

**COLLEGE OF NURSING & HEALTH
SCIENCES**

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2015-2016

Handbook Overview

The Graduate Student handbook has been developed to provide information and guidance.

The Handbook contains policies and procedures related to the graduate nursing program. Additional policies and procedures are described in The University of Vermont Graduate Catalogue, the Cat's Tale, and official publications directed to students in the Department of Nursing, all graduate programs and the Graduate College. Students are held accountable for policies and procedures described in these official publications.

Students will be advised if any changes occur in the graduate program. For general announcements and messages, students should frequently check their UVM email account. Questions regarding policies and procedures should be directed to your advisor or Department Chair.

Disclosure Statement

The Department of Nursing, subject to and consistent with the policies of The University of Vermont, reserves the right to make changes in course offerings and degree requirements as educational and financial considerations require. Students are responsible for staying abreast of current policies.

Note: There is a separate handbook for students in the undergraduate program

Contact Information

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Department of Nursing Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Nursing reflects the mission of the University. The University mission, "...is to create and share knowledge. UVM prepares its students to live productive, responsible, and creative lives through a high quality liberal education. As a research university, UVM endorses the intrinsic value of the creation of new knowledge and promotes the application of relevant knowledge to benefit the State of Vermont and society as a whole. As a research university, UVM is distinguished by the comprehensiveness of its academic mission, its range of graduate and undergraduate programs and its commitment to research-based lifelong learning. As a community of scholars, students, both undergraduate and graduate, are involved in the generation of knowledge. As a member of its local and global community, the University has an obligation to share its knowledge, to assist with relevant applications of that knowledge, and to understand and respond to a changing and diverse world" (UVM Catalogue, online at www.uvm.edu/catalogue).

The mission of the Department of Nursing is derived from its philosophy and it reflects the faculty's assessment of current and projected health needs of people everywhere and the role of the nursing profession in meeting these needs. The Department of Nursing's mission is: 1) to prepare qualified individuals for professional and advanced nursing practice, 2) to improve the quality of nursing education and service, and 3) to improve the quality of health and health care.

The Department of Nursing carries out its mission of preparing qualified individuals for professional and advanced nursing practice by offering the following educational programs:

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- RN-BS Program
- Master of Science in Nursing (Primary Care Nurse Practitioner through fall 2014)
- Master of Science in Nursing (Clinical Nurse Leader/CNL)
- Post Masters Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
- Direct Entry Program in Nursing (DEPN)
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (Primary Care Nurse Practitioner)
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (Executive Nurse Leader)

The Department carries out its mission of improving the quality of nursing education and service through the following activities:

1. Research and scholarly activities which contribute to the development of clinical practice, nursing education, and the further development of the science of nursing;
2. Outreach to the community;
3. Participation in local, state, regional, and national nursing organizations;
4. Provision of consultation to agencies providing nursing care and nursing education.

The Department carries out its mission of improving the quality of health and health care through the following activities:

1. Preparing qualified individuals for nursing practice at entry and graduate levels;
2. Undertaking research and scholarly activities which contribute to the improvement of health care;
3. Participation in the activities of health related organizations;
4. Educating consumers of health care.

Philosophy of the Department of Nursing

University of Vermont

Our goal is to enhance the health of a complex pluralistic society through research and the preparation of exemplary practitioners. As a faculty we believe learning, discovery, and engagement are life-long processes. Nursing practice evolves in response to the health needs of a global society and transcends cultural and national boundaries. Health is a dynamic process that involves the interplay of individuals, families, and communities with their environments—economic, social, political, built, and natural—and is filtered through and shaped by health values and beliefs. Health values, in turn, are influenced by personal, spiritual, cultural, and societal beliefs and practices.

Updated 6/2010; reviewed 2014

Academic Integrity

The University of Vermont, Department of Nursing is a learning community. Consistent with its mission, purpose, and values the Department of Nursing seeks to foster within its community, it is expected that academic honesty and integrity guide the actions of all of its members. It is the responsibility of every person in the academic community to ensure that dishonesty is not tolerated. Academic dishonesty (cheating and/or plagiarism) violates the Academic Honesty Policy and may result in an “F” on the work involved or in the course. Cheating not only violates the Academic Honesty Policy, but also may be grounds for probation, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Code of Academic Integrity <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/acadintegrity.pdf>

Communications

Email

All students will have an UVM email account. This is the major mode of communication utilized by faculty and staff in the department.

Students are expected to use their UVM email account for **all** UVM correspondence.

Failure to read emails sent from faculty/staff, Nursing Department, Graduate College, CNHS, or UVM does not excuse students from adhering to deadlines, assignments, requests, etc.

Graduate Student List Serv

This is an electronic list serve for graduate nursing students and is maintained by the graduate program staff. Students are automatically added when they are admitted and removed when they graduate. It is a means for communication among the students and to receive pertinent information. Faculty cannot access this listserv. Your UVM email is the method of communication between faculty and students.

It is your responsibility to check your UVM email daily.

Academic Calendar

The Academic Calendar for 2015-2016:

http://www.uvm.edu/~rgweb/?Page=importantdates/i_ac1516.html&SM=i_menu.html

The Graduate Program in Nursing

Introduction

The faculty believes that graduate education in nursing is characterized by intellectual inquiry and critical analysis focused on theory, practice, and research in preparation for advanced nursing practice. The faculty strives to provide an environment which responds to individual learning needs.

The graduate program in nursing at The University of Vermont prepares professional nurses to assume leadership roles within the discipline of nursing, to expand nursing knowledge, and to develop expertise in a specialized area of nursing. The master's program provides the foundation for doctoral study and continued professional development.

Master of Science End of Program Competencies

Graduates of the program are able to:

1. Make clinical and organizational decisions to change and improve practice by critically evaluating research and clinical evidence.
2. Enhance quality of care through use of information technologies.
3. Contribute to the improvement of health care delivery using knowledge of policy, organizational structure and behavior, and health care financing.
4. Incorporate personal, organizational and societal perspectives into ethical decision-making.
5. Contribute to the profession of nursing and to the delivery of health care through competent application of roles inherent in master's prepared/advanced practice nursing.
6. Assume accountability for the quality of one's own professional practice.
7. Incorporate relevant theories from nursing and other related disciplines into one's own practice based upon critical evaluation of their relevance and utility.
8. Provide culturally competent health care for individuals, families, and populations based on an understanding of the impact of diversity, culture, and society on health status and decisions.
9. Promote health and disease prevention in individuals, families, and populations by critically examining evidence and relevant theoretical models.

Approved Graduate Education Committee 4/21/05

Doctor of Nursing Practice End of Program Competencies

At the completion of the DNP program, graduates will be able to:

1. Use conceptual and analytical skills in evaluating the links among factors that affect health.
2. Demonstrate leadership in the development and implementation of institutional, local, state, federal, and/or international health policy.
3. Evaluate care delivery models and/or strategies using concepts related to population health, and its cultural and socioeconomic dimensions.
4. Employ collaborative and leadership skills to create change in healthcare and complex healthcare delivery systems.
5. Ensure accountability for quality of health care and safety for populations with whom they work.
6. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of information systems/technology resources to implement quality improvement initiatives and support practice and administrative decision-making.
7. Develop and evaluate nursing practice approaches integrating nursing and the foundational sciences based on theories from nursing and other disciplines.
8. Demonstrate proficiency in the generation, application, and evaluation of knowledge.
9. Demonstrate advanced levels of clinical judgment, systems thinking and accountability in designing, delivering, and evaluating evidence-based care to improve health outcomes.
10. Advocate for social justice, equity, and ethics within all healthcare arenas.

Approved by Graduate Education Committee 5/12/11

Academic Advisement and Advising Resources

Upon admission each student is assigned a faculty advisor to assist in program planning. An advisor may be changed at the discretion of the chair, the faculty member or the student. Requests for change of advisor should be made to the Graduate Program Assistant.

Advisement is the responsibility of both the student and faculty. Students are encouraged to initiate a meeting with their advisor each semester to discuss progression and graduation requirements, changes in courses and for guidance in elective course selection as needed. In addition, students can seek advice from their advisors regarding personal issues/stressors that are negatively impacting course work. Advisors are available either during scheduled office hours or by appointment throughout the academic year to discuss issues or questions advisees may have.

The *Learning Cooperative* represents an additional advising resource. The Learning Co-op supplements the academic environment by providing developmental instruction in writing, reading, and study skills. As well, the Co-op maintains a campus-wide tutoring program. An appointment can be made by calling 656-4075.

Additional advising resources are described in the most current UVM Online Catalogue, online at: <http://www.uvm.edu/academics/>

Classroom Code of Conduct

Faculty and students will at all times conduct themselves in a manner that serves to maintain, promote, and enhance the high quality academic environment befitting The University of Vermont. To this end, it is expected that all members of the learning community will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Faculty and students will attend all regularly scheduled classes, except for those occasions warranting an excused absence under the policy detailed in the catalogue (e.g., religious, athletic and medical).
2. Students and faculty will arrive prepared for class and on time, and they will remain in class until the class is dismissed.
3. Faculty and students will treat all members of the learning community with respect. Toward this end they will promote academic discourse and the free exchange of ideas by listening with civil attention to comments made by all individuals.
4. Students and faculty will maintain an appropriate academic climate by refraining from all actions which disrupt the learning environment (e.g., making noise, cell phones ringing, ostentatiously not paying attention, and leaving and re-entering the classroom inappropriately).

Note-Taking Policy

On November 10, 1999, the Faculty Senate adopted the following motion to be effective spring semester 2000: The taking of notes during a scheduled class of a scheduled University of Vermont course for the purpose of selling the notes or other commercial purpose is prohibited without the express written permission of the professor(s) who teach the course.

Code of Academic Integrity

Please refer to: <http://www.uvm.edu/~dledford/academicintegrity.pdf>

Overview of the Curriculum for the Graduate Program

The Master of Science degree (for students admitted in the Primary Care track before fall of 2015 and all CNL students) or the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree is awarded upon successful completion of requirements through full or part-time study. The major components of the graduate curriculum are designated as core courses, track courses, electives, and a project. Track courses focus on either primary care (MS and Doctor of Nursing Practice) or patient care coordination (MS Clinic Nurse Leader).

Electives may be non-nursing or nursing graduate courses. Consideration of non-nursing electives is encouraged as it provides the student with additional opportunities to study with students in other disciplines.

The comprehensive examination is a University requirement. The oral examination provides the student with the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the core content of the program. [See Comprehensive Examination Guidelines.](#)

MS- Nurse practitioner students will complete a Project or a Thesis. The culminating experience for the student choosing the thesis is to conduct a research-related activity with faculty supervision. The culminating experience for the student choosing the master's project is to develop and implement a project in a health care related setting. *The thesis option is only available for the final MS-NP cohort completing in December 2016.*

MS- Clinical Nurse Leader students will complete a CNL Project in which they develop and implement a project in a health care related setting.

DNP- students will complete a DNP Project in which they develop and implement a project in a health care related setting.

Many of the major nursing courses have both a theoretical and a laboratory or practicum component. Credit allocation for class, laboratory, and practicum components of courses is described below:

One credit is equivalent to 1 class hour/week.

One credit is equivalent to 2 laboratory hours/week.

One credit is equivalent to 120 hours/semester.

Links to Graduate Program Curriculum

MS Nurse Practitioner

http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/nursing/?Page=graduate_ms.html

MS Clinical Nurse Leader

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/nursing/?Page=cnl.html>

Direct Entry Program in Nursing (DEPN)

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/nursing/?Page=depn.html>

Doctor of Nursing Practice

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/nursing/?Page=dnpr.html>

Post Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice

http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/nursing/?Page=post_masters_dnp.html

Please Note: In keeping with evolving national accreditation standards, the Master of Science (MS) program for nurse practitioners in primary care offered by the Department of Nursing has transitioned to the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program and has accepted its final entering class in fall 2014. Students in the final MS class are expected to complete the program on a full-time basis in December 2016. DNP Program information is available on the Department of Nursing Home page: <http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/nursing/>

APA Format Guidelines

The American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines are used for the preparation of all papers required for GRNS courses unless otherwise specified by the professor. Students should purchase the current edition of *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.)*. Washington, DC, at the beginning of their graduate studies.

Practicum Experiences

The majority of your track (AGNP and FNP) courses have both a theoretical and practicum component. These practicum experiences may be located throughout the state of Vermont or in other select states at student request. Students are expected to have at least one rotation at a rural site outside of Chittenden County. As well, it should be noted that some practicum experiences may occur during the evening hours or weekends. Inherent in practicum experiences is the risk of exposure to infectious diseases. Students should maintain at a minimum, standard precautions in all settings to minimize the likelihood of occurrence. Satisfactory completion of practicum objectives is required prior to progression in the program.

Student Mandatories

As a CNHS graduate student, you are required to complete the CNHS Pre-Clinical Mandatories, prior to first clinical course. Students must keep these requirements current throughout their program. Since each clinical site has different requirements, it is essential to be compliant with this process. As a graduate student, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are up to date with all pre-clinical requirements (example: making sure that your CPR certification is current). Aside from being required before clinical experiences, the CNHS Mandatories keep you healthy and safe for your future profession.

Complete details on CNHS Mandatories are online at:

http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/?Page=student_services/gradmandatories.html

The immunization and serology work takes time. You may need a booster and you may need to re-titer. Allow yourself ample time to complete this process and schedule your health care provider appointments by planning ahead.

Confidentiality

All clients have a right to confidentiality regarding their health status and their interactions within the health care system. Students must engage in professionally responsible communication in practicum and classroom settings. When presenting cases or using an example from your practicum experience to express a concept, you are to maintain the confidentiality of your clients and not disclose any identifying information.

Health Insurance

The University does not pay medical costs resulting from injury during practicum rotations or other curricular activity unless this injury is due to negligence of the University. All nursing students should carry their own health insurance.

Student Attire

Graduate students should be cognizant of the fact that they are representing the nursing profession and The University of Vermont Department of Nursing while engaging in practicum experiences. With this in mind, students are asked to present a professional appearance and demeanor. A UVM name tag indicating your student role is to be worn in all clinical and laboratory settings. Students' names are given to the UVM Bookstore and name tags are ordered after students pre-pay for them.

DEPN Pre-licensure Year:

- When providing patient care:
 - Wine colored scrubs with UVM patch sewn on left sleeve
 - Neutral colored hosiery
 - Closed toe and heel white shoes (may wear white sneakers)
 - Plain white, black or wine colored short sleeved T-shirt
 - UVM name tag
 - White or wine colored “warm-up jacket” with UVM patch sewn on left sleeve or white lab coat with UVM patch sewn on left sleeve
 - No visible tattoos
 - Long hair pulled back
 - Jewelry
 - One ring/hand
 - One post earring/ear
 - No nose, lip or facial piercings
 - Watch with second hand
- Non-direct care experiences:
 - Business casual attire (no jeans, short skirts, t-shirts with logos or low necklines)
 - Coordinating hosiery
 - Closed toe and heel shoes
 - Knee length white lab coat with UVM patch sewn on left arm
 - UVM name tag
 - No visible tattoos
 - Jewelry
 - One ring/hand
 - One post earring/ear
 - No nose, lip or facial piercings
 - Watch with second hand

Candidacy Requirements

Acceptance to candidacy for the degree is granted to those students who have met all prerequisites for the graduate degree program and all of the Department of Nursing requirements for candidacy. Under most circumstances, meeting the requirements for admission will allow advancement to candidacy. Students who appear to be marginal in meeting admission requirements may be required to complete selected course work before acceptance as a degree candidate.

Graduation Requirements

The minimum requirements for the graduate programs are successful completion of:

- Core, track, and elective courses
- Comprehensive Examination
- MS Project or Thesis, CNL Project, or DNP Project

UVM Graduate College Time limits for Graduate Degree Completion:

Master's Degree - 5 years from matriculation

Doctoral Degree - 9 years from matriculation

Certificate of Graduate Study - 5 years from matriculation (all courses)

All courses applied towards the degree must be taken within 7 years for master's degrees, 9 years for doctorates. Individual departments may set deadlines within these time limits.

Department of Nursing Graduate Grading Policy

1. Students are expected to earn a final grade of B or better in graduate courses. If a student earns two grades of B- or any grade lower than a B-, it is grounds for dismissal.
2. Students are required to earn a satisfactory grade in clinical. An unsatisfactory grade in a clinical course is grounds for dismissal.

Department of Nursing Graduate Completion Policy

1. In order to graduate, all program requirements must be met within one academic semester of completion of final practicum.

UVM Graduate College

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gradcoll/>

Please refer to the Graduate College for important information on different policies applicable to Graduate Students including (but not limited to) grading policy, leaves of absence and rights and responsibilities of graduate students.

Comprehensive Examination

The Comprehensive Examination is conducted by the Graduate Program in the Department of Nursing. The examination is designed to allow the student to demonstrate analysis¹ and synthesis² of knowledge gained through the program. Students should take the examination as soon as possible after the core courses have been successfully completed. The Comprehensive Exam must be completed prior to the final track courses and practicums.

Students are expected to respond orally to specific questions provided to the student two weeks prior to the exam date. Questions will be formulated by Graduate Faculty on the Comprehensive Exam Committee. The student can expect questions related to:

- Research and relationship to evidence-base practice; research utilization.
- Relationship of nursing theory to nursing research and practice.
- Role dimensions and core characteristics of advanced practice nurses.
- Health care policy and role of the APRN.

Students will provide evidence of written preparation of responses to the Comprehensive Exam questions at the time of the defense:

- Written notes
- Bulleted outline
- APA formatted reference list of citations used during the exam

Criteria for Evaluation

The Comprehensive Examination is rated on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Satisfactory performance requires that in response to the questions, the student demonstrates analysis and synthesis of content addressed throughout the program of study by:

- (1) Addressing fundamental nursing issues with evidence of original arguments and critical judgments, including demonstration of analysis and synthesis;
- (2) Identifying dominant themes of the content;
- (3) Distinguishing relevant from extraneous material;
- (4) Addressing implications for nursing practice, including specialty area;
- (5) Identifying conclusions and supporting rationale;
- (6) Integrating concepts from your program of study, including core and advanced clinical practice specialty courses, in response to the examination questions;
- (7) Organizing and presenting your thinking in a clear and logically consistent manner;
- (8) Appropriate and sufficient number of citations and references.

If the Comprehensive Examination is unsatisfactory, the student will have two weeks to formulate a written response to the original questions. Only one re-examination will be allowed (UVM Graduate College Catalogue, online at www.uvm.edu/catalogue). A satisfactory grade for passing the written re-examination will be in the 'B' range or above.

¹Analysis emphasized the breakdown of information into its constituent parts and the detection of relationships of those parts.

²Synthesis refers to the process of working with elements or parts from many sources and combining them in such a way so as to form a product not clearly there before.

University, CNHS, and Department of Nursing Governance Organizations

There are multiple opportunities for student participation in the governance of the University, the College, and the Department of Nursing. Students may also join the Student Nurse Association and may qualify for Kappa Tau, the UVM Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, the International Nursing Honor Society. Students are strongly encouraged to consider these opportunities and actively participate in this aspect of University life.

In the Department of Nursing, the following committees and organizations seek graduate student participation:

Committee/Organization	Purpose	Membership	Meetings
Graduate Education Committee	Functions as a working group to oversee and make recommendations to the Faculty Organization who are members of the Graduate Faculty in the Graduate College to refine, implement, and evaluate the graduate curriculum.	Five elected faculty members, student representation from the graduate program, and other invited persons with liaison responsibilities.	Monthly during the academic year.
Kappa Tau Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society	The purposes of Kappa Tau are to recognize superior achievement and development of leadership qualities, foster high professional standards, encourage creative work, and strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession.	Graduate nursing students are required to have completed $\frac{1}{4}$ of the program of study. Students in graduate programs are required to achieve a 3.5 GPA on a four-point scale or its equivalent.	Kappa Tau activities occur throughout the semester and are open to all.

Scholarly and Professional Recognition

Honors Day

Honors Day is held each spring to recognize students for excellence in scholarship, leadership, clinical excellence and community service. Information on specific criteria and the nomination process for the following awards can be obtained from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Office of Student Services, Rowell 106.

Kappa Tau Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International: Graduate Student Award

Awarded to a student in the master's program who demonstrates high professional and academic standards. The recipient is selected by graduate faculty.

Kappa Tau Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International: Graduate Student Project Award

Awarded to a graduate nursing student for excellence in his/her project. This student is selected by members of Kappa Tau.

Kappa Tau Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International: Graduate Student Thesis Award

Awarded to a graduate nursing student for excellence in his/her thesis.

Vermont Organization of Nurse Leaders

Award for outstanding leadership is presented to the student graduating from the graduate program who, in the opinion of the faculty, best exemplifies achievements in scholarship, scholarly productivity and leadership for nursing.

UVM Medical Center Award for Innovation in Nursing Practice

Award was established in 1998 by the nurse administrators at FAHC to recognize a graduate student who demonstrates innovation in practice in any setting; and a breakthrough initiative in patient care or patient education, or care coordination across the continuum.

Vermont State Nurses' Association Award

Awarded to a graduate student, who in the opinion of the faculty, best demonstrates outstanding clinical practice.

Special Recognition Awards

Awards may be given to graduating graduate students who demonstrate outstanding achievement in academics, significant University involvement and/or significant community service involvement.