CNS Handbook

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## Overview

The College of Nursing (CON) at Michigan State University offers master’s and doctoral practice degrees in the Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). Consistent with the CON mission, graduates are prepared to lead nursing practice partnerships that translate nursing science into practice to improve health outcomes.

The master’s core coursework and population specific courses all build on the previous learning of the baccalaureate degree in nursing. The graduates of the MSN program are prepared as advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and are eligible to sit for certification in their chosen population focus.

The master’s program of study is informed by eight MSN program objectives and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) MSN Essentials. At the end of the master’s program, the graduate will be able to:

| MSN Essentials  (AACN, 2011) | Graduate Program Objectives |
| --- | --- |
| I. Background for Practice from Science and Humanities | 1. Synthesize theories from nursing and related disciplines that are applicable to a specialty area of advanced practice. |
| II. Organizational and Systems Leadership | 7. Assume a leadership role to advocate for care based on ethical principles that values diversity in populations and advocates for health care access across care delivery systems.  8.  Analyze organization and system outcomes in relation to resource utilization and management to achieve quality outcomes. |
| III. Quality Improvement and Safety | 3. Utilize evidence-based data to examine health issues, evaluate program outcomes and processes relevant to nursing practice. |
| IV. Translating and Integrating Scholarship into Practice | 2. Contribute to the profession of nursing through the evaluation and application of relevant research evidence to inform and shape clinical practice. |
| V. Informatics and Healthcare Technologies | 6. Demonstrate leadership within healthcare systems through the use of interdisciplinary collaboration, information technology, research dissemination, and political advocacy to improve population health and system outcomes. |
| VI. Health Policy and Advocacy | 7. Assume a leadership role to advocate for care based on ethical principles that value diversity in populations and advocates for health care access across care delivery systems. |
| VII. Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes | 6. Demonstrate leadership within healthcare systems through the use of interdisciplinary collaboration, information technology, research dissemination, and political advocacy to improve population health and system outcomes. |
| VIII. Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving Health | 5. Deliver advanced nursing care within an area of specialization derived from scientific principles and the best available evidence to promote optimum health outcomes across diverse populations. |

The DNP program of study is informed by six DNP Program objectives. At the end of the doctoral program, students should be able to:

| DNP Essentials  AACN, 2006 | BSN-DNP Program Objectives |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Scientific Underpinnings for Practice | 1. Utilize science-based theories and current evidence to inform practice and improve healthcare delivery. 2. Apply ethically sound decision-making processes. |
| 1. Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking | 4. Demonstrate leadership to promote  high quality, cost effective,  interprofessional and equitable care  for individuals, aggregates, and  populations.  5. Influence health policies that  improve outcomes of care for  culturally diverse and underserved  communities and populations. |
| 1. Clinical Scholarship and Analytical methods for Evidence-Based Practice | 1. Utilize science-based theories and current evidence to inform practice and improve healthcare delivery.   3. Apply clinical scholarship, analytic  methods and information technology  to implement evidenced based  advanced practice nursing.  4. Demonstrate leadership to promote  high quality, cost effective,  interprofessional and equitable care  for individuals, aggregates, and  populations.  6. Provide safe and competent clinical  care as an advanced practice nurse. |
| 1. Information Systems/Technology and Patient Care Technology for the Improvement and Transformation of Health Care | 3. Apply clinical scholarship, analytic  methods and information technology  to implement evidenced based  advanced practice nursing.  6. Provide safe and competent clinical  care as an advanced practice nurse. |
| 1. Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care | 2. Apply ethically sound decision-  making processes.  5. Influence health policies that  improve outcomes of care for  culturally diverse and underserved  communities and populations. |
| 1. Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes | 4. Demonstrate leadership to promote  high quality, cost effective,  interprofessional and equitable care  for individuals, aggregates, and  populations.  5. Influence health policies that  improve outcomes of care for  culturally diverse and underserved  communities and populations.  6. Provide safe and competent clinical  care as an advanced practice nurse. |
| 1. Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation’s Health | 3. Apply clinical scholarship, analytic  methods and information technology  to implement evidenced based  advanced practice nursing.  5. Influence health policies that  improve outcomes of care for  culturally diverse and underserved  communities and populations. |
| 1. Advanced Nursing Practice | 3. Apply clinical scholarship, analytic  methods and information technology  to implement evidenced based  advanced practice nursing.  5. Influence health policies that  improve outcomes of care for  culturally diverse and underserved  communities and populations.  6. Provide safe and competent clinical  care as an advanced practice nurse. |

In addition, each population foci have further defined student outcomes that support the chosen clinical specialization and are consistent with the achievement of overall DNP Program objectives.

The clinical nurse specialist role is designed to prepare registered nurses to achieve an advanced nursing practice in an acute care setting. This is delivered completely online. This program is a minimum of 54 credits for the master’s and 70 credits for the doctoral degree. The master’s and the doctoral program provide clinical practicum experiences exceeding the 500 clinical hours minimum required to sit for the national certification examination in the population focus.

Graduates are eligible for certification Adult-Gerontology CNS. The program may be completed in a three (3) year full-time or four (4) year part-time program of study. Master’s and doctoral students complete core courses related to theoretical foundations and evidence-based practice, health policy, informatics, leadership, epidemiology. Courses in pathophysiology, population health, pharmacology, advanced health assessment, and advanced practice nursing issues are required in preparation for CNS Advanced Practice Role Development courses. The CNS master’s and DNP programs are fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

Clinical experience is an essential component of the program. Clinical experiences are based on each student’s goals, needs, and availability of clinical sites. Clinical experiences involve active participation in interprofessional management of health care services for patients and their community.

## MSN Degree Requirements

* Completion of all required courses with an earned grade of 3.0 or higher
* Satisfactory completion of a master’s project

## DNP Degree Requirements

* Completion of all required courses with an earned grade of 3.0 or higher
* Satisfactory completion of a scholarly DNP project
* Completion of 240 DNP project practicum hours
* Completion of a total of 1095 clinical hours, 240 if from the project practicum hours

## Add Links to DNP and Master’s CNS programs

Following the initial screening, applicants identified as well-matched with the College of Nursing academic standards and program focus will be contacted for a required personal interview with program faculty. Recommendations for admission are made by the faculty committee to the Dean of the College based on the requirements for admission and the personal interview.

## Michigan State Residency

MSU is obligated to comply with other states’ laws regarding the delivery of distance education. Detailed information is available from the Office of the Registrar at <https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/StateAuth/USDOEProcess.aspx>

Students who relocate to another state after admission to the CNS program need to contact the Office of Student Affairs.

## Academic Standards

Progression is dependent upon the following guidelines.

1. A 3.0 cumulative GPA, and a minimum of a 3.0 or passing grade in each required (both NUR and non-NUR numbered) courses, must be maintained to continue to progress. If a grade below 3.0 is attained, the student will be dismissed from the program.
2. To request permission to repeat a course in which a grade of 2.5 or below was received, the student initiates the process by sending a letter of request to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs requesting permission to repeat the course and providing the rationale/plan that will facilitate success if permission is granted.
3. If approved by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, a student may repeat a course in which a grade of 2.5 or below was received. A course may be repeated only once. The student must request and receive written approval and meet the conditions for continuation to proceed in the program before enrollment in additional courses.

## Dismissal and Reinstatement Process - DRAFT Policy

Students who receive a course grade of ***less than 3.0 or Fail*** at the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) level, are dismissed from the program.

The following process is designed to align with University Hearing Board processes and facilitate timely, equitable, and transparent resolution of dismissal and reinstatement requests:

1. Per CON policy, the student will be informed of APRN program dismissal when a NUR course grade is below passing expectations (3.0 or Fail).
2. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (ADAA) will be informed of failures by the Director of the Office of Student Affairs (DOSA) and will sign letters of dismissal, sent by secure email.
3. In this letter, the student is instructed that if they wish to return to their CON APRN program, they must submit a letter of request, with detailed explanation of plans for success, to the ADAA or their designee within 72 hours of receiving the letter, or requesting the ADAA for an extension.
4. The ADAA or designee will contact appropriate course faculty, program director, and/or faculty advisor to receive input on the students’ potential for success and recommendations regarding reinstatement.
5. Upon receipt of a request for reinstatement from the student, the ADAA or their designee will respond to the student that the request has been received and is being processed.
6. Upon reaching a collaborative decision with faculty mentioned in #4 above, the ADAA or designee will notify the DOSA to draft a letter for signature based on the recommendation of reinstatement or denial of the request resulting in dismissal.
7. The student will be notified of the outcome by secure email.
8. The ADAA notifies the chair of the Advanced Practice Program Committee (APPC) of the failure situation and outcome.
9. If the student disagrees with the decision, they have the right to appeal the CON decision based on University policy and the CON policy in the student handbook.
10. If an appeal is requested, a College Hearing Board (CHB) is convened.
11. The CHB will consist of 2 faculty members and 2 APRN students. The chair of APPC will serve as chair of the CHB unless there is a conflict, in which case another elected APPC member will be designated. The 2nd member will be selected from remaining elected APPC faculty members. Student members will be selected from APPC and/or Student Advisory Council (SAC) members. If not enough faculty members or students are available from these groups, another APRN faculty member and/or APRN student will be identified and invited to participate. The CHB chair will conduct the hearing according to University established processes.
12. The student has the right to appeal the CHB decision per University policy.

## Reinstatement After Lapse in Enrollment

Graduate students who have stepped away for three academic semesters or more **must** request readmission in a letter to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs by February 1 for Fall semester, August 1 for Spring semester or December 1 for Summer semester addressing the following:

* Reason for seeking readmission
* Reason for withdrawal/dismissal
* How his/her situation has changed in the interim
* Which semester the student wishes to return
* Response to any recommendations that may have been made at the time of withdrawal/dismissal

Requests for reinstatement should be sent to the Office of Student Affairs and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The final decision for readmission will be determined by the Dean and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs who will notify the student in writing of the final decision.

Students who have failed to enroll for more than one academic year must also

* Complete and submit a University Application for Readmission (available online at [www.reg.msu.edu](http://www.reg.msu.edu/), click on Readmissions) at least 2 months prior to the first day of registration.
* Complete and submit necessary compliance documentation including completion of new background check and drug screen.

## Responsible Conduct of Research Graduate School Requirements – DRAFT Policy

All MSU graduate students are required to complete the Responsible Conduct of Research trainings. The following links will provide you with the guidelines for how you will complete these requirements during your graduate education.

## Scholarly Project

Students in each concentration are required to complete a scholarly project.  Master’s students will complete a Master’s project. The project is specifically related to the specialty of the student and are selected in collaboration with faculty.

DNP students will complete a DNP project embedded in NUR 995, 996, and 997.

## University Exit Surveys

Exit surveys are provided to all graduating students. The survey data is used to collect information regarding the educational experiences and profession plans after graduation. This information is used to improve the curriculum and guide the development of graduate study initiatives.

The identity of all respondents will be kept confidential and only aggregate (group) information will be made available to faculty and administrators. An email reminder will be sent from the MSU Graduate School Dean prior to completion of the program. The survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete.

## Clinical Nurse Specialist Certification

Completion of the clinical nurse specialist concentration of the MSN or DNP degree qualifies students to sit for both the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) **OR** the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN).

## Annual Progress Reports

All students will be assigned an academic faculty advisor upon admission to the MSN or DNP program. An annual progress report is completed on all students in collaboration with their faculty advisor, in fulfillment of the University Graduate School requirements. The annual progress report is a part of the electronic student academic file.

## Faculty Advisor

The duties of CON faculty advisors in the MSN and DNP degree program are dictated by the University Graduate School.

Faculty advisors are expected to:

* Be a mentor for their advisees
* Demonstrate professional role modeling
* Serve as the DNP project faculty mentor
* Develop a plan of study in collaboration with the program director

## Student Expectations

Faculty advising provides an opportunity for mentoring and professional guidance in a collegial and safe environment. Socialization and mentoring are best achieved in a mutually responsive relationship.

Students are expected to:

* Make regular contact with their faculty advisor, at least once per semester
* Respond to all faculty advisor communication within a reasonable timeframe
* Communicate any changes in circumstances that may impede ability to complete coursework as required
* Give faculty advisor editing rights to e-portfolio and competency tracking sheets
* All university communication must be done using office MSU email (@msu.edu)

Students may initiate a change of advisor assignment by contacting the Office of Student Affairs. The CON assigns the faculty advisor after consultation with the appropriate parties.

## Completion of Graduate Studies Expectations

Graduate program studies must be completed within six years from the beginning of the first enrollment in which credit is earned toward the degree. If a student is unable to complete the degree within the six-year time limit, he/she may submit a request for a time extension. Submitted extension requests should not be viewed as guaranteed re-enrollment. A one time, one-year extension is the maximum time that may be granted.

## Leave of Absence

Students who have completed courses in the program may submit a request for a leave of absence for no more than one year. A new plan of study should be developed in collaboration with the faculty advisor and program director. The decision to approve/disapprove leave requests is at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Students who stop out for more than three semesters without an approved and current plan of study are subject to dismissal from the program. Reinstatement in the program is based on compliance with the plan of study and the availability of space in required courses.

## Independent Study

NUR 990: Special Problems (Independent Study in Nursing)

NUR 990 permits students to develop personal competencies through individualized experiences and student interest in an area. It allows exploration of an area in greater depth and/or from a different perspective than is possible within the limits of required courses. The content explored must not be available through an existing course. The student takes initiative for selection of a topic, issue or problem, and assumes major responsibility for the associated planning, implementation and evaluation. The student seeks consultation and guidance from a faculty member selected by the student.

This course is available for any interested graduate student but is required for post-graduate DNP students.

NUR 990 is a variable credit course (1-6 cr.) Students may enroll for a maximum total of 8 credits in excess of those required in the curriculum. The number of credits is based upon the scope of the topic, issue or problem, and the associated objectives. The following guidelines should be utilized:

* Search for information from the library and other sources
  + 1 credit = 30 hours
* Clinical application of the independent study process
  + 1 credit = 45 clinical hours
* A combination of #1 and #2 may occur

Enrollment requirements

Prior to enrollment in the NUR 990, students must:

* Select a topic, issue or problem related to nursing or healthcare systems
* Determine the scope of the study, with timeframe
* Secure approval by faculty advisor
* Complete the Michigan State University CON [Application for Independent Study](https://reg.msu.edu/read/pdf/indestudyapp.pdf)
* Obtain the required signatures
* Send the Application for Independent Study to the Office of Student Affairs for processing

The Independent Study Form is a written contract and is completed by the student and faculty advisor prior to the semester the independent study will be taken.

Evaluation and Grading

To develop a plan for evaluation and grade assignment in NUR 990, the following information should be included:

* A clear and appropriate purpose and scope of the project
* Objectives should reflect measurable outcomes
  + May be revised as necessary
  + Should be consistent with the topic
  + Must define the issue or problem selected
  + Are attainable within the predetermined time allotted
* Time required to meet objectives matches the registered number of credits
* The approaches used to achieve the project outcomes are clearly stated
* The conduct of the project reflects self-direction and self-evaluation
* All University IRB requirements must be adhered to

Students using NUR 990 for clinical or practicum hours will need to follow the above noted requirements, in addition to the following:

* Discuss desired clinical placement with faculty advisor
* Follow CON process for clinical site placement

The parameters for grading are provided in the Application for Independent Study.

## Transfer Credits

Up to 25% of graduate coursework (excluding DNP project credits) may be transferred into the MSN or DNP program from an accredited program.

The transfer of course credits from other institutions may be completed through the following procedure:

* When possible, obtain written permission from the faculty advisor and program director before enrolling in a course at another University.
  + Send a copy of this written permission to: College of Nursing Student Affairs, Bott Building for Nursing Education and Research.
* When the course is completed at another institution, request that official transcript of the grade(s) be sent to:
  + College of Nursing, Office of Student Affairs, Bott Building for Nursing Education and Research, 1355 Bogue Street, Room C120, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1317.
* Students must submit the course syllabi and an official transcript for review when requesting credit for transfer courses completed without prior approval.
  + Materials should be submitted to the College of Nursing, Office of Student Affairs, Bott Building for Nursing Education and Research, 1355 Bogue Street, Room C120, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1317.

## Clinical Educational Experience

Each student will be placed with preceptors who possess appropriate credentials (licensure, certifications, and at least one year of clinical experience). Preceptors practice settings should facilitate achievement of student competencies educational goals. Preceptors must be present during the students’ hours at the agency for the clinical experience to count towards required hours.

## Clinical Placements

Student clinical placements are arranged by the CON clinical placement coordinator in collaboration with concentration program director. Clinical placement assignments are determined by availability of required clinical opportunities for students and a valid affiliation agreement with the hosting agency. Student clinical placement assignments may not be exchanged between students. All clinical placement communication and other CON notifications are through MSU email.

There are many external factors that affect the complexity of securing clinical placements (e.g. other nursing programs, medical students, physician assistant students, residents, and implementations of electronic documentation systems). Therefore, the clinical placement process is an established framework to facilitate appropriate clinical sites that will meet the course and program objectives, and concentration specific NP competencies.

Students identifying extenuating circumstances that could affect their clinical assignment are required to submit a description of their specific circumstance to the clinical placement coordinator as soon as possible. Not all requests for assignment considerations can be honored.

Students may not be mentored by a relative/partner or in the clinical unit or department in which the student is currently employed. Other departments or units within the same agency are acceptable.

## Fees/Agency Compliance Requirements

Students are responsible for any associated agency/system placement costs, and specific agency compliance requirements that may require additional time prior to entering clinical (e.g., additional background checks, electronic health record [EHR] training).

## Travel Requirements

Clinical experiences are provided in a variety of settings throughout the state. Students are responsible to make all travel arrangements necessary to complete the degree requirements. This includes travel arrangements and transportation to and from clinical agencies. Parking provisions vary from agency-to-agency. Students are required to follow agency policies regarding parking.

## Scholarships

The College of Nursing administers several scholarships which are established by the gifts and contributions of various private donors and friends of the College. Scholarship amounts vary and include both merit-based and need-based criterion.

The application deadline for College of Nursing scholarships is March 1; applications are available in the Office of Student Affairs and online at <http://nursing.msu.edu/Students/Scholarships/Scholarships.htm>.

## Council of Graduate Students (COGS)

The Council of Graduate Students (COGS) represents all registered Michigan State University graduate and graduate-professional students. COGS is composed of one representative from each degree-granting unit and seven officers. COGS exists to:

* Promote the academic, social, and economic aims of graduate and graduate-professional students
* Establish effective communication among these students
* Increase communication with other student organizations, and with the academic and administrative units of the University

COGS maintains an office at 316 Student Services Building where it provides a copy service and a thesis and dissertation printing service. The e-mail address is [cogs@msu.edu](mailto:cogs@msu.edu).

COGS has also arranged for graduate students to use the ASMSU Legal Services.

## Standing Committees with Student Representation

The standing committees in the University and College of Nursing with graduate student representation are:

* Council of Graduate Students
* Advanced Practice Program Committee
* Student Advisory Council

Student involvement is welcomed. Please reach out to the concentration program director should you be interested in joining as a student representative.

## Student Organization Involvement

Graduate students are encouraged to join one or more of the student organizations listed below:

* Sigma Theta Tau, Inc.
* Doctoral Nursing Association (DNA)
* Michigan Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (MI-CNS)