.

## **Master of Science Programs: Nursing Policies Population/Public Health Nursing & Nurse Educator Tracks**

### **Academic Dismissal Appeal Procedure**

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

1. 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 the Graduate Education Council to review academic records.
2. The Graduate Council will consider the appeal at its next meeting.
3. In a written response to the student, the Council will outline the conditions and rationale of its action:
  - a. If the appeal is granted, the Council will outline the conditions of reinstatement and time frame for program continuation/completion
  - b. If the appeal is denied, the student is administratively withdrawn from the program; he/she may not re-apply to the same program and cannot apply for re-admission to another program for 12 months.
4. A second dismissal for academic deficiency is not subject to appeal.
5. academic standing evaluation will occur after each semester/session.

### **Non-Academic Dismissal Appeal Procedure**

After the Dean has sent the decision of the Graduate School 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 someone else's work 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; "self-plagiarism:" submitting, copying, or substantially restating the work of oneself in an oral or written work without citing the appropriate source; collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging that contribution; copying the answers of another student in an examination; purchasing written documents and representing them as your own; using artificial intelligence (like ChatGPT) to produce written work without explicit permission of the course instructor. Worcester State University will not tolerate plagiarism or cheating in the classroom in any fashion. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and unawareness is not an acceptable justification. The instructor may fail the student or enforce another appropriate penalty concerning academic dishonesty. All papers will be submitted through Safe Assign, a plagiarism detection service.

## **Academic and Professional Integrity**

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

Expected ethical behavior in practicum situations is based on the American Nurses' Association *Code of Ethics for Nurses*. Students are expected to protect patients'/students' confidentiality and to be honest in any documentation regarding the patients'/students' condition and their assessments and interventions. Students are expected to maintain high professional standards, including physically, intellectually, emotionally, and academically prepared when caring for patients or interacting with students.

## **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 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:** 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 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.

### **Admission Criteria**

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

- Have achieved a GPA of 2.75 in undergraduate study. Applicants may seek conditional admission with a GPA of 2.5 if they have demonstrated substantive growth as a professional nurse.
- Have a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from an accredited program.
- Hold a current unencumbered license to practice professional nursing in one of the states where practicum is approved, which include MA, RI, CT, ME, NH, NY, SC, and PA (contact nursing@worchester.edu if you would like to complete the practicum in another state).

### **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 communicate with their program coordinator/academic advisor for academic advising if they have questions regarding planning 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.

### **Blood Borne Pathogen Policy.**

All Worcester State University (WSU) nursing students must comply 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 acknowledgment 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 pathogens (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 Handbook entitled "Agency Health Requirements for Clinical Placement."
2. All students will be educated regarding current OSHA guidelines for preventing occupational exposure to BBP and using universal precautions during orientation. In addition, universal precautions and personal protective equipment (PPE) are 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"> <li>● Remove Contacts</li> <li>● Immediately flush with cold water for 15 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Flush vigorously with cold water for 15 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Immediately flush and wash thoroughly with soap and water</li> </ul>

### 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 tests 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 healthcare 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 a 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 and the facility incident report (Appendix A).
7. Follow up health services as instructed by the 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.

### **Celebration of Scholarship and Creativity**

Students are encouraged to present their scholarly work at Worcester State's annual Celebration of Scholarship and Creativity, held every April:

<https://www.worcester.edu/academics/additional-learning-opportunities/scholarship-research/celebration-of-scholarship-creativity/> In particular, work from NU 920, NU 925, NU 963, and NU 964 may be amenable to presentation. Students who are interested should speak with their course faculty member about this possibility.

### **Career Services**

Career Services offers students and alumni resume and cover letter critiques, assistance in preparing a portfolio, guidance on doctoral studies, mock interview practice, and career guidance and planning. Additional information can be found at

<https://www.worcester.edu/campus-life/student-services/career-services/student-and-alumni-services/>

### **Counseling Services**

Counseling services are available to matriculated graduate students free of charge via two avenues of approach — on-campus clinicians (available during regular business hours and on-call after hours) and “Resilient U” (services accessible anywhere, anytime). Counseling services can support you while you resolve a psychosocial issue, enhance your personal growth, and strengthen your academic skills and performance. Additional information can be found at

<https://www.worcester.edu/campus-life/counseling-services/>

### **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.

Only the higher of the two grades for a repeated course is computed in the cumulative GPA. A course may be repeated only once. Both the old and the new grades 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 be able 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 "Holder Signature" line must be signed. eCard is also acceptable; 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 a letter stating course completion from the provider. A new requirement will be created for you to upload your certification card within 30 days.

### **Drug Screen Policy:**

Refer to Appendix E

### **Email**

The student is responsible for obtaining and maintaining a Worcester State University email account ([www.worcester.edu](http://www.worcester.edu)). There is no charge for the account. Your admission information 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 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 several surveys. Around the time of graduation, students are expected to evaluate the curriculum of the Master of Science Program in the Exit Survey. These surveys provide information to help the plan for future students and strengthen the program.

## **Governance of Master's Program: Student Participation Opportunity**

We value student input into the Master's program. Formal participation in program governance is available to students through membership in the Graduate Program Committee (GPC), on which at least two students sit are non-voting members. Not only does membership in the GPC allow student input into the program, but it also provides valuable professional leadership/service experience to be noted on the student's resume/CV. Students may be eligible for NU 942 and/or 943 practicum hours for their service on the GPC. Students interested in serving on the GPC should contact their Program Coordinator. Informal avenues for student input are available through conversations with student representatives on the Graduate Program Committee faculty, staff, and the Program Coordinator (whether via phone, Zoom, email, or other means). From time to time, the Program Coordinator may offer "open houses" for students to drop in and converse about the program with the coordinator and other students.

## **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
U	<70	0.0

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

## **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.

## **Grade Appeals**

The Nursing Department adheres to the Graduate School-wide appeal procedure outlined in

the Graduate School catalog. 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**

Before invoking 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 inconsistent with the stated grading policy.

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

#### **Step 1**

Within ten working days of the availability of the grade in question, the student shall request a meeting with the instructor in writing. 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 receiving 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 receiving 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.

## Graduation

Students must complete all specified coursework 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 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.

## Group Work

Group projects are included as part of the required coursework for several courses. Working in groups poses challenges, but this is an important real-life skill that allows for deeper learning for all group participants. When group work is required, all group members are expected to contribute equally to the final product and to communicate promptly with other group members. If a conflict arises within the group, group members are expected to attempt to address the conflict with each other as a first step. If a resolution does not occur, the course faculty member should be notified, and they may request a meeting with the group members. Faculty notification of potential group conflict or unequal participation must be made before the due date for any group project. Additional tips for working in groups can be found at [https://uwaterloo.ca/student-success/sites/ca.student-success/files/uploads/files/TipSheet\\_GroupWork\\_0.pdf](https://uwaterloo.ca/student-success/sites/ca.student-success/files/uploads/files/TipSheet_GroupWork_0.pdf)

## 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**, and any students attending on a student visa are required to submit proof of immunization to Worcester State University Student Health Services. Please note this is separate from the Department of Nursing requirements. Additional details can be found in the graduate catalog: [catalog.worcester.edu](http://catalog.worcester.edu)

**\* Health requirements for the nursing tracks must be met in addition to any University requirements (see Practicum Handbook).**

Generally, students are required to have:

- Annual Physical Exam
- Annual Tuberculin Skin Test- 2-step test
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) two doses or titers verifying immunity to each



- Hepatitis B vaccine and quantitative positive titer.
  - Tetanus/Diphtheria or Tdap booster within 10 years
  - Varicella titer or vaccine (two doses)
  - Seasonal influenza vaccine
  - COVID-19 initial vaccine series and initial booster fully completed; seasonal COVID boosters may be required at the discretion of individual sites, and this will be communicated by the Clinical Resource Coordinator.
- Additional details can be found once a student registers for the Castle Branch tracking system. Any questions about health requirements should be directed to the Clinical Resource Coordinator (508-929-2483 or AOPcoordinator@worchester.edu)

## **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 the requirements of any graduate degree program. The students are responsible for completing independent study contracts (available in the Office of Graduate Studies), along with required signatures, and filing 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 if the student 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; this calendar may be found at <https://www.worcester.edu/academics/catalogs-calendars/>. If the requirements are not met within the appropriate period, the incomplete will automatically become a “U,” which is recorded on the student’s permanent record. An extension of an incomplete for one semester may be granted if circumstances prevent the student from completing the course. In such cases, the student is responsible for obtaining the professor’s approval, and the student must notify the Registrar in writing of his/her approval before the end of the initial six-week period. With regard to the extension of an incomplete grade, the student must complete the required coursework before the beginning of the final examination period of the semester immediately following the one in which the incomplete was originally issued. The instructor will have five working days to submit a final grade to the Registrar.

## **Information Technology**

Worcester State's Information Technology (IT) goal is to support teaching and learning through technology. Please note IT's hours and services here: <https://www.worcester.edu/information-technology/> . IT can also be reached at 508-929-8856.

## **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, a student may be granted an extension at the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education's discretion. Approved leave time is not counted against allowable program length. Students found in violation of the drug screen policy (see Appendix E) do not qualify for a leave of absence.

## **Library**

Online students have the same access to the university library as those on campus. The library offers a wealth of information and services to help you with your academic work.

### **Find Library Materials**

The WSU Library provides access to a wide variety of full-text online resources, including e-books, article databases, journals, newspapers, and magazines via the Library's website.

E-Books - search title, author, or subject keywords through the HELM Catalog.

Journals, newspapers, or magazines

Course E-Reserves

Subject Guides - access article databases by subject: Nursing

Off-campus Access: EZ Proxy allows authorized users to access licensed resources off-campus without installing additional software.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL): Articles and book chapters not available from the library may be obtainable from other libraries <https://www.worcester.edu/Interlibrary-Loan-Desk/>

### **Get Help from a Librarian**

WSU librarians can help you identify research strategies, develop research questions, search for sources, and citation information via email/online form, phone, videoconferencing, or chat through the Ask Us research help page.

Subject librarians can provide in-depth research consultation when needed:

Nursing librarian: William Lundmark, [wlundmark@worchester.edu](mailto:wlundmark@worchester.edu) or 509-929-8897

### **Library Online Tutorials**

Library Online Tutorials can help you learn the basics at your own pace. The topics include how to find a variety of library resources and how to use some essential library services.

### **Professional Liability Insurance and Licensure**

Before participating in fieldwork/clinical practicum, graduate students are required to upload evidence of current unencumbered licensure to practice as a registered nurse and documentation of current professional liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000 to Castle Branch.

### **Portfolio for Masters of Science in Nursing Degree**

You will be required to develop a professional e-portfolio. This e-portfolio may be used for subsequent employment interviews and in the application process for a doctoral program.

The e-portfolio is a purposeful collection of your work that illustrates efforts, progress, and achievement in one or more areas over time.

Your 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. Your working portfolio will be a collection of evidence indicating how learning or skills acquisition is taking place throughout your program of study.

### **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 the plan for the student and the Graduate Admissions and Progression Committee to complete the academic requirements for the Master of Science in Nursing degree. The official Program of Study reflects the course work that 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.

## Registration

Registration for graduate nursing classes is accomplished online through Self Service (selfservice.worcester.edu) during the periods indicated by Department of Graduate and Continuing Education (DCGE). It is essential that students register for courses in a timely fashion to ensure that desired courses are available and because undersubscribed courses (<4 students) may be canceled.

A schedule of classes for the next semester will be posted on Self-Service. Students are advised to consult with their Master of Science in Nursing Program Coordinator to plan appropriately. The following websites contain planned course offerings for the next several years:

*Public/Population Health:* Worcester-State-University-Accelerated-Online-Graduate-Public-and-Population-Health-Program-Four-Year-Course-Offerings\_June2021.pdf

*Nurse Educator:* <https://webcdn.worcester.edu/continuing-education/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2023/02/Nurse-educator-two-year-planning-guide.pdf>

## 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 Contact Information

Graduate students are responsible for keeping a **current address and telephone number** on file with the department administrative assistant, graduate program coordinator, and the Department of Graduate and Continuing Education. It is important that students receive mail from both the department and the 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 to the Student Accessibility Services Office (SAS) to receive special services. Once documentation has been filed with SAS, that office will advise the student of services available on campus. SAS will also advise faculty on the conditions and accommodations that should be allowed. Students with disabilities challenged by traditional teaching styles must be known to their advisors and/or individual course faculty. Faculty members are expected to assist such students in adapting class assignments and examinations if reasonable and appropriate. Without notification from the SAS, no faculty member is required to make accommodations for a student.

## 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 letter's first line or email's subject line should indicate that the student is seeking a formal resolution for a concern. In the letter or email, the student shall include (1) the student's name, date, email address, and phone number; (2) a detailed description of the concern; and (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 for 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.

### **Recording and Photography**

Recording devices and camera use must be approved by the faculty member before use in the classroom setting (virtual or in person). 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 two years immediately before 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.

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 rare instances, ***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.

### **Writing Center**

A Writing Center is on campus, available for students needing writing assistance. Online help is available. The Writing Center has a wide collection of resource material on a wide range of technology-based subjects. The Writing Center is typically available in the Spring and Fall semesters only.

### **Written 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. The course syllabus and/or faculty indicate that resubmissions are subject to point deduction.

Unless the course faculty specifically indicates otherwise, all written work must be submitted as a Word document.

Coursework will be submitted at the times specified on the course syllabus or guidelines. Faculty, at their discretion, may allow an extension of the time. Whenever possible, a request for a time extension should be made before the coursework's due date. 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 the course syllabus for written work guidelines.

## 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 in Central Massachusetts:

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

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 at [wchadbourne@worcester.edu](mailto:wchadbourne@worcester.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 at [wchadbourne@worcester.edu](mailto:wchadbourne@worcester.edu).

## Important Telephone Numbers

Bookstore	(508) 754-3448
Bursar	(508) 929-8051
Campus Police Department	(508) 929-8044
Emergency	(508) 929-8911
Information	(508) 929-8886
Counseling 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
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.*



## **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

Appendices B-E are required to be signed by the students and

## 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/device? \_\_\_\_\_ was the needle/syringe equipped with a safety?
- € 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? \_\_\_\_\_  
Did the site create an incident report? \_\_\_\_\_ (Please attach copy)

Were 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 not, 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 the event: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Report:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B**

### **BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT FORM**

Students must sign and return this form before any fieldwork/practicum placement affiliated with their educational preparation at Worcester State University Nursing Program. The policies have been developed for your safety and the clients you care for. You are also following requirements in the Department of Nursing, the Department 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.

## 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. Respect 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. Demonstrating these competencies is essential for passing any clinical or didactic course. **Any student 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 required for all nursing courses. I agree that successfully demonstrating these competencies is essential for passing any graduate nursing course at Worcester State University."

## **Appendix D**

### **Acknowledgment 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 2024-2025 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.**

## Appendix E

### **DRUG SCREEN TESTING POLICY**

The Department of Nursing is committed to educating professional nurses and must provide safe and effective care for our clients. We are also obligated to comply with various clinical requirements of those agencies we contract. 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 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 for which 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 a specimen).
- Drug screening is ordered online through Castle Branch at students' expense. When you register for testing, you will be given the location of a Quest Diagnostics 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 Castle Branch account. You will receive an email that your chain of custody form is ready to print. You will need to print the e-chain and take it with you to do the test. Testing must occur at the facility designated by the Castle Branch.
- 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 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 at 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 authorizes the release of the drug test results in accordance with this policy.

- Your drug screening results will be posted to your Castle Branch account. The Department of Nursing will have access to the results.
- When the final report is posted to your Castle Branch 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 that Castle Branch notifies students via email the day results are posted. The students are responsible for logging into their Castle Branch account to view results when they are notified. Retesting timeframes are based on Castle Branch notifications (timestamped and recorded electronically).**

**Negative Test Result:**

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

**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 student's 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 the original instructions for ordering a drug screen. Retesting must occur at the facility designated by Castle Branch and at the student's expense.
- **Dispute Testing of Positive Results:** Students have the right to dispute positive results. Castle Branch will create a new package and contact students for consent and payment for dispute testing at the student's request. The original specimen is retested. Currently, the cost for dispute testing is \$250 (subject to change) 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 that may impair their performance. Students in a clinical setting are required to be aware of the effect that all medications may have on performance. They must notify their instructor and receive confirmation of approval to attend clinical assignments before attending the clinical setting.*

**Effective: January 1, 2020**

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

By signing below

I \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that I have received a copy of the WSU Dept. of Nursing Drug Testing Policy, which explains that if a site requires drug testing, 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. 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.

## **Appendix F**

### **Current Mission and Vision Statement.**

The following mission and vision statements remain in effect until the new statements are approved. Notification will be sent once approval is finalized.

### **Department of Nursing Mission Statement.**

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 services 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 healthcare 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 Statement.**

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