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**ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Nursing and**  
**Rehabilitation**  
**Sciences**  
**Master of Science in Nursing Program**

**Graduate Student Handbook**



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Current as of August 1, 2012  
In all cases, the Graduate Catalog supersedes.  
Students will be notified of updates or changes in this document.

## **DISCLAIMER STATEMENT**

This handbook has been prepared to inform you of the selected policies, procedures, and activities within the Nursing Program at Angelo State University.

The purpose of this handbook is to be supplementary to the Angelo State University Student Handbook. The rules and regulations of the Board of Regents, Texas Tech University System, as well as university policies described in the Angelo State University Undergraduate and Graduate Handbook shall not be superseded by this document. As Registered Nurses, graduate students must adhere to all rules and regulations in the Nursing Practice Act. The sole purpose of this manual is to further describe how said policies specifically pertain to the Nursing Program. This handbook is available through:

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## **ACCREDITATION**

The MSN programs at ASU are fully accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). In addition, all nursing programs have full approval status by the Texas Board of Nursing.

Texas Board of Nursing  
333 Guadalupe #3-460  
Austin, TX 78701  
Office: (512) 305-7400  
Fax: (512) 305-7401

National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission  
3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 850  
Atlanta, GA 30326  
Telephone: (404) 975-5000  
Fax: (404) 975-5020 website: ([www.nlnac.com](http://www.nlnac.com))  
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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program. Your decision to enroll in one of the tracks within our MSN program will help open doors to advancing your career and the professional nursing care you provide. Upon graduation from Angelo State University, you will have a strong foundation upon which to fulfill your lifelong commitment to the nursing profession and to the health care needs of the community. Your knowledge and skills will prepare you for many opportunities available in the health care field, and prepare you to make a difference in the lives of patients/clients, their families, and communities. You will be a part of the future of nursing.

We welcome you to the Nursing Program and look forward to the many contributions you will make during this educational experience. We are committed to providing you with an education that is both challenging and supportive, leading to intellectual discovery and success.

**Susan Wilkinson, PhD, RN, CNS**  
**Department Head and Associate Professor**  
**Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences**

Welcome to the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program. It is my sincere pleasure to serve you as the MSN Advisor and Graduate Program Coordinator. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of assistance. I look forward to working with you.

**Molly Walker, PhD, RN, CNS, CNE**  
**Professor and Graduate Advisor**  
**Angelo State University**  
**Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences**

## **ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY**

As members of the Texas Tech University System, the Graduate nursing faculty hold inviolate the [ASU Mission, Value Statement, and Master Goals and are in congress with the College of Health and Human Services.](#)

### **Mission Statement**

To educate competent health care professionals who will enhance the quality of life of individuals in a dynamic and diverse society.

Angelo State University, a member of the Texas Tech University System, delivers undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences and professional disciplines. In a learning-centered environment distinguished by its integration of teaching, research, creative endeavor, service, and co-curricular experiences, ASU prepares students to be responsible citizens and to have productive careers.

Approved by the Board of Regents, Texas Tech University System, March 6, 2009  
Approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, April 30, 2009

## VALUE STATEMENT

- **Learning: Our Focus**

ASU holds student learning as the center of everything that we do.

- **Excellence: Our Standard**

ASU embraces excellence in teaching, scholarly activity, creative endeavor and service.

- **Transformation: Change for the Better**

ASU prepares its students for a life of contribution and accomplishment by instilling a respect for learning and intellectual inquiry.

- **Integrity: Social and Ethical Responsibility**

ASU expects a high standard of social and ethical responsibility from all members of the campus community.

- **Engagement: Participation and Community Service**

ASU encourages participation and community service both on and off campus by faculty, staff, and students.

- **Innovation: Teaching, Service, and Scholarship**

ASU promotes innovation in teaching, scholarship, technology, collaborative partnerships, support services, and co-curricular activities.

- **Diversity: Cultures, People and Ideas**

ASU believes that everyone should experience a diversity of cultures, people and ideas in order to better appreciate the world around them.

- **Collegiality: Getting Along**

ASU fosters – among students, faculty, and staff, and across disciplines – a culture of shared governance, open communication, transparent operations, and mutual respect.<sup>1</sup>

## DEPARTMENT OF NURSING & REHABILITATION SCIENCES

### Mission and Philosophy

The Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences supports the Mission of Angelo State University by offering undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare nurse professionals to provide high quality, safe care for a multi-cultural society.

As nursing faculty members, we use certain beliefs and values as a guide and framework for excellence in teaching and learning. We believe the art and science of nursing involves critical thinking, decision-making, leadership, teamwork, and collaboration to optimize patient outcomes. Advocacy and quality improvement strategies are a foundation for quality care. Nursing requires caring, culturally sensitive, therapeutic partnerships that respect patient values and preferences. We are committed to excellence in nursing education, offering a supportive and caring environment that facilitates personal and professional growth and life-long learning.

The faculty believes the health care needs of the community are best served by multiple levels of nursing practice that produce competent, safe practitioners at the

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.angelo.edu/services/strategy/Mission\\_and\\_Value\\_Statements.php](http://www.angelo.edu/services/strategy/Mission_and_Value_Statements.php)

BSN and MSN levels. Each level of nursing education builds and expands on prior knowledge and competency. Course experiences at all levels assist students to develop as critical thinkers and ethical decision makers.

Our undergraduate degrees prepare students for generalist practice. The BSN undergraduate degree focuses on care of the individuals and families across the life span in various health care settings. Baccalaureate nursing further encompasses health promotion of families, individuals, and communities in a variety of settings. Undergraduate nursing programs emphasize evidence-based practice, quality improvement, safety, informatics, patient-centered care, teamwork, and collaboration.

The Master of Science in Nursing Degree is built upon the foundation of undergraduate nursing educational elements and provides graduate students with advanced skills and knowledge for their professional roles. The graduate program choices are: the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (FNP); the Nurse Educator or the Registered Nurse First Assistant.

Faculty members encourage and support collaborative endeavors with students in a variety of scholarly activities within a wide range of health care settings. These programs position graduates for leadership roles in a broad range of health care and educational settings.

At all levels, nursing faculty members are committed to respecting individual diversity and offering access to quality learning resources. By fostering professionalism, science-based care, and life-long learning, graduates are prepared for practice and leadership in current and future health care environments.

## **GRADUATE PROGRAMS, CONCENTRATIONS, AND TRACKS**

The Nursing Program has several tracks leading to the MSN degree. The MSN program offers several options for persons who hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing or a Registered Nurse license and an associated degree or a diploma in nursing. The advanced practice track includes the academic requirements for both national certification and advanced practice designation in Texas.

The RN-MSN curriculum is designed for persons who hold a nursing license without a bachelor's degree. After completing the required courses the student is eligible to obtain the BSN degree as well as the MSN degree.

All tracks are required to complete and pass a comprehensive examination before graduation. More specific information about any of the tracks is available on the Nursing Program website or in the Nursing Program office.

### **MSN Program Goals**

The primary goal of the Master of Science in Nursing Degree program is to prepare graduates for living and working in a competitive global society, and specifically to assume responsible roles as members, and leaders, of multidisciplinary health care delivery teams.

Students completing their Master of Science in Nursing will be able to:

1. Integrate master's-level knowledge, theory, and evidence-based research into advanced nursing.
2. Function as a leader in healthcare systems and organizations across diverse populations within areas of professional specialization.
3. Participate in scholarly activities for continued professional growth and development.

### **MSN Program: Core Curriculum Outcomes**

The core curriculum supports the MSN program with outcomes that are intrinsically linked to all program and track courses.

Students completing the Master of Science in Nursing core courses will be able to:

1. provide evidence-based nursing leadership for diverse populations through advanced communication, innovative teaching, quality research, competent care, and community service.
2. function as accountable practitioners who advocate, educate and influence health policy and practice issues related to clinical, professional and research ethics.

### **MSN Program: FNP Track Outcomes**

Students completing the Master of Science in Nursing-FNP track will be able to:

1. apply evidence-based research and other forms of knowledge to promote the advanced practice nurse role, enhance clinical practice, and improve patient outcomes.
2. utilize technology relevant to primary care practice to target specific patient and family educational needs and develop treatment options addressing those needs.
3. provide leadership to foster collaboration with multiple stakeholders (e.g. patients, community, integrated health care teams, and policy makers) to

improve health care.

3. develop comprehensive management plans to address health promotion/disease prevention needs of client populations.

### **MSN Program: Nurse Educator Track Outcomes**

Students completing the Master of Science in Nursing-Nurse Educator Track will be able to:

1. use nursing theory and specialized knowledge in the functional roles of Nurse Educator to facilitate learning, design curricula and evaluate student and program outcomes.
2. provide leadership in the pursuit of continuous quality improvement and delivery of innovative evidence-based nursing education and client care.
3. continue professional growth through continuing education, specialty certification and/or advanced degrees.

### **MSN Program: RNFA Certificate Program for the APRN Outcomes**

The APRN completing the RNFA Post-Masters Certificate Program will be able to:

1. display adherence to evidence-based practice standards unique to and necessary for the safe delivery of patient centered care in the perioperative setting.
2. verbalize the rationale for and demonstrate the capability to perform a variety of advanced manual skills required to function in the unique role of the first assistant at surgery.
3. function collaboratively as a member of the interdisciplinary surgical team to promote safety and positive outcomes for patients undergoing surgical or other invasive procedures.
4. demonstrate the requisite knowledge and communication skills necessary to assist patients in navigating and transitioning through entire episodes of perioperative care.

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to the general requirements for admission to the Graduate School, applicants for regular admission to the MSN Program must meet the criteria listed below:

- A Baccalaureate degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, or the AACN Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education.
- A Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale.\*
- An upper division (Junior or Senior level) statistics course completed with a grade of C or higher.
- A basic pathophysiology course (equal to 3 SCHs) completed with a grade of “C” or higher
- A current, unencumbered nursing license to practice as a Registered Nurse in Texas.
- MSN Core Curriculum and Advanced Practice Practicums are required to be completed in Texas.
- Evidence of inclusion of basic physical assessment content in an undergraduate nursing program or demonstrated proficiency in health assessment.
- A basic computer literacy course (equal to 3 SHC) or demonstrated proficiency.
- Acceptance to the College of Graduate Studies.
- Three professional Letters of Recommendation.
- A 500 word essay articulating education and professional goals, services.

\* When the GPA is below 3.00 but between 2.75 and 2.99 and if the applicant has achieved 3.0 in the last 60 hours of undergraduate work, the applicant may be granted provisional admission.

Prior to first clinical courses, graduate students must have the following on file in the nursing office:

- Current CPR (professional level) certification
- Evidence of meeting state-mandated immunization requirements.
- Proof of current health insurance
- Drug Screen

## **PHYSICAL/MENTAL PERFORMANCE/ADMISSION/PROGRESSION POLICY**

In order to accomplish the objectives of the program, students must be able to meet the following performance requirements:

- Visual acuity with corrective lenses to identify cyanosis, absence of respiratory movement in patients, and to read small print on medication containers, physician's orders, monitors, and equipment calibrations.
- Hearing ability with auditory aids to understand the normal speaking voice without viewing the speaker's face and to hear monitor alarms, emergency signals, call bells from patients, and stethoscope sounds originating from a patient's blood vessels, heart, lungs, and abdomen.
- Physical ability to stand for prolonged periods of time, perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation, lift patients, and move from room to room or maneuver in limited spaces.
- Ability to communicate effectively in verbal and written form. Ability to speak clearly and succinctly when explaining treatment procedures, describing patient conditions, and implementing health teaching. Ability to write legibly and correctly in patient's chart for legal documentation.
- Ability to use computer based technology at a reasonable level of proficiency for safe patient care.
- Manual dexterity to use sterile techniques and insert catheters, prepare and administer medications such as IVs, POs, and IMs.
- Ability to function safely under stressful conditions, adapting to ever-changing clinical situations involving patient care.

## SELECTION PROCESS

- A student planning to earn the MSN degree at Angelo State University must be accepted into the MSN program **before** enrolling in required nursing coursework. A number of factors, including regulatory agencies' requirements and university resources, may dictate the number of candidates who can be accepted into the MSN program. As a result, meeting pre-admission requirements **does not guarantee** admission to the MSN program. In the event that applications for admission for a specific semester outnumber available openings, the most qualified candidates, based on an evaluation of factors including overall grade point average (GPA), and last 60 hours (GPA), will be admitted.
- Students who have been accepted to the College of Graduate Studies, and meet admission criteria for the MSN program, but have a non-degree seeking status, may be given permission to enroll in graduate nursing courses on a "space available" basis.
- Application packets for the MSN program are available on the departmental website, and in the Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences Department office.

- Applications are not considered complete until all admission requirements have been met. Only completed applications will be evaluated for admission to the program.
- There will be an initial review of all complete applications for admission to a specific semester. Depending on the number of available seats and number of complete applications, a candidate could be admitted, or their application could be deferred to the final evaluation round for a particular semester. Candidates are highly encouraged to submit applications by the initial review deadline. Application Deadlines for final review of completed applications are as follows:

Fall Enrollment: April 1 (Family Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Educator)  
 Spring Enrollment: September 1 (Nurse Educator and Post Master's Certificate Programs)  
 Summer Enrollment: April 1 (Nurse Educator and Post Master's Certificate Programs)

**Note:** Alternate admission schedule requires Graduate Advisor Approval

### **Standards for Progression in the MSN Program**

The following standards must be maintained by each student in order to progress in the MSN program to graduation:

- Compliance with all rules and regulations outlined in the MSN Student Handbook, the current Angelo State University Graduate Catalog.
- A minimum 3.00 overall grade point average (GPA) at the completion of each semester in order to register for the next nursing course. Students with a cumulative or semester GPA below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation.
- Each student must have a minimum 3.00 overall grade point average in order to graduate.
- Successful completion of each nursing course with a grade of "C" or above
- Students receiving less than a "C" in a graduate nursing course are eligible to repeat that course one time only pursuant to recommendation of course faculty.
- Demonstration of safe performance in the clinical laboratory/practicum at all times.
- Adherence to the rules and regulations as defined in the current Nurse Practice Act for the State of Texas, and the Code of Ethics of the American Nurses Association while in performance of duties in the MSN program.
- Current, unencumbered Registered Nurse License
- Proof of current health insurance.
- Current CPR certification.
- Validation of Texas Department of Health immunization requirements for students enrolled in health related courses.
- Compliance with all requirements of the clinical facility while engaged in student clinical experiences. These include, but are not limited to, criminal background checks and drug screenings. The student is responsible for all costs associated with these requirements.

- Compliance with the Angelo State University Honor Code.

## **Policies**

**Record Keeping** - All ASU graduate nursing students records must be up to date & on file in the Graduate Nursing Office *PRIOR* to the first day of class. Failure to have current up to date records on file will be considered out of compliance and the student may be dropped from courses and barred from practicum. Up to date records include nursing license, CPR, immunization, insurance, student data sheet and reading of the Graduate Student Handbook confirmation form. Students are responsible for maintaining their compliance throughout the semester in which they are enrolled.

**Departmental Website** - ([www.angelo.edu/dept/nursing](http://www.angelo.edu/dept/nursing))

Students should access the departmental website for updates, information on courses, books, course schedules, preceptor/clinical facilities, degree plan applications, and other important items.

Dismissal from the M.S.N. Program will result from the following circumstances:

- Students earning an “F” in two or more graduate courses in one semester.
- Students earning an “F” in the same nursing course twice.

Failing to meet expected standards in any nursing program may result in dismissal at any time

**Communication** – All email communication with students will be done exclusively by using the student’s Angelo State University email address.

**Preceptor Clinical Experiences** – A number of MSN courses include clinical practicums in traditional and community-based settings. These clinical experiences can usually be completed in the student’s city of residence or surrounding area, under the supervision of a qualified preceptor. The student, with faculty guidance, will identify a qualified preceptor, provide the preceptor with the departmental Preceptor-Student Orientation Handbook, and return the signed Preceptor Agreement Form, Preceptor Profile Form and a current Preceptor CV to the Nursing Department’s Graduate Office before beginning clinical experiences. In addition, the student is responsible for determining if a clinical contract with the preceptor’s clinical facility is on file in the departmental office.

## **Online Learning**

While MSN courses are offered in an online format, there may be instances when the student will be required to come to campus (e.g., orientation, skills lab, comprehensive exams).

Online Learning is an educational process that takes place when student and instructor are not physically in the same place. Using a computer and an Internet Service Provider (ISP), a student can work on course work where it is most convenient. Even though the online class may be more accommodating to a student’s schedule, the content and workload are the same in the online class as in a face-to-face course.

In an online class, the instructor provides instruction and facilitates the learning environment. Students can review course materials online; interact with other students and the instructor via e-mail, chat rooms and threaded discussions; and participate in virtual classroom meetings. In the online classroom, students initiate their own learning, so they need to possess a high degree of self-motivation.

Online courses are similar in structure to classroom courses. The courses have a syllabus, weekly assignments, projects, papers and tests. The student will do exercises and solve problems either alone or in small groups. Students will interact with classmates and instructors through online communication tools instead of face-to-face interaction.

For online course work, students should possess basic computer skills. They should be able to send and receive e-mail; attach, send and open documents from e-mail or internet sites; participate in online chats; research topics using the web resources; and use internet library databases.

The educational technology tool used is the Course Management System (CMS) called Blackboard. A CMS is a web-based “frame” through which instructors can communicate with students, distribute information and facilitate the exchange of ideas, information and resources. A CMS offers students easy and immediate access to discussion forums and chats, course materials, assignments and resources, announcements and course calendars.

Most online courses are asynchronous or designed so that students can conveniently complete their work anywhere via internet access.

### **Online Technical Requirements**

Current recommendations for technical support in online education can be found at: [http://www.angelo.edu/dept/nursing/online\\_learning.html](http://www.angelo.edu/dept/nursing/online_learning.html)

Computer Requirements can be found at: [http://www.angelo.edu/dept/nursing/student\\_resources/computer\\_requirements.phd](http://www.angelo.edu/dept/nursing/student_resources/computer_requirements.phd).

### **Information Technology Services (IT)**

Assistance with problems associated with Blackboard course management system may be obtained by calling the ASU IT Help Desk at (325) 942-2911 or [helpdesk@angelo.edu](mailto:helpdesk@angelo.edu).

### **Orientation to Online**

It is mandatory that MSN students attend a MSN orientation held prior to Fall and Spring Semesters.

### **Electronic Mail Policy**

Electronic Mail (e-mail), like post mail, is a mechanism for official university communication to students. ASU Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences will exercise the right to send e-mail communications to all students, and the University will expect that e-mail will be received and read in a timely manner. The student's official ASU email address is the destination to which the Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences will send official e-mail communications. Consequently, e-mail returned with "user unknown" is not an acceptable excuse for missed communication.

## **Academic Policies**

### **Provisional Admission**

Students who have been admitted provisionally must meet their specified conditions or be subject to dismissal.

### **Current RN Licensure**

A copy of the student's current RN license number must be on file in the Nursing Department Graduate Office by the beginning of the first clinical nursing course. Each student is responsible for maintaining current records of licensure in the Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences. Students will not be permitted to register for classes unless they have filed evidence of a current registered nursing license with the department. A valid RN license must be held by the graduate student before any clinical courses are taken.

### **Encumbered Registered Nurse (RN) Licensure**

1. To obtain regular admission to the graduate nursing programs students must have an unencumbered RN license.
2. If a student experiences an encumbered license (such as an RN license with stipulations or restrictions) during his/her graduate studies, he/she must notify the MSN Advisor immediately upon receipt of the encumbrance. The student will provide the MSN Advisor with a copy of the Agreed Order.
3. Students may be allowed to take non-clinical courses with an encumbered license.
4. Students will not be allowed to take clinical courses with an encumbered license.
5. The student will notify the MSN Advisor when the student's license becomes unencumbered and provide a copy of the BON's notification letter. The student may then participate in clinical courses.
6. Failure to notify the MSN Advisor of an encumbered RN license will be considered academic misconduct and be treated as such.

### **Course/Transfer Credit**

As stated in the Angelo State University 2011-2012 Graduate Catalog: A **maximum** of 9 semester credit hours of graduate-level work taken prior to admission to the degree program may be used in the student's degree program but only with the written approval of the major department's Graduate Advisor, the Head of the student's major department, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

## **Degree Plan**

Graduate students are expected to maintain a degree plan for the purpose of tracking their progress through the program and must have an approved degree plan on file prior to their second registration cycle. It is the student's responsibility to maintain this plan and to make appointments as necessary for course advisement and counseling with the Graduate Program Advisor. Sample degree plans are provided on the graduate nursing website.

## **Degree Plan Modification**

Students accepted into the graduate degree program will be required to meet the criteria for specific program tracks (i.e. FNP and NE) in order to be admitted to that track. Because each track has specific criteria, students will not be able to change program tracks at will. Changing from one program track to another requires Graduate Advisor and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies approval. Such approval must be obtained before the student enrolls in any course for which a modification is being sought. A letter of intent to change from one degree plan to another should be submitted to the Graduate Advisor *prior* to each semester's University set, academic advising date. The student is responsible for making arrangements to discuss their desire to change from one program track to another with the Graduate Advisor. An approved modification is contingent upon space-availability and the student's ability to meet all criteria for preferred program track.

Students who fail to obtain approval for program track change will be required to formally apply to their desired program track.

## **Academic Honesty**

The graduate student Academic Honesty statement is as follows: "The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach. Student will be expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work is subject to disciplinary action. (See page 27 of the *ASU Graduate Catalog 2011-2012* for further information)

[http://www.angelo.edu/dept/admissions/documents/catalogs/g11\\_12.pdf](http://www.angelo.edu/dept/admissions/documents/catalogs/g11_12.pdf) )

Further, the student Academic Honor Code statement is as follows: "Angelo State University students shall maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits." (See the [Angelo State University Student Handbook](#) for an explanation of the parameters of this statement as well as for information concerning the failure to comply.

Incidents taken to the University Office of Student Life will be reported to the Board of Nursing.

On-line education requires a high level of personal integrity. Any indication that submitted work is not original or that students are collaborating unless expressly given permission will be considered academic dishonesty.

## **Departmental Website**

Students should access the departmental website for updates, information on courses, books, course schedules, preceptor/clinical facilities, degree plan applications, and other important items.

## **Student Attendance**

It is imperative that students attend lecture\*, clinical, and laboratory experiences as scheduled. A week's worth of cumulative absences in any one course will result in faculty evaluation of the student's ability to meet course objectives. Thus, missing a week's worth of course activities may result in failure of the course.

Online: Like face-to-face classes, online classes require weekly attendance. Timely participation in discussion forums or other assigned activities is online classroom attendance. Equivalent weekly attendance is expected and is critical to the successful completion of the course. For example, a three credit-hour course may require 3 separate days of attendance in on-line forums or other activities.

Missing one week is equivalent to missing 3 days of class. Failure to contribute in a timely fashion to any weekly discussion is considered an absence. Just like face-to-face classes, missing a week of class may result in evaluation of the student's ability to meet course objectives and may result in failure of the course.

Two weeks of non-participation in online classes with no communication or explanation to faculty may result in the student being blocked from the class. Any student with a total of three weeks of nonparticipation, either continuous or episodic, is also subject to withdrawal from class. The faculty member will make at least two attempts to contact the student before removing the student.

\* Lecture for on-line courses is at the discretion of the faculty. Generally, the student is required to participate in discussion board and assignments on a weekly basis.

## **Examinations**

**Professionalism.** As future nurses, students are expected to demonstrate appropriate moral and ethical behavior. Unless specified otherwise, it is expected that students will work alone and without notes to take online quizzes or tests.

**Test Security.** Students are expected to maintain test security by **NOT** discussing test questions with peers or attempting to copy exams in any way. Discussing test questions or test content with students who have not taken the tests is a violation of test security, and will result in being reported for academic dishonesty.

**WE TAKE TEST SECURITY VERY SERIOUSLY.** *Violations in test security are considered not just academic violations, but ethical violations, which is unacceptable behavior for nursing professionals. If a student is found to be in violation of test security or has been found to have cheated or colluded with other students on an online test, the student will be immediately reported to the Office of Student Life for disciplinary action. Faculty reserve the right to require proctored exams.*

## Academic Integrity

Nursing students are expected to maintain an environment of academic integrity. Actions involving academic dishonesty violate the professional code of ethics, are completely unacceptable, and will not be tolerated in any form. Any student found guilty of any form of dishonesty in academic work will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts" (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2). All assignments submitted by students are subject to review by anti-plagiarism software. Students found guilty of scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the ASU Academic Honor Code <http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf>. Disciplinary procedure for academic dishonesty are also explained under the section on "Student Services and Activities" in the [Angelo State University Student Handbook](#). In a case of suspected academic dishonesty, the faculty member may take any or all of the following action in the order as indicated below:

- F on the assignment or
- F in the course
- Refer the case to the Student Affairs Committee
- Report the student to the department head as is outlined for student filing a grade grievance.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

Cheating:

- Copying from another student's exam or other assignment.
- Using or possessing unauthorized materials during a test
- Using, having, or acquiring test answers, test drafts, test copies, etc.
- Discussing or sharing test content with students who have not taken the test

Plagiarism:

- Using someone's work in your academic assignments without appropriate acknowledgement
- Copying another student's paper or any portion of it
- Using ideas from or copying a portion of published material (e.g., books or journals) without adequately documenting the source
- If five or more words in sequence are taken from a source, those words must be placed in quotes and the source referenced with author's name, date of publication, and page number of publication
- If the author's ideas are rephrased, by transposing words or expressing the same idea using different words, the idea must be attributed to the author by proper referencing, giving the author's name and date of publication
- If a single author's ideas are discussed in more than one paragraph, the author must be referenced at the end of each paragraph.
- Authors whose words or ideas have been used in the preparation of a paper must be listed in the references cited at the end of the paper

Students are encouraged to review the plagiarism module from the UT Arlington Central Library via <http://library.uta.edu/tutorials/Plagiarism> and from the ASU library

## **Social Media Policy**

The Angelo State University Nursing Program supports the use of social media in personal/nonacademic or non-professional contexts. Students may encounter confidential information within the academic or patient care environment during clinical practicum and must demonstrate professional behaviors and communication. Consistent with Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements [ANA, 2001], Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice [ANA, 2nd ed., 2010], Nursing's Social Policy Statement [ANA, 2010] and the ASU Confidentiality Statement all students sign at the beginning of their program, it is the student's responsibility to refrain from the following:

- Uploading images/videos of yourself in a clinical environment or uniform\*
- Discussing patients, visitors, vendors, or organizational partners
- Talking about physicians, hospital/facility/clinical staff
- Discussing clinical events or news stories involving clinical partners
- Giving medical advice online
- 'Friending' or requesting to friend patients (even when they are no longer patients), Department/College faculty, or staff.

\* The only exceptions are individual or group photos of the clinical group and faculty. ASU nursing faculty reserves the right to order the immediate removal of inappropriate items (HIPPA violations, etc.) that are posted on a student's social media site. Students preparing to enter the nursing workforce have a professional obligation to understand the nature and consequences of participating in social networking of all types [blogs, Twitter, Facebook, etc.]. Patient privacy is a fundamental ethical and legal obligation of nurses. Although social networking venues offer opportunities for mentoring and sharing needed health related education and information among colleagues and the lay public it also presents risk. The use of privacy settings and the separation of personal from professional information is not guaranteed from being shared or made public in less protected forums. Online content and behavior has the potential to enhance or undermine the individual student's career and/or the academic institution they attend. Students should consider the 'unintended consequences' of any information they share outside the context in which it was learned. [adapted from *Principles: Social Networking and the Nurse* [Draft 25 April 2011], American Nurses Association].

## **Grade of Incomplete**

Under some circumstances (i.e., reasons other than lack of adequate effort), if all assignments in a course are not completed before its conclusion, the student may request the instructor assign an **Incomplete** for the course. If the instructor agrees, a symbol of Incomplete is recorded on the student's transcript. The student is urged to complete the course work as quickly as possible. An incomplete in a prerequisite course will prohibit enrollment in courses requiring the prerequisite course. Work **must be completed within one calendar year** to be converted to a letter grade by the instructor. If work is not completed within one year, the Incomplete automatically converts to an "F."

## **Comprehensive Examination Policy**

All MSN students must successfully complete a written comprehensive examination as part of the eligibility requirements for graduation. The purpose of the comprehensive examination is twofold:

1. to determine core curriculum competency in areas of leadership, theory, ethics, advocacy, and research, and
2. to determine competency in the area of specialization (Nurse Educator, Clinical Nurse Specialist or Family Nurse Practitioner).

Comprehensive exams are normally taken in the final semester when all course work for the degree have been completed except for those courses in progress in the semester when the degree is to be awarded. The graduate nursing faculty are beginning a mid-program comprehensive exam to test core curriculum competency upon completion of core courses and end of program specialty course comprehensive exam in the final semester of the specialty track.

Students should take the exam by the date specified by the graduate school for the semester the core curriculum and specialty curriculum are completed. It is at the discretion of the graduate faculty of the nursing department, after evaluating the student's answers on the written exam, to administer a follow-up oral portion of the examination during the same semester. A candidate who fails the comprehensive examination may, upon petition to the nursing graduate faculty, be allowed to take another examination no sooner than the next semester or summer session. Any student who fails the second comprehensive examination will be dismissed from the graduate program.

### **Recognition by Texas Board of Nurse Examiners as an Advanced Practice Nurse**

Angelo State University prepares advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) through an MSN degree program. All individuals completing preparation in the advanced practice trade must be recognized by the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners (BON), or their current state of residence, as an Advanced Practice Nurse prior to practicing. Graduates in the state of Texas must access the BON web site, <http://www.bne.state.tx.us/>, and complete the application to be recognized as an Advanced Practice Nurse. This cannot be done until the graduate has proof of successful completion of the required certification exam. Graduates from states outside of Texas should access their state regulatory site for current information regarding advanced practice.

### **Certification in Area of Specialization**

All individuals prepared as APRN's must be certified in their area of specialization. The Texas BON designates that the graduate has two years from completion to pass the certification exam and become certified in their specialty area (this requirement might vary from state to state). The graduate level director will facilitate the completion of paper work to submit for the certification exam. The graduate will be responsible for completing all application materials and submitting them to the certification organizations that are currently available for graduates (ANCC –the American Nurses Credentialing Center or the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners--AANP).

### **Complaint/Grievance Policy**

A graduate student has the right to seek redress of any complaint/grievance related to his or her program of study. Every effort should be made to resolve complaints/grievances informally between the student and the faculty member most directly involved; or, such efforts failing, by the Graduate Advisor, and/or the Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences Department Head. A written record of all complaints/grievances, with resolution, will be maintained in the departmental office.

When complaints/grievances cannot be resolved informally, the graduate student has recourse to formal grievance procedures set by the university and outlined in the Angelo State University Student Handbook.

## **Standards of Professional Nursing Practice**

**§217.11. Standards of Professional Nursing Practice.** The responsibility of the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners is to regulate the practice of professional nursing within the State of Texas. The purpose of defining standards of practice is to identify roles and responsibilities of the registered professional nurse (RN) in any health care setting. The standards for professional nursing practice shall establish a minimum acceptable level of professional nursing practice.

(See Rule 217.11 [Texas Administrative Code Standards of Nursing Practice](#) )

## **Patient/Client Confidentiality Policy**

In accordance with the Texas Nursing Practice Act (2004), Rule §217.12 Unprofessional Conduct, the faculty members of the Nursing Program have adopted the following policy: [Texas Administrative Unprofessional Conduct](#)

1. Except in the structured, teaching-learning situation, all aspects of the patient/client's medically-related information and/or data shall not be discussed with any person or persons under any circumstances.
2. Proper identification as stated in ASU Dress Code is required before reading charts/records.
3. Under no circumstances is the student to photocopy and/or tape record any part of the patient's chart/records.
4. This confidentiality policy applies to all information (patients, families, peers, agency staff) the student comes in contact with, and also applies to information about the clinical agency itself.
5. Failure to honor this basic ethical right may result in the immediate dismissal of the student from the Nursing Program.
6. All graduate students must have a signed "Commitment to Confidentiality" statement in their student file. Such a form must be signed annually.

## **Evaluation of Faculty and Course**

Evaluations are most helpful when they are honest, fair, constructive, and pertinent to the class, clinical experience, or course. Faculty members seriously consider student evaluations in making modifications in the course, specific classes, and clinical experience. Evaluations of class, laboratory, and clinical teaching effectiveness are used by individual faculty members in identifying areas of strength and areas of needed improvement. Faculty members value student evaluations of teaching effectiveness as a means of improving teaching skills. Students are encouraged to evaluate classroom and clinical instruction using the forms and methods provided. In addition, verbal input is welcome. The clinical instructor will also provide a tool for students to evaluate the clinical experience.

## **Financial Information**

### **Departmental Scholarships**

Students needing financial assistance are encouraged to contact the University Financial Aid Office. There are also a number of scholarships and traineeships available through the Department. Information regarding application is disseminated at the beginning of each semester. An application, as well as current scholarship availability, is provided on the graduate nursing website.

### **Academic Excellence Graduate Scholarship**

Academic Excellence Graduate Scholarships are also available; please refer to [College of Graduate Studies Financial Aid website](#)

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Nursing Learning Resource Center**

The Nursing Learning Resource Center (LRC) is located on the second floor of the Vincent building. It has a simulation lab, one computer lab, one audiovisual room, two nursing skills labs, and one student study room. The purpose of the LRC is to assist any ASU nursing student at any level to prepare for class or clinical assignments.

### **Bulletin Boards**

The MSN student bulletin board is located on the 2nd floor of the Vincent Building across from the Nursing Office.

### **Copy Machines**

Coin operated copy machines for student use are located on the second floor of the Vincent Building.

## **Advanced Practice Nurse's Organizations**

**San Angelo Coalition of Nurses in Advanced Practice (SACNAP).** The San Angelo Coalition of Advanced Practice Nurses is an organization established to encourage networking and professional development and collaboration among advanced practice nurses in the San Angelo area. All nurses recognized as advanced practice in the state of Texas (i.e., nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse midwives, and nurse anesthetists) as well as graduate students preparing for the advanced practice role are encouraged to join and participate. SACNAP meets approximately 10 times a year and meetings typically include an educational program. Past meetings have included information on newly approved drugs or equipment or dialogue with local politicians and policy makers. Legislative issues and rules and regulations affecting advanced practice are also discussed.<sup>2</sup>

## **Emergency Messages**

If the Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Services receives a call for a student that is of an emergency nature, the Department will locate the student to relay the message. This procedure will be used only for emergencies. It is the student's responsibility to maintain accurate phone numbers with the department office and their practicum instructor.

## **Procedure for Requesting Special Accommodations**

Persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

## **Practicum Policies and Procedures**

### **Precepted Clinical Experiences**

A number of MSN courses include a clinical practicum in traditional and community-based settings. These clinical experiences can usually be completed in the student's city of residence, under the supervision of a qualified and approved preceptor (See Preceptor Handbook). The student, with faculty guidance, will identify a qualified preceptor, provide the preceptor with the departmental Preceptor Handbook, and return the signed Preceptor Agreement Form to the Department before beginning clinical experiences. In addition, the student is responsible for determining if a clinical contract with the preceptor's clinical facility is on file in the department office. Please contact the Secretaries in the Nursing office to inquire about the status of a clinical contract with a facility.

### **CPR Certification**

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<sup>2</sup> Graduate students are encouraged to participate in nursing organizations such as Texas Nurses Association and advanced practice nurses organizations in the community in which they reside to build professional networks and learn the advanced practice role in the context of their community.

Students must have a current CPR (Basic Life Support) certification prior to beginning clinical course work and active status must be maintained throughout the program. At the beginning of subsequent semesters, certification status will be reviewed. Only students with an active status will be permitted to progress. Certification courses are offered by the Continuing Education Department of Angelo State University and by various community agencies. Students will need to make arrangements for enrollment and payment for required certification courses.

### **Health Insurance**

Students must present proof of current health insurance

### **Immunizations**

Since students may be exposed to infectious disease, the immunizations listed below are required for all nursing students and a complete immunization history is kept for each nursing student.

- Hepatitis B (3 immunizations)
- Measles (exposure, immunization, or titer)
- Mumps (exposure, immunization, or titer)
- Rubella (exposure, immunization, or titer)
- Tdap (must be current within 10 years)
- TB Test (CDC recommends Mantoux test every year)
- Chickenpox (exposure, immunization, or titer)

Hepatitis B vaccine is required to be initiated prior to the student's first clinical practicum. The three-part series must be completed according to an established immunization schedule which extends over a six-month period. Health facilities require students to have other immunizations or testing prior to their clinical experience (Texas Administrative Code Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 97, Subchapter B Rule 97.64 Required Vaccinations for Student Enrolled in Health-related and Veterinary courses in Institutions of Higher Education).

It is strongly recommended that students have annual autumn immunization against influenza.

Students may receive the required immunizations and/or titers from the Health Department or from their own private physician. Students are responsible for any fee charged. Current evidence of meeting these requirements is necessary throughout your enrollment in the Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences, and should be reported to the Graduate Nursing Office.

### **Professional Attire**

Projecting a professional image is a responsibility of all students and faculty. Appearance reflects not only upon the individual, but also upon the Angelo State University Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences and the nursing

profession. Individual agencies may determine further dress code requirements at their discretion. If a student appears at a clinical agency inappropriately attired, it will be the agency representative's prerogative to ask the student to correct the situation. It is the responsibility of the student to purchase a nametag\* to be worn while in the clinical area. The nametag should NOT be worn at the place of the student's employment

MSN students are required to purchase a name tag through ASU's Student Nurses Association. The cost is \$10.00 and each student must complete and submit to the Graduate Secretary the completed form and their check, payable to SNA at least two (2) months prior to beginning clinicals. The name tag order form is located on the student resources page of the nursing web site.

For assistance, contact departmental secretary.

### **Student Incident**

Any student involved in a clinical incident (e.g., accidental needle stick, fall, etc.) must notify his/her clinical faculty member immediately. The faculty member will then provide information on appropriate action to be taken. Reporting of any incident must be done immediately for the safety of all persons involved.

### **Preceptor Selection Criteria**

A qualified and approved preceptor must supervise the clinical experience. Angelo State University follows the Advanced Practitioner Regulation Subsection 219.10 (Board of Nurse Examiners for the State of Texas, September 13, 2001; effective January 8, 2008 Texas Regulation 184) by requiring the following qualifications:

1. Nurses:            Master's Degree in Nursing from an accredited university.  
  
                              Current RN license in the state where student will engage in clinical experiences.  
  
                              Authorized to practice as advanced practice nurse in their area of specialization and with specified patient population APRN focus, in the state in which they practice. \*  
  
                              Currently licensed health care professionals who provide supervision and teaching in clinical settings appropriate for advanced practice nursing. \*  
  
                              Have at least **one year** of full time experience in the role in which the student is being precepted.\*\*
2. Physicians:        Doctor of Medicine or Osteopathy from an accredited university.  
  
                              Currently licensed and practicing.
3. Area of practice must be relevant to the educational clinical practice component.

4. Able to provide adequate supervision, teaching, and evaluation of students for the achievement of clinical course objectives and learning needs.
5. Able to facilitate active participation of students in the delivery of health care.
6. Commitment to the concept of advanced practice nursing.
7. Familiar with written clinical objectives specific to preceptor experience.

\*Required for APRN students

\*\* ASU Graduate Nursing policy

### **General Guidelines for Written Assignments**

The official source book to be used throughout the graduate curriculum will be the most current edition of:

American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.

Students are expected to follow the guidelines set down in this manual.

Formal papers are to be submitted in electronic format. Faculty members reserve the right to return papers with an abundance of noticeable corrections, including spelling and grammar, and give a zero for the assignment.

### **Policy for Universal Precautions**

The Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta has developed CDC Isolation Guidelines as recommendations to all health care workers for preventing transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other blood borne diseases in the health care setting. Blood and certain body fluids of **ALL** patients are considered potentially infectious for HIV, Hepatitis B virus (HB.) and other blood borne pathogens. The guidelines are intended to prevent parenteral, mucous membrane, and non-intact skin exposure. The implementation of these control measure does not obviate the need for continued adherence to general infection-control principles and general hygiene measures.

#### **Body Fluids to Which CDC Isolation Guidelines Apply**

Universal precautions apply to blood and other body fluids containing visible blood. ***Blood is the single most important source of HIV, HB, and other blood borne pathogens in the health care facility.*** Universal precautions also apply to semen and vaginal secretions, tissues, and the following fluids: cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, and amniotic. Although universal precautions do not apply to saliva, feces, nasal secretions, sputum, sweat, tears, urine, or vomitus, the use of the gloves and/or eye shield is recommended during any contact with these secretions and/or excretions! Using gloves and washing your hands after handling any of the above should minimize any risk.

## **General Precautions**

1. Use universal precautions for **all** patients.
2. Use appropriate barrier precautions routinely when in contact with any blood or other body fluids of any patient.
3. Change gloves after each contact with patients, followed by hand washing after gloves are removed.
4. Wear mask and protective eyewear during any procedure that is likely to generate drops or sprays to prevent exposure of mucous membranes of mouth, nose, and eyes.
5. Wash hands and other skin surfaces immediately and thoroughly if contaminated with blood or other body fluids.
6. Refrain from all direct patient care if you have exudative lesions or weeping dermatitis until the condition resolves.
7. Use mouthpieces, resuscitator bags or other ventilation devices to reduce the need for mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
8. Always use gloves when changing wound dressings, starting IV's or heparin locks or in any situation in which you may come in contact with blood or body fluids.
9. Take care to prevent injuries when using needles, scalpels or other sharp instruments.
10. Do not recap needles. Discard needle units uncapped and unbroken into sharps containers after use.
11. Notify your instructor immediately if you receive an injury from a contaminated needle or other sharp instruments.
12. Fill out an incident report immediately following any accident or incident involving contamination from body fluids, needle stick injuries, or any potentially harmful occurrence to either you or your patient(s). It is your responsibility to adhere to the policies and procedures of the agency regarding completion of incident reports.

## **Policy for Standard Precautions**

Standard precautions must be observed by all health care workers in all health care settings. This includes nursing students.

As you care for patients and clients, you will be expected to comply with the precautions set forth by the occupational safety and health administration (OSHA), the centers for disease control and prevention (CDC), and the health care agency where you are participating in clinical experiences.