



College of Nursing and Health Sciences  
Department of Nursing

# Graduate Nursing Program Handbook

Academic Year: 2026-2027

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# Handbook Overview

The Graduate Student Handbook serves as a resource for students and faculty, providing information, policies, and guidance to support successful progression to degree completion. Students are required to review the Handbook and attest that they have read and understand its contents.

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 and official publications directed to students in the Department of Nursing, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, 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 are responsible to check the UVM email account daily and throughout the summer. Questions regarding policies and procedures should be initially directed to your academic advisor. Should questions remain please contact the Graduate Program Director 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.

## OFFICES AND DEPARTMENTS

### Dean, College of Nursing & Health Sciences

Dr. Dain LaRoche  
Rowell 105  
Phone: (802) 656-2216  
Email: [Dain.LaRoche@med.uvm.edu](mailto:Dain.LaRoche@med.uvm.edu)

### Graduate Student Services Specialist

Mary Hong  
Rowell 216  
Phone: (802) 656-3452  
Email: [Gradnursing@med.uvm.edu](mailto:Gradnursing@med.uvm.edu)

### Chair, Department of Nursing

Dr. Rosemary Dale  
Rowell 216  
Phone: (802) 656-3830  
Email: [Rosemary.Dale@med.uvm.edu](mailto:Rosemary.Dale@med.uvm.edu)

### CNHS Office of Student Services

Rowell 005  
Phone: (802) 656-3858  
Email: [cnhs@med.uvm.edu](mailto:cnhs@med.uvm.edu)

### Vice Chair / Graduate Program Director

Dr. Jennifer Laurent  
Rowell 204  
Phone: (802) 656-3024  
Email: [Jennifer.Laurent@med.uvm.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Laurent@med.uvm.edu)

### UVM Student Health

1 South Prospect Street  
Phone: (802) 656-3350  
Email: [health@uvm.edu](mailto:health@uvm.edu)

# History of the Department of Nursing

In 1943, the baccalaureate program was established at the University of Vermont. Originally, the program held departmental status within the College of Arts and Sciences and later the College of Education and Nursing. In 1968, the Department of Nursing became the Department of Nursing within the newly formed Division of Health Sciences.

At its inception, the baccalaureate nursing program was five calendar years in length. Over time, it evolved into the current four-year academic program. In so doing, the curriculum of the baccalaureate program has emerged as a model for the campus for its commitment to liberal and professional education.

The demand for change in academic programs throughout the 1960s, precipitated by a knowledge explosion in the health sciences, created new opportunities for the School of Nursing. In 1966, funded by the American Nurses' Foundation, a program in continuing education for nurses was started. As an outcome, registered nurses joined the baccalaureate nursing program starting in 1968. Also notable, 1968 marked the initiation of the second academic program in nursing, the two- year associate degree program.

In 1974, a federally funded certificate nurse practitioner program was begun. This program continued until 1981. In 1988, the Master of Science program was approved by the UVM Board of Trustees, and the first graduate students were admitted to the adult health nursing track. The community health nursing track was added in 1989. In 1996, the primary care track was established with federal funding to prepare nurse practitioners.

In May 1996, the faculty of the School of Nursing closed the associate degree nursing program and focused their energy on the baccalaureate and graduate programs. In addition to expanding the graduate program, an RN- BS-MS accelerated track was added to the baccalaureate program in the fall of 1997.

In 2000, the Dean of the School of Nursing also assumed responsibilities as the Dean of the School of Allied Health Sciences, and in 2002, the two Schools joined to become the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The School of Nursing became the Department of Nursing in the newly formed College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

The Department of Nursing offers the following undergraduate and graduate degrees in nursing approved by the Vermont State Board of Nursing and accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education:

- Bachelor of Science (BS) in Nursing
- Master of Science (MS) in Nursing
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), Executive Nurse Leader

## Department of Nursing Mission, Vision, and Values

**MISSION** Our mission to prepare 21st century nurses to provide high-quality health care that improves the health and well-being of our communities and global society.

**VISION** Our vision is to transform and lead healthcare by creating an innovative and inclusive learning environment that prepares nurses to meet the dynamic and diverse healthcare needs of individuals, families, communities, and our planet.

As educators, researchers, clinicians, and scholars, we uphold the following core values:

- Lifelong Discovery: To inspire creativity, collaboration, and scholarship.
- Social Responsibility: To act as stewards for a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just community.
- Excellence: To lead as professionals with respect, integrity, and compassion.

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 (BS) in Nursing
- Master of Science (MS) in Nursing
- Accelerated Master of Science in Nursing (AMP)
- Direct Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN/DEPN; pre-Licensure)
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), Executive Nurse Leader
- Post master's Doctor of Nursing Practice (Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, Executive Nurse Leader)

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

- Research and scholarly activities, which contribute to the development of clinical practice, nursing education, and further the development of the science of nursing.
- Outreach to the community.
- Participation in local, state, regional, and national nursing organizations.
- 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:

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

Approved by the Department of Nursing Faculty: 5/14/22

## Graduate Programs 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.

**PROGRAM OUTCOMES** At the completion of the program, the graduates will:

1. Integrate nursing science conceptual and analytic skills into nursing practice to improve patient outcomes.
2. Design, manage, and evaluate comprehensive person-centered care using best practices.
3. Analyze data and formulate plans to improve health of individual and aggregate populations through collaborative efforts with academic practice and community-

- based partnerships.
4. Synthesize, translate, apply, and disseminate theoretical and scientific knowledge to promote high-quality, safe, and effective care.
  5. Integrate scholarship, research and analytic methods to lead evidence-based practice change to ensure the highest level of quality and safety within organizational systems.
  6. Lead and collaborate with inter-professional teams to enhance healthcare delivery and improve health outcomes.
  7. Optimize safe, cost-effective, and equitable care through coordination of resources within complex health systems.
  8. Evaluate information systems and emerging technologies to optimize ethical and safe patient care to improve health outcomes and care delivery.
  9. Use professional practice to reduce health disparities, encourage cultural sensitivity and promote access to quality care while advocating for social justice and equity locally, nationally, and globally.
  10. Initiate and engage in activities to develop professional and interpersonal maturity, versatility, and robust leadership while fostering self-care and wellness.

Approved by Graduate Education Committee 3/5/21; Graduate Faculty 10/20/23

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

[Student rights and responsibilities](#) are described in the current UVM Online Catalogue.

## 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. Additional disciplinary provisions applicable to students are articulated in the University’s [Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).

**USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** Graduate nursing students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity, particularly in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. While AI can be a valuable resource for learning and research, it is essential that students use it responsibly, ensuring that all work submitted is their own and properly cited. Misuse of AI to produce work that does not reflect one's own knowledge and skills undermines the educational

process and the integrity of the nursing profession. Additional policies prohibiting the use of AI may be specified in individual course syllabi and must be strictly adhered to by all students.

## Grievance Policy

The Graduate College is ultimately responsible for grievances regarding policies and procedures related to graduate education. A grievance properly begins within a student's department by the student sharing a concern with the Program Director or Chair. If this does not resolve the grievance, the student can present the grievance in writing to the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences in which the program resides, and after that to the Dean of the Graduate College. The Graduate College Dean, who may seek input from the Graduate College Executive Committee, is the final arbiter of Graduate College regulations. Excluded from the Graduate College appeals process are grievances that contest grades on grounds other than due process: the process to appeal a grade requires students to pursue department or program and School or College channels, is set out in the [University Grade Appeal Policy](#).

In addition, the [Graduate College has an ombudsperson program](#). The Ombudsperson is responsible for providing independent, informal and impartial assistance to graduate students on matters affecting their graduate education.

## Communication

**EMAIL** All students 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 LISTSERV** This is an electronic Listserv 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 the graduate students' responsibility to check your UVM email regularly.

## Academic Calendar

Need sentence about that includes this link to the [UVM Academic Calendar](#).

# Academic Advisement and Advising Resources

Upon admission each student is assigned a faculty academic advisor to assist in program planning. Advisor changes may be initiated by the student, faculty member, or Chair. Requests should be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant, who will coordinate the change with the Graduate Program Director.

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 advisors regarding 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.

**STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES** [UVM Student Accessibility Services](#) has information on accessibility news, policies, education, resources, and support.

**ADVISING RESOURCES** [Additional advising resources](#) are described in the current UVM Online Catalogue.

## 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:

- Faculty and students will attend all regularly scheduled classes (campus and online), except for those occasions warranting an excused absence under the policy detailed in the catalogue (e.g., religious, athletic and medical).
- Students and faculty will arrive to in person classes prepared and on time, and they will remain in class until the class is dismissed.
- 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.
- 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).

# Clinical Attendance Policy

This policy sets expectations for clinical, simulation, and laboratory attendance as well as guidelines for communicating absences and determining consequences for tardiness or missed clinical days.

**INTRODUCTION** Clinical, lab, and simulation experiences are essential to nursing education, providing the hands-on learning needed to build clinical judgment and professional competence. Attendance is expected and is a top priority. Clinical hours are regulated and monitored by the Vermont Office of Professional Regulation to ensure graduates meet competencies and NCLEX eligibility. Students are required to be present for all clinical, simulation, and laboratory experiences and are expected to be present for the entire experience, beginning to end. Securing clinical sites and faculty is complex and resource-intensive; make-up opportunities are very limited. When available, make-up experiences will be prioritized for students with documented emergencies or serious extenuating circumstances. Unexcused absences, patterns of tardiness, or repeated absences in clinical for any reason may jeopardize course completion. All clinical attendance will be tracked and will influence student progression throughout the program.

**EXCUSED CLINICAL ABSENCE** The recognized grounds for an excused absence are covered within [UVM Attendance Policy](#). All excused absences require appropriate documentation submitted through the Graduate College Dean's office.

**UNEXCUSED CLINICAL ABSENCE** A clinical absence for any reason not outlined within [UVM Attendance Policy](#) or for which required documentation is not provided is considered an unexcused absence. More than one unexcused clinical absence will result in clinical failure, which will also result in course failure.

**TARDINESS** Tardiness is defined as arrival after the clinical start time, as specified by the clinical faculty, without any prior communication to the clinical faculty. Students who demonstrate a pattern of repeated late arrivals will have this documented in their clinical evaluation and may be at risk of not meeting the clinical objectives related to accountability and professional behavior.

**ABSENCE NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE** As soon as a student becomes aware that they will be tardy or absent, they must:

1. Notify the clinical faculty and on-site preceptor as soon as possible.

2. Obtain required documentation from CNHS Office of Student Services or other UVM entity as outlined by the UVM attendance policy.
3. Initiate communication with the Clinical Faculty to determine next steps.
4. Failure to follow absence notification procedures will result in a Clinical Warning.

**CLINICAL WARNING (i.e., ACADEMIC ALERT)** A Clinical Warning sent via Academic Alert for the course will be issued for:

- Any unexcused clinical absence
- Two instances of tardiness
- Lack of appropriate communication with clinical faculty

All Clinical Warnings will be accompanied by an Academic Improvement Form (AIF), documented on the students' clinical evaluation, and tracked across the program by the student's academic advisor and Program Director. The AIF will remain on the student's record even if remediation is completed for an unexcused clinical absence. More than one Clinical Warning, for any reason, within a clinical course may result in clinical failure and ultimately course failure.

**ATTENDANCE LIMITS** The attendance limits apply regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused. Even one (1) clinical, simulation, or laboratory absence jeopardizes the student's ability to meet course objectives, may result in course failure, and may negatively impact program progression. Final determination regarding achievement of clinical objectives is at the discretion of the clinical faculty; remediation of excused absence time does not guarantee achievement of clinical objectives. Missing any clinical, simulation, or laboratory experiences across the program may negatively impact program progression. If clinical faculty is absent due to illness or other emergency, an alternative clinical experience may be arranged. This alternative experience will count as a regular clinical experience and will not be considered a student absence.

**MAKE-UP** Make-up clinical opportunities are limited and not guaranteed. Students with excused absences will receive priority for available make-up experiences. Students with unexcused absences are not guaranteed a make-up opportunity.

Approved by the Department of Nursing May 17, 2026

## 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.

# Department of Nursing Code of Conduct

The University of Vermont Department of Nursing (DON) Code of Conduct sets forth the highest standards of professionalism and ethical behavior for students, staff, and faculty. It emphasizes respect, civility, and compassion in all interactions, requiring adherence to principles that ensure a safe and inclusive environment. The code addresses specific behaviors including honesty, integrity, and confidentiality, and outlines the procedures for handling conduct violations to support continuous learning and uphold the community's trust.

## Student Accessibility Services

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) provides services and accommodations to all UVM students who have current documentation of a disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including but not limited to walking, talking, learning, hearing, or seeing. For more information please visit the [UVM Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\) website](#). Requests for classroom accommodations should be initiated at least 2 weeks in advance of any semester. Requests for clinical accommodations should be initiated at least 1 month in advance of any semester.

## Overview of Graduate Program Curriculum

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree or the Master of Science (M.S.) 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, elective courses, and a project. Track courses focus on either primary care delivery (AGNP/FNP) or patient care coordination. Elective courses in the MS or post-graduate DNP program may be non-nursing or nursing graduate courses. Rarely, an independent study course may be approved. Prior to enrollment in independent study, students must obtain the approval from their academic advisor, a faculty sponsor, and the faculty sponsor's department Vice Chair, Chair, or designee. Guidelines for development of an independent study are found in the [University Catalogue](#).

The comprehensive examination is a University requirement. The oral examination provides the student the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the core content of the program. In addition, DNP- Primary Care and Executive Nurse Leader students will complete a DNP Project in which they develop and implement a project in a health care related setting.

MS students will complete a master's project or thesis in which they develop and implement a project or research study that contributes to nursing, health, patient care, and/or health outcomes.

Many of the graduate nursing courses have both a theoretical and a laboratory or practicum component. Credit allocation for class, laboratory, and practicum components of course is defined as: One credit is equivalent to: 1 class hour/week; 2 laboratory hours/ week; 120 practicum hours/ semester. Ratio applies to the NP and MS practicum courses.

## LINKS TO GRADUATE PROGRAM CURRICULUM

- [Direct Entry Program in Nursing: Doctor of Nursing Practice \(DNP\) AGNP/ FNP](#)
- [Doctor of Nursing Practice: Adult- Gerontology Nurse Practitioner or Family Nurse Practitioner \(AGNP/FNP\)](#)
- [Direct Entry to Master of Science in Nursing Program \(MEPN\)](#)
- [Master of Science \(MS\)](#)
- [Postgraduate Doctor of Nursing Practice](#)

# Practicum Experiences

Nurse practitioner track courses (AGNP and FNP) have both a theoretical and practicum component. These practicum experiences may be located throughout the state of Vermont or in other select states as deemed appropriate by the Program Director. Vermont RN licensure (by exam or endorsement) is required one month PRIOR to the start of the program clinical training (typically GRNS 7080, Spring Semester, Year 1). It is student's responsibility to renew their Vermont RN license as required by the VT Board of Nursing and upload your current license to Castle Branch/Exxat prior to expiration. Students are expected to have rotations at rural sites throughout Vermont. A car is needed to travel to rural sites across the state of Vermont. Students should expect distant travel (e.g., 1-2 hours) on one or more occasions during the program.

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 precaution in all settings to minimize the likelihood of occurrence. Satisfactory completion of practicum objectives is required prior to progression in the program. Our department has cultivated relationship with our clinical partners to provide high quality practicum experiences. As such, our clinical partners have requested that students do not reach out to any potential preceptor independently. Students that have specific preceptors or clinical rotations they are interested in should contact the lead clinical course faculty to discuss the matter further. Students are not to reach out independently to clinical preceptors or to the clinical

placement coordinator. By doing so, the student jeopardizes our long-standing relationships and student clinical opportunities in the present as well as in the future.

## Student Clinical Mandatories

As a CNHS graduate student, you are required to complete the CNHS pre-clinical mandatories. All mandatories are completed by the student prior to the deadline of August 1 each academic year. Immunization and serology lab work may take several weeks to complete. A booster vaccine may be required and repeat lab work to assure immunity may be necessary. Allow ample time to complete this process and schedule health care provider appointments early to assure clinical requirements are complete prior to August 1st. [View complete details on CNHS Mandatories online.](#)

Students that are not current in mandatory training, licensing and certifications are not allowed in the clinical setting. As a graduate student, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are up to date with all pre-clinical requirements in Castle Branch/Exaat. castle branch/Exaat is the online platform which is the hub for maintaining your CNHS clinical requirements throughout your education. In addition to castle Branch/Exaat, HIPAA/OSHA is required annually via the [Evolve e-Learning Solutions website](#). Yearly UVM Medical Center EPIC Training is required every January. Upon completion of EPIC training students are expected to log in to EPIC at least every 90 days to ensure ongoing access in the case of a last-minute clinical change.

Failure to complete these requirements and/or a required update to these requirements within 2 weeks of the clinical practicum will result in disenrollment from the course, delay of start, the inability to complete the practicum course, and /or delayed academic progression. Please be aware, clinical sites may have additional onboarding requirements that are completed prior to each clinical placement (e.g., electronic health record training, additional background checks or education, etc.) that need to be completed in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in delayed start.

Nurse Practitioner students are required to document clinical experiences in a time-tracking system which includes case-logging, evaluations and a student portfolio. Exxat is a web-based data management system designed to manage, collate and analyze your clinical experience. Students will receive onboarding typically in the Spring of their first year. Updated 7/2018; 8/2019, 4/1/2021, 7/2023, 6/2024

# Confidentiality

As a CNHS graduate student, you are required to complete the CNHS pre-clinical mandatories. All mandatories are completed by the student prior to the deadline of August 1 each academic year. Immunization and serology lab work may take several weeks to complete. A booster vaccine may be required and repeat lab work to assure immunity may be necessary. Allow ample time to complete this process and schedule health care provider appointments early to assure clinical requirements are complete prior to August 1st. [View complete details on CNHS Mandatories online.](#)

All patients 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 patients and not disclose any identifying information. This applies to patient information in written and verbal formats.

# 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 shall carry their own health insurance.

# Student Dress Code for Clinical and Practicum Settings

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 expected to present a professional appearance and demeanor. A UVM name pin or badge indicating your student role is to be worn in all clinical, practicum, and laboratory settings. Students' names are given to the UVM Bookstore and name pins are ordered and secured for each student. Additional identification may be required by clinical practicum sites.

**PURPOSE** The following dress code is required for all students to meet standards for professional appearance, reduction of infection, and promotion of safety. Variations in the following guidelines are at the discretion of the Faculty. Faculty may stipulate more specific expectations based on

the setting. Failure to comply with the dress code may result in an unexcused absence from clinical experiences.

1. All clinical experiences require the following dress code expectations:
  - a. Students are expected to be neat, clean with well-groomed personal hygiene and appearance.
  - b. Clothing is clean, pressed, fits properly and loosely, in good repair (no frays, rips, or holes).
  - c. UVM name tag (or agency ID) worn on upper chest.
  - d. Tattoos should be covered if they are obscene, sectarian, or discriminatory.
  - e. Jewelry should not interfere with infection prevention, and a limited number of rings should be worn when providing patient care because of frequent handwashing.
  - f. Hair is neat and clean. Long hair is pulled back and secured when providing direct patient care.
  - g. Facial hair is clean and well-groomed. Mustaches and beards are neatly trimmed or clean shaven.
  - h. Fingernails are clean and neatly manicured. Use of artificial nails, nail decorations or nail polish are not allowed due to infection risk.
  - i. Colognes, perfumes or scented hand lotions are not used due to client allergies, sensitivities and possible adverse reactions.
  - j. Clothing does not reveal cleavage, midriff, shoulders, or undergarments.
  - k. Head coverings may be worn for religious or medical reasons.
2. Pre-Clinical Preparation: When the student arrives at a clinical agency to retrieve their assignment, the student will introduce themselves to a patient, or begin to collect pertinent data, the student will wear:
  - a. Business casual attire
  - b. Business casual includes below the knee or longer dresses and skirts, slacks, blouses and sweaters. Shoes are soft soled, low heeled with closed heel and toe, and worn with socks.
  - c. Business casual does NOT include denim or jean-like pants, tank tops, tube tops, sleeveless shirts, shorts, jeans, miniskirts, sweatpants, hooded garments, t-shirts with logos, tight fitting clothing, or low necklines.
  - d. A clean white lab coat with the UVM DON logo on the left sleeve.
  - e. UVM name tag (or agency ID badge) clearly displayed.

3. Clinical experiences requiring scrubs: When providing direct patient care, the student will wear:
  - a. Green scrubs with UVM patch sewn on left sleeve.
  - b. A plain (no logos or designs) long-sleeved T shirt may be worn underneath the scrub top.
  - c. White lab coat may be worn over the scrub top.
  - d. Shoes should be supportive, soft-soled, closed toe, and closed heel. Shoes should be clean, free of debris, and professional in-appearance. Recommended shoes should be exclusively dedicated to clinical use only.

Approved by DON on 5/19/22

## Candidacy Requirements

Acceptance to candidacy for the degree is granted to those students who have met all pre-requisites for the graduate degree program and all of the Department of Nursing requirements for candidacy. Satisfactory completion of the written and oral components of a comprehensive examination are required for advancement to candidacy.

## Graduation Requirements

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

- Core, track, and elective courses
- Comprehensive Examination
- MS project or thesis, or DNP Project

### **UVM GRADUATE COLLEGE TIME LIMITS FOR GRADUATE DEGREE COMPLETION**

- Master's Degree – Five years from matriculation
- Doctoral Degree – Seven years from matriculation
- APRN Certificate - 5 years from matriculation (all courses)

All courses applied towards the degree must be taken within 5 years for master's degrees, 7 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 (83%) or better in graduate courses. If a student earns two grades of B- or any grade lower than a B- is grounds for dismissal.
2. A final grade of B (83%) or better is required to pass Advanced Pathophysiology.
3. Students are required to earn a satisfactory grade in clinical or DNP project related courses. An unsatisfactory grade in a clinical course or project seminar or practicum is grounds for dismissal.
4. Final grades rounding procedure: Grades will be rounded from the 10th of a decimal using the following procedures:  $<.5$  is rounded down and  $\geq .5$  is rounded up.

# Department of Nursing Graduate Progression and Completion Policy

1. Students completing the DEPN/MEPN program must successfully pass the NCLEX exam upon completion of the pre-licensure year. Registered Nurse (RN) licensure shall be secured by January 1st. Failure to pass the NCLEX and secure RN licensure will result in program dismissal.
2. Students who fail to comply with requests for mandatory requirements and/or have not completed their mandatory requirements at least two weeks prior to the onset of the academic semester will not be allowed to progress in the program.
3. To graduate, all program requirements must be met within one academic semester of completion of final clinical practicum.
4. GRNS 7140, 7150/7160 and GRNS 7190, 7200/7210 must be taken sequentially in the same academic year.
5. Students that do not receive a satisfactory grade in either the clinical track and clinical track specialty course or the associated practicum must repeat both the course and the corresponding practicum.

# UVM Graduate College

Please refer to the [Graduate College Catalogue](#) 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

**DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE DEGREE – PRIMARY CARE NP (FNP, AGNP) AND DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE DEGREE – EXECUTIVE NURSE LEADER (DNP)** Following completion of the DNP project proposal, the student will complete the comprehensive examination. Once the DNP Project proposal is accepted by the DNP project advisor, the student is eligible to schedule the oral Comprehensive Exam. The Comprehensive examination is designed to allow students to demonstrate competency of knowledge acquired throughout the DNP curriculum by means of their DNP Project.

**MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE** Students will collaborate with their project advisor on the development of the written scholarly project or project/thesis (MS only) proposal. The student must work closely with their team to develop a realistic timeline for completion of project proposal. Upon completion of the project proposal, the student will complete the Comprehensive examination. The integration of project and comprehensive examination is designed to allow students to demonstrate mastery of knowledge acquired throughout the program.

## 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:

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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; works to refine, implement, and evaluate initiatives.	Seven 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	Recognizes superior achievement and development of leadership qualities; fosters high professional standards; encourages creative work; and strengthens commitment to the ideals and purposes of the nursing profession.	Graduate nursing students must have completed one-quarter of the program of study and achieved a GPA of 3.5 on a four-point scale or its equivalent.	Activities occur throughout the semester and are open to all members.

## 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**

This honor is awarded to a student in the graduate program who demonstrates high professional and academic standards. The recipient is selected by the Kappa Tau Awards Committee.

### **UVM MEDICAL CENTER AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN NURSING PRACTICE**

This award was established in 1998 by the nurse administrators at UVMHC 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**

This honor is awarded to a graduate student, who in the opinion of the faculty, best demonstrates outstanding clinical practice.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS** These awards may be given to graduating graduate students who demonstrate outstanding achievement in academics, significant University involvement and/or significant community service involvement.

## Program Specific Policies

**DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM** The DNP is a hybrid program, meaning that the majority of coursework will be delivered 50% using web-based design and 50% in-classroom. There will be non-clinical courses delivered using 100% web-based design. As part of the clinical experience, students are required to travel to distant areas of Vermont throughout their program. Clinical experiences will include rotations in distant rural primary care sites. Students will require their own source of transportation and should expect travel distances up to 2 hours.

**DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM: DEPN YEAR AND DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM: MEPN YEAR** The DEPN/MEPN (i.e., Pre-licensure year) program is delivered on campus, meaning that coursework will be in the classroom. There may be non-clinical courses delivered using 100% web-based design. A Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) is NOT awarded at the end of the pre-RN licensure year of study. The final degree of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) or Master of Science is awarded upon completion of the respective program. Students who do not pass the RN licensure exam will not progress in the program.

## Student Attestation

I have read and understand the materials presented within the University of Vermont Graduate Student Handbook.

Student Name:

Student Signature:

Date: