

MSN PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK



Developing professional healthcare leaders and educators

Missouri Western State University College of Science & Health

Department of Nursing

2024-2025

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DEPARTMENT OF NURSING INFORMATION

WELCOME

Welcome to Missouri Western State University's MSN Program. This student handbook has been developed to assist you in successfully completing your master's degree in nursing at Missouri Western State University. You are responsible for reading the material carefully and discussing any questions you might have with a graduate faculty member or the MSN Program Director. You are responsible for complying with the policies as stated in the Missouri Western State University MSN Student Handbook and specific course syllabi.

MSN students are expected to read and abide by the regulations and policies in the University Graduate Catalog, University Student Handbook, and MSN Student Handbook. These documents apply to all students taking graduate level courses through the nursing program, including, MSN Healthcare Leadership, MSN Nurse Educator, MSN/MBA, and Nurse Educator Certificate.

In keeping with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 in regard to sex discrimination, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in regard to disability discrimination and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 as to age discrimination, as well as other applicable federal and state laws and regulations as they pertain to discrimination in the areas of age, race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, and the disabled, Missouri Western State University follows a policy of nondiscrimination in the aforementioned areas in regard to all employment practices and to the awarding of student financial aid as well as recruitment, admission, housing, placement, and retention of students. The Title IX compliance and Affirmative Action Officer is the Director of Human Resources. The section 504-ADA Coordinator is the Accessibility Resource Center Coordinator.

Mission Statement

The Missouri Western State University Department of Nursing is committed to the development of students as individuals and leaders striving for excellence in inter-professional practice and the promotion of healthy communities.

Nursing Philosophy

As an integral part of Missouri Western State University, the Department of Nursing supports the mission, goals and policies of the University and the College of Science & Health. To master the discipline of nursing and the increasingly complex knowledge, skills and attitudes required to deliver safe, quality care, a broad-based baccalaureate education including theoretical and applied learning are essential for generalist nursing education. Graduate education develops nurses for advanced nursing practice roles. Recognizing the complexity of organizations, financing and delivery of health care, the faculty are committed to supporting ongoing program/curricular evaluation and adaptation to meet the demands of the evolving health care system.

The faculty believe that professional nursing practice is based upon the integration of the concepts related to person, health, environment and nursing. Systems thinking guides the integration of these concepts into the nursing process to promote a holistic nursing care.

Person

The person is viewed as a unique being with intrinsic worth and dignity, whose wholeness is more than the sum of his/her biophysical, psychosocial, cognitive, and social components. A person is a complex open system who is in constant interaction with an internal and external environment. The person or designee is able to choose among alternative actions; set goals; make decisions based on perceptions, values, and needs. Diversity among persons is valued and respected. Professional nurses respect the right of self-determination in making informed health care decisions.

Health

Health is a dynamic holistic process in which individuals and/or groups interact with, biophysical, psychosocial, cognitive and social stimuli in order to achieve maximum potential. All individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities have the potential for both health and illness. The goal of nursing is to promote health, prevent illness, support disease management, improve quality of life and support end-of-life decisions and care.

Environment

The environment is the aggregate of conditions which influence individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. The health care environment varies from basic to complex and highly technological. Nurses manage, monitor and manipulate the environment to foster health and promote safe, quality care. Nurses use informatics to support decision-making and improve outcomes.

Nursing

“Nursing integrates the art and science of caring and focuses on the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and human functioning; prevention of illness and injury; facilitation of healing; and alleviation of suffering through compassionate presence. Nursing is the diagnosis and treatment of human

responses and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations in recognition of the connection of all humanity.” (American Nurses Association, 2021, p. 1).

Standards-based practice underpins the implementation of the nursing process and is focused on maintaining, restoring or promoting optimal health. Application of the nursing process requires critical thinking, nursing judgments and competent nursing actions. The nursing process is implemented through a collaborative relationship that involves interpersonal communication, mutually defined goals and desired outcomes. Professional nursing integrates multiple role expectations including leader, provider, designer, manager and coordinator of care. The professional nurse promotes, participates in and uses research as a part of a commitment to high quality care and evidence-based practice.

Nursing is an integral part of the inter-professional health care system which has the responsibility to provide accessible, cost-effective, safe, quality care. As such, professional nurses must possess effective organizational and teamwork skills; strong communication skills; a service orientation; an ethic of professional and social responsibility; cost awareness and accountability for clinical outcomes; commitment to continuous improvement of health care and competency in population-based care.

MSN Curriculum

The MSN curriculum at MWSU is aligned with the Department of Nursing mission, vision, and philosophy as well as the AACN Essentials. Together these standards assist graduates of the MSN program to demonstrate core competencies in leadership, quality, safety, scholarship, population health, and professional practice.

MSN Program Objectives	
Integrates professional standards from nursing and other disciplines to practice	Advocate for healthcare policy to address the needs of a complex healthcare system
Promotes person-centered care within nursing practice	Evaluate the use of information and communication technologies to inform decision-making for quality and efficient care
Promotes public health through the use of policy, partnerships, and advocacy.	Model a professional nursing identity that is accountable to ethical and inclusive practice.
Translates scholarship and theory from nursing and related disciplines to transform practice.	Demonstrate personal and professional leadership activities that foster resilience and life-long learning
Integrate systematic improvements to provide quality nursing care and promote safety.	
Collaborate with the interprofessional team to improve healthcare outcomes.	

Nursing Course Descriptions

The descriptions for all courses required for the completion of the MSN degree are in the Missouri Western State University Graduate Catalog. They can also be found online at <http://catalog.missouriwestern.edu/graduate/>

Faculty

Members of the faculty are available to students for consultation concerning curriculum, professional mentoring, and other matters during office hours and by appointment. A complete roster of the nursing faculty, contact information, and their educational qualifications is available online at <https://www.missouriwestern.edu/nursing/facultystaff/>

Faculty may also be contacted by emailing or by calling the Department of Nursing administrative assistant at (816) 271-4415; fax (816) 271-5849. The Department of Nursing is located in Murphy Hall, Room 309.

Code of Conduct

MSN students are professional nurses and therefore are bound by the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics. A code of ethics is an integral part of nursing and serves three major purposes: 1) outlines the ethical obligations and duties of each nurse; 2) provides a nonnegotiable standard; 3) makes a commitment to individuals, families, colleagues, the profession, and society. Therefore, the Department of Nursing has adopted

the following Code of Conduct to which all nursing students will be held accountable. The Code of Conduct is derived from the principles in the ANA Code of Ethics and adapted from the National Student Nurses Association.

Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, falsifying documents or academic records, or any other fraudulent activity.

1. Advocate for the rights of all clients.
2. Maintain confidentiality of clinical health information and information from health care agencies.
3. Act to ensure the safety of self, clients, and others.
4. Provide quality care for the client in a timely, compassionate, and professional manner.
5. Communicate in a respectful, truthful, timely, and accurate manner.
6. Promote the highest level of moral and ethical principles and accept accountability for all actions.
7. Promote excellence in nursing by encouraging lifelong learning and professional development.
8. Treat others with respect and promote an environment that respects human rights, values, and cultural and spiritual beliefs.
9. Collaborate with the academic faculty and/or clinical staff to enhance learning and practice outcomes.
10. Refrain from performing any technique or procedure for which the student has not been adequately educated.
11. Refrain from any deliberate action or omission in the academic or clinical setting that creates and unnecessary risk to the client, self, or others.
12. Abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages or any substance that impairs judgment in the academic or clinical setting.
13. Strive to achieve and maintain an optimal level of personal health.
14. Uphold school policies and regulations related to academic and clinical performance, reserving the right to appeal according to university policy.

Standards-Based Nursing Practice

The MSN program holds all students accountable to the same standards-based nursing practice as is required in their professional practice as a registered nurse. Standards-based practice guidelines for the MSN program include, the *ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses*, *ANA Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice*, and the Missouri Nurse Practice Act. In addition, the AACN Masters Essentials, QSEN Graduate Competencies, professional nursing standards of practice and competencies, such as AONL, NLN, and ANPD serve as standards for the MSN program.

MSN PROGRAM INFORMATION

Academic Advisement

Students will be assigned a nursing faculty advisor. Students must meet with their advisor each semester during the enrollment period to plan their course of study.

Academic Honesty

Honesty in the classroom or clinical area is required. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information is unprofessional behavior and may result in dismissal from the program. See the [MWSU Student Handbook](#)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline the acceptable use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to enhance learning while maintaining academic integrity, ethical standards, and clinical judgment skills. The American Nurses Association (2015) Code of Ethics for Nurses states that “nurses in all roles are accountable for decisions made and actions taken in the course of nursing practice. Systems and technologies that assist in clinical practice are adjunct to, not replacements for, the nurse’s knowledge and skill” (p. 15). The Nursing Department recognizes that AI cannot replace clinical judgment or assessment skills. AI tools should be used to complement a student’s efforts, not as a complete substitute. Students should rely on their clinical knowledge, faculty feedback, and evidence-based practice to make clinical decisions rather than depend on AI recommendations in assignments or case studies.

This policy applies to all nursing students in the Department of Nursing. All educational settings including classroom, research, simulation lab, and clinical work are covered by this policy.

Guidelines for AI Use

AI tools may be used by students to:

- Reinforce concepts and improve understanding
- Brainstorm ideas
- Fine-tune research questions
- Find references or information on a research topic
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts
- Check grammar
- AI tools that assist in literature searches are allowed; however, students must critically evaluate the sources and information provided by AI to ensure accuracy and relevance.

Inappropriate Use of AI

AI should not be used for:

- Examinations unless explicitly permitted and instructed.
- Impersonating a student in classroom contexts, such as using the tool to compose discussion board prompts.
- Completing group work unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.

- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.

How to give credit to AI:

- Students must give credit to AI tools whenever used, even if only to generate ideas.
- When using AI tools on assignments, add an appendix showing:
 - The entire exchange, including which AI tool was used highlighting the most relevant sections.
 - An explanation of how the tools were used (to generate ideas, provide an illustration, refine an idea, etc).

Faculty Responsibility

- Some instructors may prefer stronger restrictions on the use of AI tools and they are free to impose them so long as care is taken to maintain transparency and fairness in grading.
- Faculty members are responsible for educating students on the appropriate use of AI tools in nursing education.
- Faculty will monitor student use of AI tools to ensure compliance with this policy.

Consequences for Misuse

Submitting work generated by AI as your own is considered academic misconduct. Violation of this policy will result in action per the student handbook.

References for AI Policy

American Nurses Association (ANA). (2015). *Code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements* (2nd ed.). American Nurses Association.

McAdoo, T. (2024). *How to cite ChatGPT*. APA Style. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Northern Illinois University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. (2024). *Class policies for ATI tools*. <https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/class-policies-for-ai-tools.shtml>

OpenAI. (2024). *ChatGPT* (Version 4.0) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

Turn It In

Scholarly work in the MSN program will be submitted to plagiarism checkers. Students who receive high percentages of duplicated work could result in failure of the assignment or course. Unless otherwise specified by the course and faculty, duplication of the student's own work is still a form of plagiarism and will be addressed the same as plagiarism noted from outside sources.

Attendance

Regular attendance and class preparation is an essential part of professional behavior and academic work. Faculty expect students to attend all scheduled classes of the courses in which they are enrolled.

Clinical Behavior

Masters students at Missouri Western State University are expected to maintain professional standards of

practice as licensed registered nurses. Students should be aware that behavior that deviates significantly from these standards and is unsafe, illegal, or unprofessional may result in a recommendation for dismissal from the program. While a single incident may be serious enough to warrant an immediate recommendation for dismissal, a pattern of less serious, unprofessional behaviors will also result in a recommendation for dismissal.

If a student's behavior/performance is believed to be an immediate and severe threat to patient or public safety and welfare, he/she may be removed from the clinical area, followed by a written recommendation for dismissal from the course. Dismissal from the nursing program may be recommended (*See Management of Unprofessional or Unsafe Behavior*).

If a student's behavior violates the Nurse Practice Act, the behavior may be reported to the Missouri State Board of Nursing.

Clinical Compliance

Students are expected to maintain health record, background check, and drug screen compliance as required by the clinical agency. Students will receive direction from course faculty and/or the MSN Program Director for courses that require clinical compliance. Below are the clinical compliance documents that may be required, depending on the clinical agency.

BLS – Basic Life Support

Completion of basic life support (BLS Provider) from the American Heart Association is required. The student will upload documentation of course completion of BLS Provider in Project Concert. It is the student's responsibility to keep their BLS updated every two years.

Criminal Background Disclosure

Prior to placement or assignment of a student with clinical agencies, the student may be required to provide the Nursing Program with a criminal record review consistent with agency guidelines. Criminal history includes any conviction or plea of guilty to a misdemeanor or felony charge. In addition, the University must make an inquiry to the Missouri Department of Social Services as to whether the student is listed on the employee disqualification list, as provided in the §660.315 RSMo. This background check is conducted through a designated vendor and the student is responsible for the expense. Results of the background check are sent to the School designee and shall be confidential. Prior to placement or assignment of a student with a clinical agency, the University shall certify, in writing, to the requesting clinical agency, that such student does not appear on the "employee disqualification list" referenced above and is not disqualified from having contact with patients or residents pursuant to §660.317.6 RSMo and to specific clinical agency requirements.

During the program any criminal or legal action that may impact clinical placement or is a violation of the student code of conduct must be reported to the MSN Program Director.

Drug Testing

Students may be required to complete drug screening prior to starting clinical at their own expense. The purpose of this policy is to meet clinical compliance requirements set by our clinical partners. Drug testing will be conducted at an approved lab contracted by the Nursing Program. Results will be reviewed by the MSN Program Director. The

Chairperson of the Department of Nursing will be notified of any result other than negative. If a student tests positive for a tested substance, the student may be dismissed from the MSN program. A student with a positive drug test may reapply after one year. Failure to demonstrate a negative drug screen by the designated date using the established process will result in the student's inability to attend clinical and pass the enrolled course resulting in a failing course grade.

- Substances tested include: Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines, Cocaine Metabolites, Marijuana Metabolites, Methadone, MDA (SASS), MDMA (Ecstasy), Opiates, Phencyclidine, Propoxyphene, Methaqualone, Oxycodone, Oxymorphone
- The MSN Program recognizes that some banned substances are used for legitimate medical purposes. Documentation from the student's prescribing provider will be requested by the Medical Review Officer of the drug screening vendor if a positive test occurs. The Medical Review Officer will confirm medical need and render the test negative, as appropriate.
- A dilute test will require retesting at the student's expense. If a student receives 3 consecutive dilute test results, the student may be dismissed from the MSN program. The student may reapply after one year.
- The MSN Program may request a student to be retested for cause at any point, without notice, during the nursing program at the student's expense. This request will be based on reasonable suspicion of substance use or abuse. Reasonable suspicion may include but is not limited to:
 - Direct observation of substance use or abuse
 - Observation of unusual or erratic behavior
 - Observation of physical symptoms consistent with substance use or abuse
 - Arrest or conviction for a drug related offense

Documentation of cause by reasonable suspicion will be documented by the reporting individual to include relevant details and forwarded to the Chairperson of the Department of Nursing. The Chairperson will conduct an investigation and determine whether cause exists for retesting. The Chairperson will make a determination regarding the student's continuation in coursework while awaiting the results. Retesting may include, but is not limited to, the substances listed above.

Every effort will be taken to ensure confidentiality of drug testing results. However, the MSN Program reserves the right to notify University officials, State Board of Nursing, and clinical partners who have a need to know such results. Results may be used for administrative hearings, court cases, and may be sent to state and/or federal agencies as required by applicable law.

A student may appeal a test result by submitting a written request within 5 business days of notification of the result. The appeal should be submitted, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Department of Nursing. The student may request a second test to be performed on the original specimen at a SAMHSA certified laboratory of choice at his/her own cost. Transport of the specimen should follow standard laboratory protocols and the results should be submitted by the laboratory directly to the Chairperson. The Chairperson may request a third test on the original specimen to be conducted at a SAMHSA certified laboratory at the school's cost.

Immunization and Health Insurance Requirements

Documentation of immunizations or laboratory evidence of immunity is required according to standards established by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). A list of required immunizations can be obtained from the MSN Program Director.

Students should be aware that neither the school nor clinical agencies provide health insurance for students. Each individual student is responsible for his/her own health care. Injuries sustained by the student in the clinical setting are NOT covered by either the school or the clinical facility. Students are required to maintain health insurance coverage.

Documentation of immunizations and health insurance must be submitted to Project Concert to meet all clinical compliance requirements. Students who fail to submit all required documentation will not be permitted to attend clinical experiences, resulting in a failing course grade.

Personal Accountability for Risk Management

Because of the nature of various clinical situations, the risk of harm or injury to the student exists. The student must sign an *Assumption of Risk Waiver and Release Agreement* form prior to clinical experience. If a student is injured during clinical experience; the student is responsible for seeking medical care and assuming the financial obligation for that care.

Communication

Faculty in the nursing program value open, direct, honest, and respectful communication. Students are expected to communicate openly, honestly and respectfully with peers, faculty, health care agency staff, patients, and families. If concerns with a course arise, the student is expected to discuss these concerns openly and honestly with the appropriate faculty member. The student may also seek guidance from their academic advisor and/or the MSN Program Director, if necessary. Advisors, faculty, and staff in the MSN program will communicate with the student via their MWSU email. Students are expected to check this email and their canvas courses frequently to look for important information.

Complaints/Concerns

Students who wish to file a grade appeal follow the process as outlined above. Open, direct, honest and respectful communication is expected of both students and faculty.

If other concerns arise, the student is expected to discuss these concerns openly and honestly with the appropriate faculty member using the designated chain-of-command. The student may also seek guidance from their academic advisor and/or MSN Program Director. If resolution cannot be reached, the student may file a formal complaint and follow the designated process.

Formal Complaint

Formal complaints are defined as complaints from internal or external stakeholders that cannot be addressed by existing due process policies. The process for management of such complaints includes:

- Complaints must be submitted to the Chairperson of the Department of Nursing in written format and signed by the complainant.
- Anonymous submissions will not be acknowledged, nor will written comments provided on behalf of an anonymous source.
- The Chairperson will respond to all complaints within ten working days to attempt resolution of the complaint.
- If satisfactory resolution is not or cannot be reached, the complainant may appeal to the Dean of the College of Science & Health.

- The Dean will respond in writing to the complainant within ten working days. A copy of the written response will be forwarded to the Chairperson.
- If satisfactory resolution is not reached at the Dean level, the appeal may be submitted to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. A written response to the complainant will be completed within ten working days. The decision of the Provost is final. A copy of the decision will be forwarded to the Dean of the College of Science & Health.
- The Chairperson will maintain a file on all formal complaints.
- The Chairperson will provide a summary report at the Annual Program Evaluation Meeting of each academic year's formal complaints received/resolved with recommendations, as indicated, for program improvement.

Computer Literacy

Students must have a MWSU email account and have basic computer skills including the ability to; type and edit a Word document, create a PowerPoint, attach a document within an email, scan and upload documents and complete class assignments via the online learning management system.

Conferences/Events

The Department of Nursing may require students to attend scheduled professional conferences and events. This will be communicated to students in advance and will be included in course syllabi.

Confidentiality

A strict ethical and legal (HIPAA) obligation exists for nurses to respect client confidentiality and not to reveal information without the client's consent. Confidentiality of medical information on patients and information regarding the conduct of health care agency personnel must be honored. In order to practice in the clinical environment, students are required to sign a confidentiality statement for the university to hold privileged information in confidence. Violation of confidentiality may be reflected in course grade or may result in dismissal from the program (see Dismissal Policy.)

Health Information Portability and Accountability Act

The Health Information Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) established standards for health care providers in the protection of patient health information. Private patient information must be kept confidential and can only be disclosed or used for specific purposes related to an individual's care. In order to practice in the clinical environment, students are required to sign a Confidentiality Statement for the university.

Conduct Report

Student behavior that is not consistent with professional standards (ANA Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice, ANA Code of Ethics, MWSU Student Code of Conduct, Nurse Practice Act, and HIPAA) will be reflected in evaluation/grading and may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Conduct Reports should be initiated anytime the instructor deems it appropriate to document a student's performance in writing for their permanent file. This serves as a tracking mechanism for patterns of behavior as well as documentation of student acknowledgment of classroom and/or clinical concerns.

The conduct report includes:

- The event

- Plan for improvement/correction.
- Consequences for repeat behavior and/or failure to meet expectations of plan.
- Timelines for expected improvement.
- Signature of faculty member with date.
- Signature of student with date.

In addition, the Early Intervention process may be initiated through the Student Affairs department.

Impaired Nursing Student

Students in the Nursing Program at Missouri Western State University (MWSU) are expected to practice according to the standards set by the profession. The Missouri Nurse Practice Act, the American Nurses Association's (ANA) Scope and Standards of Practice and the Code of Ethics for Nurses document these expectations. The nursing faculty believes that they have a professional and ethical responsibility to provide a safe teaching and learning environment and to protect the welfare of the public. As such, nursing faculty have a responsibility to take action when a student's behavior deviates from these professional standards, including a student whose behavior is significantly impaired.

The problems of chemical abuse and/or mental illness, resulting in unsafe behaviors must be proactively addressed when identified in nursing students. The nursing faculty will intervene with the impaired student as outlined in the Procedure for Faculty Intervention with the Impaired Nursing Student and in accordance with the Nursing Student Handbook with reference to Nursing Student Ethical-Legal Liability and Student Responsibilities. MWSU Department of Nursing may request a student to have a drug retest for cause at any point, without notice, during the nursing program at the student's expense (See Nursing Student Drug Testing Policy).

The nursing program follows the university's policy prohibiting disruptive behavior and the illegal possession, use, or distribution of drugs and/or alcohol by students on university property or as a part of any university affiliated academic activity, including off-campus clinical learning experiences. Violators will be prosecuted in accordance with applicable laws and ordinances and will be subject to disciplinary action by the university in conformance with university policy (See MWSU Student Handbook regarding Code of Conduct for Students and Alcohol and Drug Policies).

The nursing faculty defines the impaired student as a person who, while in the academic or clinical setting, demonstrates unsafe behaviors resulting from mental illness or from chemical abuse. Chemical abuse is defined as abusing, either separately or in combination: alcohol, over-the-counter medications, illegal drugs, prescribed medications, inhalants, or synthetic designer drugs. Abuse of the substances includes episodic misuse or chronic use that has produced psychological and/or physical symptoms. Mental illness is an acute or chronic condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, moods, and functioning. Mental illness can interfere in coping with the ordinary demands of work, school, and family. Disruptive behavior is defined as conduct that reflects unfavorably on the individual or university community; or exhibits behavior/activities which endangers self or others and/or disrupts class or university activities.

Professional Appearance

Professional appearance promotes an image of a professional nurse. In addition to the requirements in this policy, MWSU students must comply with individual dress code requirements set forth by the clinical agency in which they are placed. Violations to the Professional Appearance Policy may warrant a Conduct Report and

possible removal from clinical (see Conduct Report).

- **Attire** – Scrubs and/or professional attire is to be worn in the clinical setting. The MWSU student ID must be visible at all times.
- **Equipment** – Students are responsible to all necessary equipment to complete clinical, including, but not limited to stethoscope, pen, paper, etc.
- **Hair and Personal Hygiene** – It is expected that students practice good personal hygiene. Hair will be clean, of a natural hair color, and of sufficient length, pulled back from face and secured in a ponytail. Bangs will be secured, if below eyebrow length, by plain bobby pins. Headbands will be solid white, gray, black, or Griffon gold. Facial hair will be clean and manicured close to the face. Facial hair will not extend beyond the mandible or chin. Hats will not be allowed.
- **Make-up and Nails** - Make-up will be conservative. No cologne or perfume will be allowed. Fingernails will be no longer than the tops of fingertips. No artificial nails, nail polish, gel nails, nail wraps or any nail adornment will be allowed.
- **Jewelry and Piercings** – One ring per hand is allowed. Facial piercings will be limited to one piercing or button in each of the lower lobes of the ear. Earrings or gauges will be round and no larger than 6 mm in diameter. Other piercings will be removed during lab and clinical or covered by flesh colored tape or earring covers/caps. No necklaces or bracelets are permitted.
- **Tattoos** – Visible tattoos are not a part of the MWSU Department of Nursing overall professional dress and appearance. Students will be required to cover them as much as possible in clinical and settings unless such covering of the tattoo creates a safety or infection control issue. Such exceptions must be approved by the MSN Program Director or Chairperson of the Department of Nursing.
- **Food and Drink** – Food and drink, including chewing gum and candy, are prohibited in patient care areas. All food and drink will be kept in designated dining areas in the clinical facility.

Professional Licensure

Students are required to maintain a current, unencumbered nursing license while enrolled in the MSN program. Failing to do so may result in program dismissal.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

Those students seeking financial aid should see a representative in the Financial Aid Office located in Eder Hall, 271-4361. The Financial Aid Office representative can assist students with information regarding various types of loans, grants, job assistance, and scholarships. Upon admission into the MSN Program, students are also eligible to compete for specific nursing and graduate school scholarships. Applications and information are available online at www.missouriwestern.edu/Finaid/

Social Media Policy

Web-based tools that allow interactive and highly accessible communication between individuals is also known as Social Media and the use of electronic devices can improve and strengthen the knowledge and understanding of the student, instructor, and client. MSN students have the responsibility to understand the benefits, responsibilities, and potential consequences of their participation in social media both as a student and as a licensed registered nurse. The use of social media by MSN students reflect on their individual professional self-image and that of the global image of health care professionals.

The Department of Nursing suggests that nursing students observe the following tips for online behavior endorsed by the American Nurses Association:

https://www.ncsbn.org/NSNA_Social_Media_Recommendations.pdf

Student Organizations

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society - Omicron Nu Chapter Missouri Western State University established the Omicron Nu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society to:

- recognize superior achievement;
- recognize the development of leadership qualities;
- foster high professional standards;
- encourage creative work; and
- strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession.

If an MSN student is not currently a member, they may be inducted as a community leader during the MSN program.

Student Input/Program Evaluation

The Department of Nursing requests that all students participate in ongoing evaluation of the Nursing Program. Student feedback is essential to the continued growth and development of the MSN program.

- **Evaluation:** At the end of each semester, students provide feedback for each course and instructor through end of course evaluations. Upon graduation, students are asked to complete an end of program survey.
- **Student Forums:** Students will be given the opportunity and are encouraged to participate in student forums with graduate faculty to discuss issues and concerns.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

Admission Requirements

In addition to be accepted to the Graduate School, prospective MSN Health Care Leadership and Nurse Educator students need to meet the following criteria:

- B.S.N. from a CCNE, ACEN, or CNEA accredited college or university
- Current, unencumbered RN license
- Minimum of undergraduate GPA of 2.75 or higher and nursing GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Completion of undergraduate statistics and research methods courses with a grade of 'B' or higher
- Completed MSN program application form
- Curriculum vitae/Resume
- Supporting statement of interest discussing career goals for the selected program track

Criminal background checks may be required. An applicant who has been found guilty of a Class A or B felony will not be admitted.

In addition to the criteria for MSN admission, students interested in the MSN Health Care Leadership/MBA program need to meet the MBA admission criteria:

MBA Admission Requirements:

MBA admissions is reviewed and approved by the current MBA director

- Students with a BSBA degree from an AACSB accredited program are unconditionally admitted with:
- An overall GPA of 3.0 or higher **OR**
- An overall GPA of 2.75 or higher with a 3.0 or higher in the last 60 hours
- CATEGORY 2: In addition to the above GPA requirements, non-BSBA graduates and BSBA graduates from non-AACSB programs are conditionally admitted and must earn a 3.0 GPA after the first 9 graduate hours for full admission. The following is recommended for students in category 2:
 - Completion of the undergraduate AACSB accredited business courses in the areas of accounting, finance, management, marketing and statistics **OR**
 - Completion of any recommended MWSU online bridging modules

Conditional admission

An applicant who does not meet all admissions requirements may be granted conditional admission based on individual circumstances.

Conditions for admission include:

1. **Admission requirement: Current, unencumbered RN license**
 - a. If the student does not yet have their RN license, they could be conditionally accepted into the program with the requirement of having their current unencumbered RN license within one semester of starting the program.
2. **Admission requirements: Minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.75 and nursing GPA of 3.0 or higher**
 - a. If the student does not meet either the minimum undergraduate or nursing GPA requirements, the director could choose from the following conditions
 - b. Earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 during your first semester
 - c. Earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in the first nine graduate hours

- d. Earns grades of B or higher in the first six graduate credits completed
- 3. Admission requirements: Completion of undergraduate statistics and research methods courses with a grade of “B” or higher**
 - a. Earn a grade of “B” or better in a research course
 - b. Earn a grade of “B” or better in a statistics course
 - c. Earn a grade of “B or higher” in an undergraduate research course
 - d. Earn a grade of “B” or higher in an undergraduate statistics course
- 4. MBA Admissions Requirements (Conditions are at the discernment of the MBA director):**
 - a. Successfully complete the accounting, finance, management, marketing, and statistics bridging modules
 - b. Earn a grade of “C” or higher in the CSC254 Computing Concepts II OR pass the related certification exam
 - c. Earn a grade of “C” or higher in the CSC294 Networking and Telecommunications OR pass the related certification exam
 - d. Earn a grade of “C” or higher in CSC305 Database Architecture and Concepts OR pass the related certification exam
 - e. Successfully pass the Missouri Content Assessment in content area of expertise within 2 semesters of initial enrollment

Grading Scale

Specific requirements for each course and the method for determining the student’s course grade can be found in each course syllabus. The grading scale utilized by Missouri Western State University Department of Nursing is as follows:

90 - 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 79	D
Less than 60	F

A grade of “C” or better is required in all graduate courses.

Grade Appeal Process

Students are responsible for meeting the standards for academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled. Students should maintain ongoing and open communication with the instructor.

In the event that a student believes that the grade received was based on something other than the performance in the course, that the grade assignment was the result of more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the course, or that the assignment of the grade was representative of a substantial departure from the instructor’s previously announced standards, an appeal may be made.

The student must discuss the course grade with the instructor of the course no later than 30 days into the

succeeding regular academic semester. If the student desires to appeal the grade further, the student must notify the Chairperson of the Department of Nursing in writing. The appeal must be made to the Chairperson no later than ten (10) calendar days after the aforementioned 30 days. The Chairperson shall notify the student in writing of the departmental decision within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the written appeal. If the appeal is not resolved at the departmental level, the student may follow the grade appeal process outlined in the *MWSU Student Handbook*. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate and proceed through the grade appeal process as outlined in the [MWSU Student Handbook](#)

Leave of Absence Policy

Students are encouraged to maintain continuous enrollment in the master's program. However, at times it is necessary for a student to take time off from graduate school for health, personal or financial reasons. If a student does not enroll in a minimum of 1 credit hour, they will be required to re-apply for admission to MWSU, the Graduate School, and the MSN Program. The re-admission process is the same as the initial admission process, including the \$50 admission fee paid to GradCAS. As per MWSU Graduate School policy, graduate degrees must be completed in 6 years.

Additional information on the Graduate School Withdrawal/Extended Leave of Absence Policy can be found in the MWSU Graduate School Catalog.

Graduation Requirements

In order to be eligible for graduation, a student must:

- Complete the course work specified in the degree's Program of Study
- Earn an overall GPA of at least 3.0 with no more than 6 credits of C
- Complete the capstone experience required in the Program of Study

NURSING PROGRESSION POLICIES

Nursing Academic Probation Policy

Probation:

- Students may only receive a final course grade of C or lower in six credit hours in the program.
 - Students who earn a C or lower in any graduate course will result in the student being placed on academic probation in the next enrolled semester (including Summer).
 - A single final course grade of D, F, or W in any MSN course will result in the student being placed on academic probation in the next enrolled semester (including Summer).
- Graduate students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher each semester.
 - Students who earn an overall graduate GPA below 3.0 in a single semester will be placed on academic probation in the next enrolled semester (including Summer).

Once on Academic Probation:

- Regardless of the reason for being placed on academic probation, the student must earn a term GPA of 3.0 or higher in the next enrolled semester (including Summer).
- Once the student earns a term GPA of 3.0 or higher in the next semester, the student will be removed from academic probation.

Dismissal:

The MSN committee recommends student dismissal to the MSN Program Director. The MSN program director notifies students of dismissal in writing. Any student who is dismissed and has exhausted all appeals will be administratively withdrawn from MSN courses.

The MSN student may be dismissed from the nursing program for any of the following reasons:

- The student earns a final course grade of D, F, or W on the second attempt.
- The student is on academic probation and fails to earn a term GPA of 3.0 or higher in the probationary semester.
- The student earns more than six credit hours of C or lower
- The student earns more than one final course grade of D, F, or W during the program
- Knowingly furnishing false information.
- Failure to comply with *ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses*, *ANA Scope and Standards for Nursing Practice*, or violation of confidentiality standards.
- Failure to maintain an active, unencumbered nursing license in any state of licensure.

Incompletes in the MSN Program

A student may only have an incomplete during one semester of the program. If the student needs an incomplete for any other semester, they must have prior approval from the MSN committee.

Student Appeal of Recommendation for Dismissal

Upon notification of dismissal, the student may submit a request for readmission to the MSN Program Director within 5 university working days of receipt of letter of dismissal. The request should be presented in writing detailing the rationale for why the student should be readmitted. The letter should include a description of the circumstances that led to the student's poor performance and strategies for improved performance if readmitted. Readmission decisions will consider the following factors:

- Evidence of unusual or extreme extenuating circumstances that led to poor performance.
- Evidence that the student sought out and used resources in an attempt to improve performance.

- Past academic performance
- Written communication or conduct reports on file related to student performance

The MSN Program Director will consult with the MSN Committee and provide a written decision to the student within 10 university working days following receipt of the request for readmission.

If the student disagrees with the decision, an appeal may be made to the Director of Graduate Programs within 5 university working days following the receipt of the denial of request for readmission. The Director of Graduate Programs will notify the student and the MSN Program Director of the decision within 10 university working days.

If the student disagrees with the Director of Graduate Program's decision, an appeal may be made to the Provost within 5 university working days following the receipt of the Director's decision. The Provost will notify the student, Director, and MSN Program Director within 10 working days. The decision of the Provost is final.

Readmission to the MSN Program is not guaranteed, however, all requests for readmission will be considered. **A student may be readmitted to the MSN program only one time in 6 years from the date the program of study form was signed. A student may be readmitted to the Nurse Educator Certificate program only one time in 3 years from the date the program of study form was signed.**

The Graduate School policy for Appealing an Academic Suspension must be followed if the student is dismissed from the Graduate School.