



 | NORTHWESTERN STATE

Master of Science in Nursing
Post Master's Certificate
Student Handbook

2018-2020

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**NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF NURSING
GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN NURSING
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING (MSN) PROGRAM

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program at Northwestern State University (NSU), College of Nursing and School of Allied Health in Shreveport (CONSAH), Louisiana provides learning opportunities for registered nurses to build upon baccalaureate nursing education, as well as experiential professional knowledge, attitudes and skills. The MSN program at NSU prepares registered nurses to function and excel in various advanced nursing roles. Graduates of the MSN program are educationally prepared to make significant contributions to the improvement of healthcare and to the advancement of nursing knowledge and practice. The MSN Program provides the student who holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing the opportunity to develop advanced knowledge, intellectual skills and clinical competence necessary for the role of the advanced practice nurse. The clinical concentrations of study include:

- I. Nurse Practitioner (NP)**
 - Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP)
 - Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPCNP)
 - Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)
 - Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PCPNP)
 - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner cross the Lifespan (PMHNP)
 - Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP)

- II. Education**
 - Adult-Gerontology Nursing
 - Maternal, Child, and Family Nursing

- III. Administration**
 - Adult-Gerontology Nursing
 - Maternal, Child, and Family Nursing

- IV. Post Master’s Certificates (PMC)**
 - Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)
 - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner cross the Lifespan (PMHNP)

The MSN Program at NSU is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation>).

The Master's Program is offered online and in-class on the Shreveport Campus, CENLA Campus, and other outreach campuses. General requirements for the Master's Degree at Northwestern State University may be found in the current issue of the Northwestern State University Catalog found at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>.

The primary administrative offices of the College of Nursing are located at 1800 Line Avenue in Shreveport, LA. Another administrative office is located at the Rapides Learning Center in Alexandria, LA. All other university administrative offices and the graduate school are located in Natchitoches, LA. Additional resources and links are provided in Appendix A.

CURRICULUM PURPOSE

The Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing Program's purpose is to provide learning opportunities for: (a) the development of knowledge, intellectual skills, and clinical competence necessary to fulfill the role of the advanced practice registered nurse, nurse educator or nurse administrator; (b) the development of skills and knowledge to function as an educator, an administrator, or a nurse practitioner; and, (c) to provide a foundation for doctoral study.

BELIEFS AND VALUES

The faculty of the Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing Program subscribe to and are guided by the mission of NSU and the mission and philosophy of the College of Nursing. The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program at Northwestern State University (NSU), College of Nursing and School of Allied Health in Shreveport, Louisiana provides learning opportunities for registered nurses to build upon baccalaureate nursing education, as well as experiential professional knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The MSN Program prepares registered nurses to function and excel in various advanced nursing roles such as: nurse educator, nurse administrator, or nurse practitioner. The PMC programs prepare Master's of Nursing to sit for the national certification exam for either the FNP or PMHNP concentration. Graduates of the MSN Program and PMC programs are educationally prepared to make significant contributions to the improvement of healthcare and to the advancement of nursing knowledge and practice.

The master's prepared nurse is one whose expert practice demonstrates advanced skills and knowledge in the provision of health care through direct and indirect client care activities and in the scientific endeavors concerned with nursing. The MSN Program fosters the growth and development of the nurse's clinical skills and knowledge specific to his or her advanced practice concentration and role. By providing a societal, historical, and ethical perspective of professional nursing, the graduate level nurse is prepared to assume influential roles in the profession and within the healthcare system as a whole.

The theory and practice of nursing is fundamental to graduate nursing education. Students are provided with opportunities to critically examine and expand their knowledge of nursing theory, and its application as a foundational component for advanced practice nursing. Additionally, the graduate level nurse is trained in the research process allowing for the

evaluation and application of existing research. Furthermore, knowledge of scientific method will prepare the student to contribute to the body of evidence in nursing research.

Teaching-learning at the master's level in nursing education is facilitated through the utilization of collegial relationships which focus on the dialogue between teacher and learner. The learner is viewed as a unique individual who brings to the learning situation a concept of self which includes a cluster of understandings, skills, values and attitudes which have personal meaning; the learner's activities are motivated by a drive to develop and enhance this perceived self. Teaching-learning is an active process, requiring total involvement of both teacher and learner; it is a profoundly personal experience in which personal meaning is explored and discovered; and it is a social phenomenon, requiring dynamic interaction between teacher and learner. The most important function of the teacher is to facilitate the optimum conditions under which the learner is free to learn. Faculty members believe this concept of teaching-learning is conducive to the development of self-direction and a sense of personal autonomy, which provide motivation for continued lifelong learning.

MSN PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Integrate theories, knowledge, skills and findings from nursing science, scientific disciplines, and humanities to guide the delivery of culturally sensitive care to clients, families, and communities within the professional scope and standards of advanced nursing practice.
2. Demonstrate responsibility and accountability as a practitioner of advanced nursing and consumer advocate to affect relevant change that will improve the health of citizens at a local, state and national level.
3. Utilize a scholarly inquiry process, grounded in evidence-based research, to become a producer and consumer of research evidence which contributes to the development and improvement of nursing theory, nursing practice and ultimately client and healthcare outcomes.
4. Analyze the effect of historical, cultural, economic, ethical, legal and political influence on nursing and health care delivery.
5. Manage resources within a health care delivery system through collaboration with other health care providers, community, and clients.
6. Contribute to the continued professional development and improvement of self, client, community and healthcare delivery systems.

MSN PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Masters of Science in Nursing Program requires a minimum of 39 to 44 semester credits. The student selects predetermined courses that will support his/her **functional role area** (education, administration or nurse practitioner). Additionally, each functional role has a predetermined number of required clinical hours.

PMC PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Synthesize theories from nursing sciences and related disciplines to guide the design and implementation of culturally-sensitive care to client, families, and communities within the respective professional scope and standard of advanced nursing practice.
2. Demonstrate responsibility and accountability as a practitioner of advanced nursing and consumer advocate to effect relevant change that will improve the health of citizens at a local, state and national level.
3. Utilize a scholarly inquiry process, grounded in evidence-based practice, to become a producer and consumer of research evidence which contributes to the development and improvement of nursing theory, nursing practice and ultimately client and healthcare outcomes.
4. Analyze the effect of historical, cultural, economic, ethical, legal, and political influence on nursing and health care delivery.
5. Manage resources within a health care delivery system through collaboration with other health care providers, community, and clients.
6. Contribute to the continued professional development and improvement of self, client, community and healthcare delivery systems.

ACADEMIC MENTORS AND ADVISORS

All graduate nursing students are assigned an academic mentor. The primary purpose of the academic mentor is to counsel students regarding the academic course load and to facilitate progression through the MSN Program. Academic mentors are also advisors; however, students can be advised by any advisor. Students are expected to make an appointment with an advisor prior to each semester for curriculum plan maintenance. The student is responsible for adhering to all graduate admission information in the *University Catalog* and for arranging advising with an advisor. Advising appointments can be made by calling (318) 677-3131. Every student should receive advising prior to registration.

FUNCTIONAL ROLE CONCENTRATIONS

The Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing Program at Northwestern State University is designed to accommodate a great deal of flexibility in meeting the degree requirements. Close collegial association between faculty and students is an important aspect of the learning experience. University policy allows students up to six years to complete the degree requirements. However, with the rapid evolution of nursing and scientific knowledge and technology, nursing students are encouraged to complete the degree requirements in less time when possible.

Full-time students in all clinical areas except the nurse practitioner concentrations may complete the course of studies in four consecutive semesters with admission in the fall semester. The nurse practitioner specialties require five semesters for completion of all program requirements. Full-time and part-time study is available.

NURSE PRACTITIONER

The nurse practitioner clinical sequence has one functional role: Role of the Nurse Practitioner. The MSN program prepares the advanced practice registered nurse in the following NP concentrations: *Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)*, *Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PCPNP)*, *Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP)*, *Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner*, and *Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP)*, *Health Nurse Practitioner Across the Lifespan (PMHNP)*.

Students who pursue this curriculum option will be required to complete courses in advanced assessment, advanced pharmacotherapeutics, and advanced pathophysiology. Nurse practitioner students will be required to complete MSN core courses, NP role courses, concentration specific NP clinical courses and a clinical practicum course in the final semester. Additionally, the student will be required to complete a family dynamics course and research paper-in-lieu-of-thesis (PILT). The nurse practitioner clinical sequence of studies requires a minimum of 42 credits (44 credits for PMHNP) and leads to the MSN degree.

Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)

Family Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Family Nurse Practitioner certification examination, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners' Family Nurse Practitioner certification examination, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in family nursing practice who can function in primary care settings with people of all ages.

Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PCPNP)

Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board Pediatric Nurse Practitioner certification examination. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in pediatric nursing practice who can function in primary care settings to care for children of all ages.

Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP)

Women's Health Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the National Certification Corporation (NCC) Women's Health Nurse Practitioner certification examination and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in women's health who can function in primary care settings to provide comprehensive care to women.

Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPCNP)

Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner certification examination, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners' (AANP)

certification exam, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses who can function in primary care settings to care for adults of all ages.

Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP)

Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Acute Care Nurse Practitioner certification examination, the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) certification exam, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses who can function in acute care settings to care for adults of all ages.

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Across the Lifespan (PMHNP)

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Across the Lifespan graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (Across the Lifespan) National Certification exam, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in psychiatric mental health practice who can function in various settings with people of all ages.

EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The MSN program offers two functional roles of education or administration with a clinical focus in *Adult-Gerontology Nursing* or *Maternal-Child Nursing*

Students who pursue this curriculum option will be required to complete a minimum of 39 credits that include MSN core and clinical courses that support the chosen functional role. Additionally, the student will be required to complete a research paper-in-lieu-of-thesis (PILT).

Adult-Gerontology Nursing

The clinical sequence in Adult-Gerontology Nursing prepares graduate nurses for the practice of advanced nursing, such as to function as teachers in institutions of higher education (*education*) and as leaders in clinical nursing settings in nursing of adults (*administration*).

Maternal-Child Nursing

The clinical sequence in Maternal-Child Nursing prepares graduate nurses for the practice of advanced nursing, such as to function as teachers in institutions of higher education (*education*) and as leaders in clinical nursing settings in nursing of childbearing women and their families (*administration*).

POST MASTER'S CERTIFICATE FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER

The Post-Master Certificate in Family Nurse Practitioner (PMC FNP) program provides master's prepared registered nurses (RNs) the didactic and clinical education necessary to become family nurse practitioners (FNPs). The objectives of this certificate program are to prepare the certificate holder to 1) apply advanced practice skills, abilities and knowledge to provide holistic family centered primary health care to populations across the lifespan in a variety of

ambulatory care settings as an advanced practice nurse specializing in family nursing, 2) provide culturally competent, population-based primary care for minor acute and chronic conditions for the family unit, and 3) demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities to sit for an FNP Certification Examination in order to apply for a state licensure as an APRN, practicing as a board certified FNP with the ability to attain prescriptive authority.

The curriculum plan for each PMC FNP student is based on the MSN FNP curriculum pattern, but will vary depending upon course work already completed during the student's prior graduate program. Each student's formal graduate transcript is reviewed, and a gap analysis is completed to compare previous course work and supervised clinical experiences to the requirements of the MSN FNP curriculum pattern. Courses on the MSN FNP curriculum pattern may be waived if the required course or its equivalent has already been completed. Depending on the course and clinical requirements, the PMC FNP can be obtained in two to five semesters.

POST MASTER'S CERTIFICATE PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

The post master's certificate in psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMC PMHNP) provides the didactic and clinical education necessary to master's prepared registered nurses (RNs) to become psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners. This program prepares the certificate holder to 1) apply advanced practice skills, abilities and knowledge to promote optimal mental health across the lifespan; 2) apply advanced practice knowledge on differential diagnosis and disease management in patients across the lifespan who are at risk for, or have psychiatric/mental health illness, including the use and prescription of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions; 3) provide culturally competent, population-based psychotherapeutic treatment modalities, and 4) demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities to sit for a PMHNP National Certification Examination.

The curriculum plan for each PMC PMHNP student is based on the MSN PMHNP curriculum pattern, but will vary depending upon course work already completed during the student's prior graduate program. Each student's formal graduate transcript is reviewed, and a gap analysis is completed to compare previous course work and supervised clinical experiences to the requirements of the MSN PMHNP curriculum pattern. Courses on the MSN PMHNP curriculum pattern may be waived if the required course or its equivalent has already been completed. Depending on the course and clinical requirements, the PMC PMHNP can be obtained in as little as 4 semesters.

CURRICULUM PATTERNS

Curriculum Patterns for the MSN program are posted on the MSN Website at <https://www.nsula.edu/academics/nursing-allied-health/nursing-program/> and in the *Northwestern State University Catalog* found at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>. Consult an academic advisor for specific information regarding offerings of courses each semester.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Students are directed to the current *Northwestern State University Catalog* found at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/> for specific course descriptions for the MSN program.

ADMISSION TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AND THE GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM

Admission to the MSN Program begins with admission to NSU's Graduate School. **Please note that admission to the Graduate School does not imply admission to the MSN Nurse Practitioner clinical programs.** The application can be found at Northwestern State University's Graduate School <https://graduateschool.nsula.edu/>.

GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATION

Students may schedule the GRE through designated professional testing centers. Applications and information may be obtained from the College of Nursing Student Services Office, the CENLA nursing office, or from the Testing Center at Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana. The mailing address for the GRE is GRE-ETS, P.O. Box 6004, Princeton, NJ 08541-6004. The GRE Web site is <http://www.ets.org/gre/>.

GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION DEADLINE

The application deadline for The Graduate School is at least 30 days in advance of registration. The application can be found at Northwestern State University's Graduate School <https://graduateschool.nsula.edu/>. Applications must be submitted along with the application fee to Northwestern State University Office of Admissions in Natchitoches, Louisiana. Application may be done online using a credit card for the fee. If the student has not been enrolled in the previous year, a new application with application fee must be submitted to Northwestern State University Office of Admissions at Natchitoches.

Graduate students are responsible for reading and following the regulations and requirements of the Graduate School at Northwestern State University. Prior to enrollment in MSN courses, all Graduate School requirements must be met and verified. A student may be admitted by the Graduate School for graduate study; however, as stated above, admission into the Graduate School does not imply admission into the MSN program. Students may take up to 9 hours as a non-degree seeking student; however, graduate nursing courses must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing.

After the admission process is initiated, a major professor form with designation of degree seeking status is completed for each student. The student should receive a copy of the major professor form after the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research has approved the form and the student's admission into the graduate program.

The requirements for eligibility for admission to the Graduate School and to the Master of Science in Nursing program are found in the current *University Catalog*. Students may be accepted on either regular status or conditional status (see below).

Regular Admission to the College of Nursing for MSN Students

1. Bachelor's degree in nursing from an NLN or CCNE accredited college or university
2. Application on file prior to registration
3. Official transcripts on file prior to registration
4. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) combined and quantitative scores of 290.
5. An undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
6. Current unencumbered, unrestricted RN license.
7. Two letters of recommendation for graduate studies.

Having achieved regular status, failure to maintain a grade-point average of 3.0 on all course work pursued, with no grade lower than C and not more than six hours of credit with a grade of C, may result in suspension from further graduate study.

Conditional Admission to the College of Nursing for MSN Students

1. Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited college or university
2. Application on file prior to registration
3. Official transcripts from every college/university attended on file prior to registration
4. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) combined verbal and quantitative score of 284 on file prior to registration
5. An undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale
6. Two Letters of Recommendation for Graduate Studies
7. Current unencumbered, unrestricted RN license
8. Evidence of potential for successful graduate study **may** be required as deemed necessary by the graduate nursing faculty.

Conditional status may be changed to regular status by earning a B or better in the first 9 graduate semester hours pursued. Failure to achieve regular status after the first nine graduate semester hours will result in suspension from the MSN program. However, a letter of appeal with a written endorsement from the student's academic mentor may be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies in Nursing for readmission. If readmission is granted, the student must complete 9 consecutive, additional semester hours of approved degree credit at NSU with a grade of B or better to change to regular status. **Additionally, if the student is in a nurse practitioner concentration, and made less than a B in NURG 5280: Advanced Human Physiology and Pathology and/or NURG 5710: Pharmacotherapeutics, the student must repeat those courses at the next offering and make a B or better.** Failure to achieve regular status will result in terminal suspension from the master's degree program.

All students admitted into the MSN program must provide proof of current, unencumbered registered nurse licensure. If the MSN student is a nurse practitioner student or will be performing clinical learning in the state of Louisiana, proof of current, unencumbered registered nurse licensure in the state of Louisiana is required once the clinical courses begin.

ADMISSION FOR POST-MASTER'S GRADUATE STUDENTS

Post master's graduate students may pursue the family nurse practitioner or Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner across the lifespan certificate. Post master's graduate student admission requirements are the same as admission requirements for all students, with exception of GRE Requirement. PMC students are not required to take the GRE.

1. Master's degree in nursing (or equivalent) from an NLN or CCNE accredited college or University.
2. Application on file prior to registration.
3. Official transcripts on file prior to registration.
4. A graduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
6. Current unencumbered, unrestricted RN license or APRN license.
7. Two letters of recommendation for graduate studies.

Proof of current, unencumbered registered nurse licensure in the state of Louisiana is required once the clinical courses begin.

ADMISSION TO CLINICAL SEQUENCE OF COURSES FOR MSN STUDENTS

Students may take nonclinical courses after acceptance in the College of Nursing Graduate Program; however, to begin the clinical sequence of courses, students must complete a clinical application. The clinical application can be found on the MSN website: :

<https://www.nsula.edu/academics/nursing-allied-health/nursing-program/>

The clinical application must be filled out completely and submitted per the instructions on the website. Students applying for clinical must be accepted to the Graduate School **and** the Graduate nursing program prior to application.

Admission to clinical sequence of courses is based upon a competitive, selective process. While the College of Nursing desires to accept all eligible students into the clinical sequence of courses for their chosen role and concentration, acceptance is based on qualified faculty and clinical site availability. Factors taken into consideration for the selection process include GRE scores, undergraduate GPA, numbers of graduate hours pursued at NSU, and years of experience as an RN. Factors for consideration into the PMHNP concentration may vary from other concentrations.

Clinical application deadline for MSN degree seeking students is JUNE 1st of each academic year. Accepted students will begin the clinical sequence of courses the same Fall semester.

ADMISSION TO CLINICAL SEQUENCE OF COURSES FOR PMC STUDENTS

Post master's certificate students applying for clinical courses must be accepted to the Graduate School **and** the Graduate nursing program prior to application for clinical. Students must complete the clinical application completely (found on the Graduate Nursing website) and submit the application per the instructions on the website. Prior to taking courses at NSU, a

completed GAP analysis should be discussed with the PMC student so it is clear what course work is required.

Post master's certificate students will enter the clinical sequence at various semesters depending on previous course work and supervised clinical hours completed. The application deadlines for each semester are:

JUNE 1st of each academic year for entry into clinical courses in the Fall semester.

November 1st of each academic year for entry into clinical courses in the Spring semester.

March 1st of each academic year for entry into clinical courses in the Summer semester.

READMISSION TO CLINICAL SEQUENCE OF COURSES

In the event that students were unsuccessful in a clinical course, application for readmission for entry into clinical courses is required. It should be noted that readmission is on an individual basis. Students who have been unsuccessful twice in the same clinical course will not be readmitted.

Students must reapply using the same clinical application (found on the Graduate Nursing Website). The readmission deadlines are as follows:

JUNE 1st of each academic year for entry into clinical courses in the Fall semester.

November 1st of each academic year for entry into clinical courses in the Spring semester.

March 1st of each academic year for entry into clinical courses in the Summer semester.

REGISTRATION

Registration date information is available prior to each semester at the Student Services Office on the Shreveport campus, from the Nursing office on the CENLA campus, and online on the University website under the Registrar's office at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>

The Graduate nursing major Code is 546 for MSN degree seeking students. The graduate nursing major code for post master's students seeking a post master's certificate in family nurse practitioner is 051. The graduate code for non-degree seeking graduate students is 500N. Each graduate nursing course begins with NURG. In addition, each graduate course number has a designated section. If a course is taught via internet only, the course section will contain an "I", such as 01I, 02I, etc. If the course is a face to face course, the section number will contain 80S, DSL, or DCA, depending on where the course is offered. Each course section has a CRN number that is used for registration. Please see your advisor prior to registration each semester.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The MSN Program has professional traineeship funds available on a limited basis for students in need. To be eligible a student must:

1. Be a resident of the United States
2. Be a full-time student in the MSN Program in the clinical sequence of coursework
3. Have Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores on file.

The ***Professional Traineeship Application Form*** for the Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship grants may be obtained from the Director for Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing office, the graduate secretary, or online. The awarding of these funds is contingent upon funding availability and is determined on a yearly basis. In special situations, the Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing program may request a Graduate Assistant. When available these positions are designated for graduate nursing student employment. The request for ***Appointment for Graduate Assistant*** is also available from the Director of Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing office, the graduate secretary, or online. For information concerning other funds available for graduate nursing students, contact the Student Financial Aid Office.

REVALIDATION OF EXPIRED CREDITS

In some circumstances, expired courses may be revalidated by examination or other approved documentation. The request to revalidate courses must be recommended by a graduate advisor/mentor and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing and the Dean of the Graduate School. Courses will be considered for revalidation based on the following criteria:

1. Transferred credits MAY NOT be revalidated.
2. The examination must be a written form (test or papers), must measure those topics currently taught in the course and must be evaluated as if the student had just completed the course. The student's written examination paper must be filed in the Graduate School office.
3. Test construction and evaluation will be done by the instructor who is currently teaching the course or who has most recently taught the course.
4. Courses with a clinical component may not be revalidated.
5. Revalidation will be on a satisfactory-unsatisfactory basis. For grade-point average purposes, the initial grade will be utilized.
6. The student will be charged a fee for revalidation.

Revalidation of Expired Course Form must be completed by the student then submitted to the graduate advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, and the College Dean for approval. Once signatures have been obtained, the form is then submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School for final approval. The fees must be paid to the Bursar in Natchitoches prior to revalidation.

TRANSFERRED CREDITS

Semester hours earned at an institution accredited by a regional committee on colleges, or the equivalent, will be accepted at NSU with the following exceptions:

1. At least 2/3 of the credit hours for the degree must be taken in residence during the required time limit.

2. Transfer credit will not be accepted as credit for a course in which a failing grade was received at NSU.
3. The academic dean will determine how transferred credits may be applied to degree requirements.
4. Credits earned at a non-accredited institution will not be accepted at NSU until the student has demonstrated knowledge of the subject through tests or by other suitable means. This determination of acceptability will be made by the Registrar and the academic dean. If a student has earned credit for courses not usually accepted at NSU and feels that the content of the courses might be acceptable to NSU degree requirements, the courses will be reviewed by the Registrar and the academic dean.
5. Any student enrolled at NSU must secure the academic dean's permission in advance to take required course work at another institution.
6. The Graduate office will not accept transfer courses for graduate credit if those courses were taken at a college or university that does not grant graduate degrees.
7. A form is to be completed by the student and academic advisor. The form entitled ***Application for Transfer of Graduate Credit*** on the Graduate School website is to be completed in advance of taking the course with approval of the academic dean or advisor, or when requesting academic credit for a course previously completed. An official transcript, documenting successful completion of the course, must be submitted to the Graduate office. Students must also submit a catalog description of the course and a course syllabus for evaluation to the Director of Graduate Studies in Nursing.

***No more than 12 semester hours can be accepted as transfer toward degree requirements.**

PROGRESSION

Policies governing progression in the Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing Program are:

1. All general requirements of Northwestern State University for progression toward the Master's Degree are met. Advancement from conditional to regular admission is required for progression beyond nine (9) hours of graduate course work. "Conditional status in a master's degree program may be changed to regular status by earning 9 semester hours of approved credit at Northwestern State University with a grade B or better on all graduate course work pursued." See **Conditional Admission to the College of Nursing for MSN Students** in earlier section in this MSN/PMC Handbook.
2. Evidence of current unrestricted, unencumbered licensure as a registered nurse, or APRN if applicable to PMC students.
3. A grade of "B" or better is required in all clinical nursing courses. A student may not progress in the clinical nursing major with a grade of "C" or below. The clinical nursing courses may be repeated once.
4. All course work credits being transferred to NSU must show a grade of "B" or better.
5. If a student makes a "D" in a required course, that course must be repeated at NSU. Such courses may not be taken and transferred from another university.

6. If a student makes an “F” in a required course, the student is dismissed from the graduate program of current enrollment. This action is subject to the appeal process.
7. In order for conferral of degree, all MSN degree seeking students must pass a comprehensive role exam. This exam is given in the last semester of studies. This exam may be taken and repeated once in the same semester if necessary.
8. PMC students must pass a role exam based on the functional role, scope, and standards of practice of the concentration for which they are receiving the post master’s certificate. This exam may be taken and repeated once in the same semester if necessary.

PROBATION, SUSPENSION, & DISMISSAL

A student whose graduate cumulative grade point average or semester average falls below 3.0 on a 4.0 scale shall be placed on probation. Probation status will be retained until the cumulative grade point average is 3.0 or above.

A student on probation who fails to make a minimum average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during the next semester shall be suspended. The first suspension is for one full academic session and the second is for one calendar year for all students enrolled in graduate courses.

Upon suspension from graduate studies a student may appeal for readmission on probation by submitting to his/her advisor a letter addressed to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The advisor, after consulting with the other members of the student's graduate committee, is to append a written recommendation and forward it with the letter to the Dean, who makes the final decision.

A student on probation with two previous suspensions who does not make a 3.0 on all hours attempted for the semester will be dismissed. **Such dismissal is a final action.**

Earning the grade of F in any graduate –level course will result in dismissal from the student’s degree program, regardless of the student’s overall grade point average. This dismissal is subject to appeal.

CONSAH POLICIES

While the policies set forth in the handbook are kept current to the best of our ability, please be aware that as policies change, there may be a reasonable lag time before this handbook is updated. Always refer to your course syllabus for specific polices.

Dress

The MSN Program does not have a specific uniform/dress code for classroom attendance. Certain clinical agencies may require a specific uniform or dress attire; if so, students will be expected to comply. Clinical students are required to wear professional jackets, lab coats, or agency approved attire. Blue jeans, halter tops, clothing inappropriately exposing the body, shorts, and flip-flops, are not appropriate clinical attire. Scrub suits, unless specifically approved by the course coordinator, are not appropriate attire for the clinical learning setting.

Eligibility for Advanced Practice Nursing Licensure

A student who (1) has ever been arrested, convicted of, pled guilty or no contest to, a charge of drug possession with the intent to distribute or a charge of violence or (2) has any physical or mental impairment which may affect one's ability to practice safely as a registered nurse MUST receive approval from the Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) (telephone: 225-755-7500) to receive licensure as an advanced practice nurse. Failure to disclose this information may result in denial of advanced practice nursing licensure.

Any student currently in the LSBN Recovering Nurse program shall notify and provide a copy of the LSBN contract to the Director of Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing IMMEDIATELY.

If a student is admitted to the clinical sequence of the program, any subsequent disciplinary action, arrest, criminal charge or conviction, addiction, or impairment shall also be reported IMMEDIATELY to the Director for Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing and to the LSBN. It is the professional responsibility of the student to forward all required documents to the LSBN for determination of eligibility for advanced practice licensure.

Social Media Policy

Social networking websites provide unique opportunities for students to get to know one another, share experiences, and keep in contact. As with any public forum, it is important that users of these sites are aware of the associated risks and act in a manner that does not embarrass the students, the College of Nursing and the School of Allied Health and Northwestern State University. It is also important to ensure patient information is not made publicly available. Therefore, the following guidelines were developed to assist students and faculty/staff in safely using social networking sites.

- A. Personal Privacy
 - 1. Set profiles on social networking sites so that only those individuals whom you have provided access may see your personal information.
 - 2. Evaluate photos of yourself that are posted to social networking sites and “untag” photos that depict you in what may be perceived as compromising situations.
 - 3. Be aware of the security and privacy options available to you at any site where personal information is posted. Keep in mind that privacy settings are not impervious and information can be shared willingly or unwillingly with others even with “Friends Only” access.

- B. Protection of Patient Information
 - 1. Comments made on social networking sites, regarding patients or clinical environments, should be considered the same as if they were made in a public place.
 - 2. HIPAA rules apply online and students may be held criminally liable for that violate HIPAA.

3. Remember that simply removing the name of a patient does not make them anonymous. Family members or friends of that patient or of other patients you are caring for may be able to determine whom you are referring to based on context.

C. Professionalism

1. Use of social networking sites can have legal ramifications. Comments made regarding care of patients, or comments that portray you, a faculty-staff member, or a colleague in an unprofessional manner can be used in court or other disciplinary proceedings.
2. Statements made under your profile are attributable to you and are treated as if you verbally made that statement in a public place.
3. Use discretion when choosing to log onto a social networking site at school. Keep in mind that use of social networking sites during lecture and clinical courses is prohibited.
4. Photographs and statements made on social networking sites are potentially viewable by future employers.
5. Students may be subject to disciplinary actions within the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health for any comments that are either unprofessional or violate patient privacy.
6. Always remember that you are representing NSU's CONSAH when you log onto a site and make a comment or post a photograph.

In summary, "Students who meet on social networking sites and who chose to discuss NSU faculty, other students, courses, or NSU in general are expected to conduct themselves in a civil and professional manner. If students should conduct themselves in a verbally abusive, disrespectful or aggressive manner while posting to a public forum of any kind, and it is brought to the attention of NSU faculty or staff, said student(s) may be asked to leave the class/university and are subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct and Sanctions (*Article VII Sanctions*)."

Drug Policy

NSU conforms to all local, state and federal laws regarding the illegal use of alcohol and other drugs on campus or during university sponsored events. The College of Nursing believes that substance abuse is a danger to the well-being of faculty/staff, students, health agencies, employees and clients.

Therefore, to insure public and professional trust, safety, and to insure fitness for duty, the unlawful and/or unauthorized use, abuse, possession, distribution, transportation, manufacture, concealment, consumption, promotion or sale of alcohol, illegal drugs, and legal drugs obtained illegally, controlled substances, or designer drugs by students will not be tolerated. Individuals found to have committed such infractions shall be subject to sanctions including suspension or dismissal from the CONSAH/University.

The College of Nursing drug policy (Appendix B) supersedes the policies published in the current *NSU Student Handbook*. This College of Nursing policy reflects additional requirements for health care professionals. The Dean of the CONSAH or her designee authorizes drug or alcohol testing of students. In addition to the College of Nursing drug policy, the MSN program administration reserves the right to conduct random drug testing.

University Policies

Important University policies are outlined in the University Student Handbook and the University Catalog. The Handbook can be found at <http://www.nsula.edu/studenthandbook/> and the University Catalog can be found at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>. For your convenience, some policies are outlined below; however, university policies listed in this MSN/PMC handbook may be superseded by the current University Catalog.

Adding or Dropping Courses

Students may drop and add courses on or before the seventh day of classes (see University Academic Calendar at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>). When a course is “dropped” it no longer appears on the student’s record, and fees for the class will be refunded or adjusted (See University Catalog at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>). After the seventh day of classes, and before the “last day to withdraw or resign from the University” (see the University Academic Calendar <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>), a student can withdraw from a course online using NSUConnect. It is recommended that you consult the Registrar’s office at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/> to be sure you have properly completed all required forms. It is recommended you speak with an advisor before withdrawing from any course. Some students are not allowed to withdraw from courses without prior approval (graduating seniors, international students, student-athletes, graduate students). Upon submission of the online request by the deadline posted in the University Academic Calendar, a grade of “W” is assigned to each course. Although “W” grades do not affect the grade-point average, excessive withdrawals reflect negatively on the student’s record, interfere with the student’s progress toward graduation, and may result in the loss of scholarships and other types of financial aid. Students should see the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Regulations in the University Catalog.

Students who drop all courses in which they are registered must officially resign from the University. Students must initiate the resignation process in the office of their academic dean by completing a resignation/cancellation form through the Registrar’s Office at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>. A student may resign from the institution with grades of “W” prior to a date specified in the official University Academic calendar. Again, it is recommended you speak with an advisor before withdrawing from any course.

Access to Educational Records

In accordance with Northwestern State University's Policy on Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, information about a student generally may not be released to a third party without

the student's written permission. Exceptions under the law include state and federal educational and financial institutions, and law enforcement officials. The policy also permits student to review their educational records and to challenge the contents of those records.

Academic Honor Code

Academic dishonesty is defined as the following: 1) acquiring or using a published test bank, 2) copying from another student's test, paper or computer file, 3) using unauthorized materials during a test, 4) collaborating during a test with any other person by giving or receiving information without authority, 5) stealing, buying, or otherwise obtaining non-administered or unauthorized tests, 6) selling or giving away non-administered or unauthorized tests, 7) bribing anyone to obtain information about a test, 8) substituting for another student or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a test, 9) submitting as your own, in fulfillment of academic requirements, any work prepared totally or in part by another, 10) supplying to another student any theme, report, or other work for use in fulfilling academic requirements, and 11) plagiarism, defined as the use of another person's work and the unacknowledged incorporations of that work in one's own work that is offered for credit. Students are expected to abide by the Northwestern State University Academic Honor Code for all educational work including electronic and on-line course work, internships, and other academic pursuits outside the traditional classroom.

Academic dishonesty will result in one or more of the following disciplinary measures to be decided by the course instructor: 1) verbal/written warning including creation of a record in Judicial Affairs, 2) conference with department chair or dean, 3) reduction of test/course grade to an "F". And, 4) a student may subsequently be referred to Judicial Affairs and receive additional disciplinary sanctions including educational alternatives, probation, suspension or expulsion from Northwestern as a result of academic dishonesty. Refer to the section in the Student Handbook concerning Academic Infractions and Sanctions for Academic Misconduct.

Classroom Civility Statement

Each Northwestern State University student is encouraged to help create an environment that promotes learning, dignity, and mutual respect for everyone in the learning environment. Students who speak at inappropriate times, take frequent breaks, interrupt the class by coming to class late or leaving early, engage in loud or distracting behaviors, use cell phones or pagers (or other noise-making devices like watches with alarms), listen to music on headphones, play with computers or hand held games, use inappropriate language, are verbally abusive, display defiance or disrespect to others, or behave aggressively toward others during the class period may be asked to leave the class and subjected to disciplinary action under the Northwestern State University Student Code of Conduct and Sanctions (Article VII Sanctions). The instructor of a course may deem additional behaviors or actions inappropriate; these actions or behaviors will be outlined in the course syllabus. Copies of the infractions and sanctions are available on the NSU website at <http://www.nsula.edu/studenthandbook/>.

Diversity

Today, members of our University Community are more likely to experience differences among people. Northwestern State University defines diversity as differences in age, gender, religion, language, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, exceptionalities, and geographic background. In our mission to acknowledge our differences, we also hope to realize our commonalities.

Title IX Statement

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. NSU is committed to equal opportunity for student success by providing access to educational programs, tuition assistance, and social and recreational activities for all students without regard to race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, age, pregnancy or parenting status, veteran status, or retirement status.

Social Networking Policy

Students who meet on **social networking sites** and who choose to discuss NSU faculty, other students, courses, or NSU in general are expected to conduct themselves in a civil and professional manner. If students should conduct themselves in a verbally abusive, disrespectful or aggressive manner while posting to public forums of any kind and it comes to the attention of NSU faculty or staff, said students may be asked to leave the class and may be subject to disciplinary action under the *Code of Student Conduct and Sanctions* (Article VII Sanctions).

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of NSU to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law, state law, and the University's commitment to equal educational opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodations, for example in seating placement or in arrangements for examinations, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Support, which is located in Friedman Student Union, Room 234, telephone (318)357-4460 or TTD (318)357-4393.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

NSU is committed to eliminating sexual misconduct in our community, advocating for students who have experienced sexual assault or harassment, and respecting the legal rights of both complainants and respondents. Misconduct involving sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, a hostile environment caused by sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, coercion, retaliation, intimidation, sexual consent, and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator, Alexis Smith Finnie, (318) 357-5570. Also, hate crimes, including those based on gender identity or national origin, should be reported. The offenses listed above are prohibited by the University. Information about conduct infractions and sanctions (Articles IV and VII of the Student Code of Conduct) are available on the NSU webpage at <https://www.nsula.edu/studenthandbook/>.

Reporting and Assistance: NSU strongly advocates reporting sex discrimination, sexual assault, intimate-partner violence, or sexual harassment. If a student discloses an incident, they will learn options for assistance, such as health and wellbeing counseling, residence and class accommodations, and options for filing complaints or criminal charges. Disclosure to University personnel will not obligate the complainant to file a grievance or criminal charge, nor will it subject the complainant to scrutiny or judgmental opinions.

Students have two options:

1. Reporting to the Title IX Coordinator (318) 357-5570 or University Police (318) 357-5431.
For emergencies or a 24/7 Confidential Advisor, please call University Police.
2. Confidential Disclosure to Campus Counselor or Confidential Advisor (318) 357-5621

For a comprehensive list of parish-wide resources for assistance, please visit <https://www.nsula.edu/notalone/>.

Confidentiality: All reporting of sex discrimination and sexual misconduct is treated as confidential to the greatest extent possible; the privacy of all individuals involved is important to the Northwestern State University. In most situations, only individuals involved in the resolution of the situation will have access to the information about the case. If there is a risk of the alleged perpetrator committing additional crimes, if a student is in immediate danger, or if there has been expressed intent to harm others, or other risks such as involvement of a weapon or the age of the students involved, the University may determine that it is necessary to compromise the level of privacy provided.

For more information and assistance in case of sexual assault or harassment, please see Title IX Coordinator's *NSU: Not Alone* webpage: <https://www.nsula.edu/notalone/>.

Student Complaints

Northwestern State University recognizes a student's need to express grievances during the college experience. The Dean of Students Office functions to assist students in lodging and resolving such complaints. Students may contact the Dean of Students Office to file a written complaint and/or for assistance in filing complaints.

Northwestern State University students who wish to lodge a written complaint about an employee of the institution (faculty or staff), another student, policies and procedures, harassment, bullying, sexual harassment, equal access or other complaints, should contact the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@nsula.edu. Ordinarily, complaints against students or student organizations follow Article V of the Student Code of Conduct and complaints against employees of the university or its agents follow the Student Grievance Procedure found in Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct.

Students should seek clarification from the Dean of Students Office when filing a complaint.

Student Complaints may be categorized as follows:

1. Complaints about an employee (faculty or staff) of the institution (See the Student Grievance Procedure, Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct).
2. Complaints about another student or organization (See Article V of the Student Code of Conduct).
3. Complaints against a department (its policies or procedures) (See the Student Grievance Procedure, Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct).
4. Complaints of sexual harassment against an employee or another student and all student related Title IX complaints (See the Northwestern State University Sexual Misconduct Policy).
5. Complaints of harassment or bullying by a student or student organization (See the Student Grievance Procedure, Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct); complaints of bullying or harassment by faculty or staff (See the Student Grievance Procedure, Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct).
6. Complaints about equal opportunity access (See the Student Grievance Procedure, Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct).
7. Other complaints not included above (Contact the Student Accountability and Advocacy office or Dean of Students).

The Dean of Students realizes that in certain situations, it is inappropriate for students to meet with the person against whom they wish to lodge a complaint. In such cases, the Dean's Office may act as a liaison or assist the student in meeting with the person or that person's supervisor. Complaints may be formal (written grievances) or informal. Whatever the circumstances, the Dean of Students will assist students in the process of filing complaints. NSU strives to maintain the confidentiality of the parties involved in the grievance process. However, in cases of sexual misconduct, the institution will comply with the Department of Education guidelines and investigate reported incidences.

Student Appeals

Student Appeals are not considered complaints. However, Northwestern seeks to allow students to appeal University policy and decisions when the student believes she/he has experienced unusual circumstances which may be out of their control or when the student believes the University failed to follow policy. Students may seek assistance at any time from the Dean of Students. It is important to verify the appeal process through the University catalog, in case the process has been updated <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>

Student Appeals are categorized as follows:

1. Admission Appeal (to determine if there is an exception, see <https://www.nsula.edu/admissions/>)
2. Academic Suspension Appeal (to allow an appeal of academic suspension, see program department head <https://www.nsula.edu/academicprograms-2/>)
3. Admission Access Appeal (to allow registration with balance, see <https://www.nsula.edu/onecard/>)
4. Grade Appeal/Registration, Credits and Graduation (to change grades, issue credit, see

- <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>)
5. Financial Aid and Scholarship Appeal (to maintain financial aid awards, see <https://www.nsula.edu/financialaid/>)
 6. Residency Appeal (to waive out of state tuition, see <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>)
 7. Auxiliary Services Appeal (to waive on campus living and food service requirements, see <https://www.nsula.edu/onecard/>)
 8. Parking and Traffic Appeal (to waive tickets or fees, see <https://www.nsula.edu/campus-parking-and-driving-regulations/>)
 9. Disciplinary Appeal (to overturn sanction in conduct hearing, see <https://www.nsula.edu/studenthandbook>)
 10. Retroactive Withdrawal/Resignation or Cancellation Appeal (to allow various post semester withdrawals with documented extenuating circumstances, see <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>)

Graduate students who receive grades they believe do not reflect the quality of their work may appeal these grades within 120 days following the academic period in which the grades were earned. For the procedure for grade appeal go to <https://graduateschool.nsula.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/Graduate-School-Form-Appeal-of-Reported-Grade.pdf>.

No Smoking Policy

Tobacco use is prohibited on all Northwestern State University campuses. The smoke-free policy covers all interior spaces on Northwestern State University campuses, properties, leased or operated by the university, all campus housing, indoor and outdoor athletic facilities, vehicles owned or leased by the university and personal vehicles on the Northwestern State campus whether they are moving or parked. The policy will apply to Northwestern State faculty, staff, students and visitors to campus including contracted personnel, contractors and vendors. The policy applies to all university events and events held in university facilities. Those who violate the policy are subject to a fine.

Policy on Research of Human Subjects

Research is promoted by the University as is the involvement of the University community including students in research programs and activities. During a student's experiences at NSU, he or she will have various opportunities to participate in assessment, measurement, and testing programs like focus groups, surveys, tests, and interviews. Some of these will be optional and voluntary while others will be mandatory. The University encourages cooperation and participation in such programs and activities. Many times such programs allow for opinions to be expressed, services to be improved, funds reallocated, and other institutional change.

When human beings are used as subjects in research projects, safeguards must be established to protect their health, well-being, and rights. Under the policies established by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), this protection is extended to all human subjects regardless of the nature of the research being performed. In response to this policy Northwestern State University established the Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects in Research to review all research proposals involving human subjects. University

policy requires that all research proposals for which data is to be collected from human subjects shall be submitted to this committee to determine whether an exemption applies or whether a review is required.

It is the responsibility of the faculty member to assure compliance with this policy in research conducted by either a student advisee or the faculty member. In 1981 the HHS revised guidelines and exempted certain forms of research involving subjects from review. These forms of research are as follows: *Common Education Practices* Research involving regular or special instructional strategies, or research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom methods. *Educational Testing* Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, and/or achievement) if information taken from these sources is recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Survey & Observation

Any research involving survey and observation is exempt except where any one of the following exists: (a) subjects can be identified either directly or indirectly; (b) subject responses if they become known outside the research could place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability; or (c) the research deals with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol.

*All research involving survey or interview procedures is exempt, without exception, when the respondents are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

Further information on the Protection of Human Subjects can be found at the Institutional Review Board (IRB) page at <http://graduateschool.nsula.edu/human-subjects-institutional-review-board-irb/>

APPENDIX A
Additional Links and Resources

Office	Website	Address	Contact Information
NSU Graduate School	https://graduateschool.nsula.edu/	123 Caspari Hall Natchitoches, LA, 71497	Phone: 318-357-5851 Toll Free: 800-232-9892 Email: grad_school@nsula.edu
College of Nursing	http://nursing.nsula.edu/	1800 Line Avenue Shreveport, LA, 71101	Phone: 318-677-3100 Toll Free: 800-454-9567 email: nursing@nsula.edu
Facilitator of Graduate Studies in Nursing	http://nursing.nsula.edu/	1800 Line Avenue Shreveport, LA, 71101	Phone: 318-677-3131 Fax: 318-677-3127 email: bumgardnerc@nsula.edu
Financial Aid Office	http://financialaid.nsula.edu/	1800 Line Avenue Shreveport, LA, 71101	Phone: 318-677-3010 Email: nsufinaid@nsula.edu
Registrar's Office	https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/	Office of the Registrar Natchitoches, LA, 71497	Phone: 318-357-6171 Toll Free: 800-807-8849 Fax: 318-357-5823 email: registrar@nsula.edu
NSU Nursing Library	https://library.nsula.edu/	1800 Line Avenue Shreveport, LA, 71101	Phone: 318-677-3007 Text: 318-210-7036
College Book Store		Shreveport and Natchitoches campuses	Shreveport Phone: 318-677-3047
Student Help Desk Student Online Support (SOS)	https://helpdesk.nsula.edu/Contact/	113 Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library Natchitoches, LA, 71497	Phone: 318-357-6696 Fax: 318-357-6480 email: E-mail Form

APPENDIX B Drug Policy

NSU, CONSAH, believes that substance abuse is a danger to the well-being of clients, students, and faculty/staff and health agency employees.

Therefore, to insure public and professional trust, safety, and to insure fitness for duty, the unlawful and/or unauthorized use, abuse, possession, distribution, transportation, manufacture, concealment, consumption, promotion or sale of alcohol, illegal drugs, and legal drugs obtained illegally, controlled substances, or designer drugs by students will not be tolerated. Individuals found to have committed such infractions shall be subject to sanctions including suspension or dismissal from the CONSAH.

This policy reflects additional requirements of curricula for professional nursing.

I. Definitions

Controlled Substances - controlled substances include all chemical substances or drugs listed in any controlled substance acts or regulations applicable under any federal, state or local laws.

Campus/clinical - A student is on campus or in clinical whenever he/she is:

1. On any university/health agency property including parking lots.
2. Present at any University sanctioned activity.
3. Wearing an official NSU CON Student Identification.

II. Scope

The NSU CONSAH prohibits the following when a student is on campus or in clinical and will result in disciplinary action by the College:

1. Unauthorized possession or use of a controlled substance and/or alcohol.
2. Being under the influence of a controlled substance and/or alcohol, including but not limited to DWI arrests, convictions, and driving suspensions.
3. Illegal manufacture, distribution, sale or purchase of a controlled substance including but not limited to arrests and convictions.
4. Use, or being under the influence of other drugs, including prescription drugs and over the counter drugs while there is any possibility that such use may impair the student's ability to safely perform or may adversely affect his/her safety or patient safety and care, or safety of faculty or fellow students.

III. Random Testing not for Cause

Drug or alcohol testing of students is authorized under this policy allowing the Dean of the College of Nursing, or designee, to direct random drug screens annually on students who are in clinical courses. Students are financially responsible for all costs related to the drug screen. Students will be given notice via student email that completion of drug screen is required within a set time frame from an NSU approved testing site. Students who do not read their email are still responsible to follow procedure according to the assigned timeline. Failure to submit drug screening as directed can subject the student to sanctions which may include hair follicle drug testing at the student's expense; suspension; or dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program.

Results of the tests will be kept confidential and will be reported to the Dean or designee. A positive drug screen test will be discussed with the student, reported to the State Board of Nursing if applicable, and may subject the student to sanctions, which may include suspension or dismissal from the CONSAH.

IV. Testing

Drug or alcohol testing of students is authorized under this policy allowing the Dean of the College of Nursing, or designee, to direct a student to undergo testing at the student's expense under the following circumstances:

When there is reasonable suspicion or cause to believe that a student is or has recently been under the influence of any drug or alcohol. It is acknowledged that it may be difficult to determine when a student may be under the "influence", in keeping with the purpose of this drug policy, NSU views that discretion must be given to the faculty and staff in recognizing the usual signs and symptoms of alcohol or drug use. In that respect, the following is a listing of what NSU deems possible signs and symptoms of drug or alcohol use:

1. Frequent absences from class, clinical or lab and/or disappearance from such.
2. Isolation and withdrawal.
3. Patient care errors, particularly medication errors.
4. Detectable odor of alcohol.
5. Increasingly poor decision and judgment about patient care.
6. Illogical or sloppy charting.
7. Unusual accidents/incidents.
8. Deteriorating personal appearance.
9. Changes in motor function/behavioral patterns including personality changes, mood swings, illogical thought patterns, gait disturbances, impaired dexterity, slurred speech, drowsiness/ sleepiness, and pupillary changes.
10. Any other unusual or suspicious behavior.

Drug screens may also be done when a student is found in possession of alcohol or drugs, or following an instance or incident, the nature of which indicates possible impairment of ability or judgment, or following an incident in which patient care standards were violated or careless acts were performed.

When such signs and/or symptoms of drug/alcohol abuse are observed in a student, the faculty member will notify the Dean or designee. The Dean or designee will direct the student to submit to drug/alcohol testing at an NSU approved testing site. Failure to agree to such testing shall be considered an admission of violation of the student responsibilities and shall be sufficient cause for dismissal from NSU's Graduate Nursing Program.

Within one hour of notification to test, the student shall report to an approved testing site. The student may not drive a motor vehicle to the testing site and will be responsible for all transportation costs and testing costs. The student may not attend class or clinical activities until the Dean or designee reviews the lab results.

Results of the tests will be kept confidential and will be reported to the Dean or designee who will then meet with the student to discuss the results and ramifications; including reporting this information to the State Board of Nursing. A positive blood alcohol and/or urine drug screen test will subject the student to sanctions, which may include suspension or dismissal from the CONSAH.