

Graduate Academic Policy

This section describes policies that apply across the graduate curriculum. Faculty may establish other course specific policies.

Academic Year

The graduate program is conducted yearly over two semesters and a summer session. Each semester is approximately 15 weeks in length. Classes do not meet on certain holidays. These holidays are listed on the academic calendar published prior to each academic year.

Academic Advising

Upon admission, students are assigned to Research College of Nursing faculty advisors who assist them in selecting courses, reviewing grade reports and completing degree requirements. Faculty advisors facilitate the progression of students through their program of study.

For the graduate program all courses taken must have the approval of the Academic Advisor and Associate Dean for Academic Programs in order to meet degree requirements.

Academic advising is under the general supervision of the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and the Graduate Program Director. Students experiencing academic problems may consult their faculty advisor, course faculty or the Graduate Program Director for assistance.

Attendance

Students are required to attend classroom, laboratory and clinical sessions regularly. Attendance policies are delineated in course syllabi.

Administrative Requirements for Enrollment and Progression

In order to be fully admitted to the graduate program, the student must provide proof of a current license as a registered nurse (RN). Professional liability insurance is provided for all students through the College; however students may secure additional insurance if they wish.

Students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment until the program is completed. Students in good academic standing who interrupt their continuous enrollment for more than two (2) semesters will be evaluated in regard to their status in the program.

Practicum Course Requirements

In order to participate in practicum courses, students in all tracks of the graduate program must hold a license as an RN in the state in which the practicum experience is based. In addition, students in practicum courses must meet the clinical requirements of the agency in which the practicum experiences occur. Requirements vary according to the type of agency but often include those listed below.

All students must complete the following clinical requirements before starting their clinical experiences. Documentation that these requirements have been met must be current and on file in the office of the Academic Registrar before students can register for clinical courses.

1. Measles/mumps. For students born on or after 1/1/57, provide adequate documentation of diagnosed disease, laboratory evidence of immunity, or documentation of adequate vaccination. (2 vaccinations)
2. Varicella (Chickenpox). Adequate vaccination, diagnosed disease or, for those with a negative or uncertain history of varicella, serologic screening.
3. Rubella. For students born on or after 1/1/57, provide laboratory evidence of immunity or documentation of adequate vaccination. All women, regardless of birth date, should have proof of rubella immunity or prior vaccination.(2 vaccinations)\

4. Incoming students who are due for a TD booster must have TDAP which includes acellosis pertussis. TDAP will be required for students at the time of their next TD booster .
5. Tuberculin Testing. Based on current CDC recommendations students must complete one of the following to assess for TB exposure:
 - a. Upon admission must present a TB screen less than 12 months old.
 - b. If most current TB screen is over 12 months old, one new TB screen is required.
 - c. If a TB screen has never been done, a 2-step TB screen must be completed.
 - d. Upon admission must present documentation of a TB titer less than 12 months old (Interferon-Gamma Release Assays [IGRAs]—blood tests for TB infection).
6. Hepatitis B immunization. The series of three immunizations or a signed waiver declining the immunizations is required.
7. Color Blindness. An assessment for color blindness must be completed before the beginning of clinical practicum courses. This can be done in the Learning Resource Center at Research College of Nursing.
8. Basic Life Support (BLS) certification for Health Care Providers. Students must maintain current Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification throughout the clinical practicum courses. The Basic Life Support (BLS) course for Healthcare Providers includes CPR skills for helping victims of all ages (including doing ventilation with a barrier device, a bag-mask device, and oxygen); use of automated external defibrillator (AED); and relief of foreign body airway obstruction (FBAO). The CPR course **MUST** include CPR for infants, children and adults (one and two person).
 - A. The CPR certification course must include evidence of satisfactory performance in both cognitive knowledge (written test) and skills (hands-on skills check-off).
 - B. CPR certification/recertification should be completed at a time when it will be valid for an entire academic year.
9. Criminal Background Check. All students must have a criminal background check completed prior to initial enrollment in nursing courses. A single negative check does not preclude the requirement of additional checks at a future time. Students should be aware that any affirmative results from a criminal background check may result in an inability to participate in required clinical activities and therefore may result in the student's inability to complete degree requirements. In the event that a student's criminal background check is reported "affirmatively" the student will have the opportunity to request an additional criminal background check. The rationale and policy related to repetition of criminal background checks is found in the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act.
10. Clinical Orientation Competency Exam. Students must satisfactorily complete the competency exam annually. This exam is available on WebCT: *Clinical Orientation Requirements*.
11. HIPAA Competency. All students must satisfactorily complete an exam (WebCT: *Clinical Orientation Requirements*) annually based on requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Additional HIPAA testing may be required by specific clinical agencies.
12. Confidentiality Statement. A signed statement completed annually regarding the confidentiality of information about patients, their families and clinical facilities. (WebCT: *Clinical Orientation Requirements*).
13. Proof of Health Insurance. Contracts with clinical agencies require that all students provide evidence of health insurance coverage. Students should be aware that if illness or injury occurs during a clinical experience, they may be required to seek appropriate medical care at a health care facility and assume the cost of any required testing or treatment. Evidence of health insurance or a waiver must be documented annually. Students who do not provide evidence of health insurance must sign a waiver stating that they assume personal responsibility for all costs of any medical care required due to illness or injury.
14. Absence of any infectious disease. A student with an infectious disease shall promptly disclose this information to the appropriate faculty member so that a determination can be made concerning whether

the student's condition poses a direct threat of harm to the student's own health or safety, or to the health or safety of others. This determination will be made in consultation with appropriate medical personnel.

If for some reason a student cannot be immunized or otherwise satisfactorily meet the requirements above, the Associate Dean for Academic Programs will consider appropriate options on a case by case basis.

Academic Requirements for Progression

1. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 is required to progress in the program.
2. A grade of C or below in any graduate course is not accepted for degree credit in any graduate course.
3. Any course in which a grade of C or below is earned must be repeated and progression in the program is affected as outlined below:
 - a. If the cumulative grade point average is at or above a 3.0, the student may enroll in another course, assuming that prerequisites have been met, and repeat the course in which the grade of C or less was earned when it becomes available.
 - b. If the cumulative grade point average falls below a 3.0, the course must be repeated before enrolling in another course. After repeating the course, the student must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better to remain in the program.
4. Two grades of C or below result in dismissal from the graduate program regardless of cumulative grade point average.
5. Clinical practicum courses are graded Pass/No Pass (P/NP). Pass grades are not calculated into the grade point average. No Pass grades are transcribed as an F and affect the grade point average.
6. A grade of No Pass in one clinical practicum course results in dismissal from the graduate program.

Dismissal from the graduate program is a serious action and results when two (2) grades of C or below are earned in any graduate level nursing course, or when a failure in a clinical practicum course occurs, regardless of the cumulative grade point average. Therefore, a student who has been dismissed from the graduate program should not expect to be readmitted.

Changes in Registration

Changes in registration must be initiated in the Office of Academic Programs. Class additions will not be allowed after the first week of the semester. Students who stop attending class(es) without processing the official withdrawal forms will receive grades of F. No credit will be allowed for a course in which the student is not appropriately registered.

Classification of Students

Enrollment Status

A **full-time** graduate student is one who enrolls in at least 9 credit hours during the fall or spring 15-week semester. Full time enrollment in the summer term is a minimum of 4 credit hours.

A **part-time** graduate student is one who enrolls in less than 9 credit hours during the fall or spring 15-week semester. In order for a student to be eligible to receive financial aid funds during the fall or spring semester he or she must be enrolled in a minimum of 4.5 credit hours. Part-time enrollment in the summer term is a minimum of 2 credit hours.

Grade Reports

Graduate students receive final grade reports only at the end of each semester and at the end of each summer session during which they have taken at least one course. Grade reports are sent to the permanent home address.

Graduate Grading System

Course requirements and the methodology for assigning grades are the prerogative of the teaching faculty of each nursing course.

A uniform grading system will be used for all graduate courses at Research College of Nursing. The grading scale consists of the following grades with their corresponding quality point values.

Grades marked with an asterisk (*) do not allow progression in nursing courses.

A	4.0	Denotes superior academic performance at the graduate level
B+	3.33	Denotes above average academic performance at the graduate level.
B	3.0	Denotes average academic performance at the graduate level.
C	2.0	Denotes below average academic performance at the graduate level which will not be accepted for degree credit in any Research College of Nursing graduate degree program and may affect progression.
F*	0.0	Denotes academic performance of poor quality which will not be accepted for degree credit.
I*		Denotes that the course has not been completed. This grade may be assigned only for serious reasons and with the approval of the Associate Dean; must be removed within six weeks or automatically becomes an F.
NP*	0.0	No Pass. This grade is given only in clinical practicum courses. A grade of NP will be transcribed as an F which will affect the grade point average.
P		Pass. This grade is given only in clinical practicum courses. A grade of P adds credit but does not affect the grade point average.
W*		Denotes that the student is allowed to withdraw without penalty.
AU*		Audit. Student enrolled on a non-credit basis. No grade or credit given.
IP		Denotes "in progress". IP will be assigned for NU 7480/7500 until completion of the project/thesis.

Graduate Program Grading Scale

92-100	=	A
87-91	=	B+
80-86	=	B
70-79	=	C
0-69	=	F

Grade Point Average

Grade point averages for the Master of Science in Nursing program are calculated on the basis of graduate credit hours attempted and quality points earned at Research College of Nursing and Rockhurst University. Courses taken on a pass/no pass basis are not computed in the grade point average.

With the exception of the Dean's Award for Graduate Achievement, the grade point average is calculated using Research College of Nursing and Rockhurst University credits only.

Graduation Requirements

All candidates for the MSN degree must successfully complete degree requirements within six (6) years from time of admission. The minimum number of credits required for each track is:

Family Nurse Practitioner	45 credits
Adult –Gero Nurse Practitioner	43 credits
Executive Nurse Practice	35 credits
Nurse Educator	36 credits

Leaves of absence will be considered on an individual basis.

Students are responsible for ensuring that all graduation requirements are met. Questions on these matters should be directed to the student's faculty advisor or the Graduate Program Director.

Students should file the Application for Degree Candidacy no later than one semester before the semester in which completion of the degree is anticipated. The application should be submitted to the Office of Academic Programs, and official transcripts of transfer credit from other institutions requested to prepare for graduation.

Transcripts of Records

No transcript, official or unofficial, or Certification of Education will be issued to or for a student or alumna(us) who is delinquent in financial obligations to Research College of Nursing.

Graduate students wishing transcripts of records to transfer from Research College of Nursing to another college or for other purposes should submit a written, signed request to Research College of Nursing Office of Academic Programs. The processing charge for transcripts is \$10.00.

Standards of Conduct

The College has two codes of conduct: one for academic conduct and one for student conduct. A student may be disciplined or dismissed from the nursing program for either academic misconduct or student misconduct. The standards of academic conduct address meeting established academic criteria and behavioral integrity in performing the academic work of the College. The standards of student conduct relate to matters outside the context of academic courses. The Student Conduct Policy can be found in the [Research College of Nursing Guide to Student Life](#).

Honesty and integrity are prerequisites to academic life and more specifically, to the practice of nursing. Honesty is defined as being truthful, free of deceit and having integrity (Webster, 1976). Integrity is defined as utter honesty and adherence to a code of values (Webster, 1976). Integrity also encompasses "being truthful, avoiding acts of cheating, fraud or outright lying, and refusing to engage in deception or false representation in practice" (Hoyer, Booth, Spelman & Richardson, 1991, p. 171). Professional integrity in nursing is reflected in the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code for Nurses (2001), ANA Standards of Professional Nursing Practice and Performance (1991) and the Scope and Standards of Advanced Practice for Registered Nursing (1996). Nursing practice is further guided by institutional standards. Nursing students must adhere to both institutional and professional standards in the classroom, clinical sites, and the community to meet the College's standards of conduct.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a breach of honesty or integrity and standards. Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to the following:

1. Cheating: giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in any assignment.

2. Plagiarism: the use of ideas, language or work of another without sufficient acknowledgment that the material is not one's own or submission of the work of another, whether altered or unaltered, as one's own. Students are to be guided by the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.
3. Manipulation or alteration of another student's or faculty's academic work.
4. Unauthorized use, removal, concealment or defacement of library, Learning Resource Center or faculty resources, e.g., books, equipment, files, papers, tests.
5. Submitting the same work or portions of work for more than one class without prior written approval of faculty.
6. Collusion: assisting another student in an act of dishonesty.
7. Lying: conveying any untruth either verbal or written.
8. Disregarding the well-being and needs of patients: acts of commission or omission that could adversely affect the patient, e.g., medication errors, failure to provide safe appropriate care, failure to follow supervisor/faculty instructions for care, breach of client confidentiality.

Sanctions imposed by faculty for academic misconduct include but are not limited to:

1. Written notification of the student's act of academic misconduct and potential consequences placed in the student's file.
2. Giving a zero (no points) for a test, assignment or paper.
3. Giving a failing course grade.
4. Recommending dismissal from the program.

Guidelines for Students

Students often become aware or suspicious of academic misconduct first. In order for the College to maintain an environment that is supportive of academic integrity, students are encouraged to maintain the standards for academic conduct. In situations where students are in doubt as to the integrity of one's own or one's peer's actions, it is advisable to consult one of the following: course faculty, course coordinator, team leader, or academic advisor. As noted in a previous section, students must adhere to both institutional and professional standards in the classroom, clinical sites, and the community

Withdrawal

Students desiring to withdraw from Research College of Nursing during a semester must complete a Change of Registration form obtained from the Office of Academic Programs. This process may be accomplished in person or through use of the official Research College of Nursing Email. The completed form must be signed by the student (or email request to withdraw attached), the course faculty, the student's academic advisor and in some cases the Associate Dean for Academic Programs.

Fees paid by a student authorized to withdraw are refundable only as indicated under "Refunds". (see Catalog chapter "Tuition and Fees") Failure to process withdrawals correctly will result in an automatic grade of F.

A student withdrawing during the semester forfeits credit for work done that semester. Any student who wishes to withdraw from a course should confer with the course faculty and advisor. The student's right to withdraw remains regardless of the course faculty or advisor's recommendation.

The last date for withdrawal from a course is the date at which 2/3 of the scheduled term for the course has been completed. This withdrawal date will be referred to as the "2/3" date. The 2/3 date will be specified in the course

syllabus. Courses dropped during the first week of the course are not recorded on the student's academic record. Courses dropped after the first week of the course and until the 2/3 date are recorded with grade notations of W (Withdrawal). Following the 2/3 date, course withdrawal will not be allowed.

This policy applies regardless of the length of the course. The procedures and deadlines for withdrawal from individual courses also apply to changes to audit status in any class.

Suspension

A student may be suspended from any classroom, lab or clinical session for inappropriate or unsafe behavior or failure to adhere to any Research College of Nursing Academic Policies. Suspension may last from several hours to one calendar year.

Faculty imposed

Faculty are solely responsible for making the immediate decision to suspend a student from classroom, clinical, or lab sessions in progress for inappropriate or unsafe behaviors. At the time of a suspension by the faculty, conditions for reinstatement are explained. Failure to meet the conditions of reinstatement may result in course failure.

College imposed

The Associate Dean for Academic Programs is solely responsible for imposing suspension for failure to adhere to Research College of Nursing Academic Policy. At the time of a suspension by the Associate Dean, the conditions of reinstatement are explained. Failure to meet the conditions of reinstatement may result in course failure or dismissal from the nursing program. The student cannot attend classroom, lab or clinical sessions during the suspension.

Academic Appeal

A student may appeal any of the following:

1. Failing final course grade (C or below for graduate).
2. Recommendation for dismissal.

An appeal is initiated by submitting a typed statement to the Chair of the Admission, Progression and Graduation (APG) Committee, no later than seven (7) College working days after being notified of the failing final course grade or recommendation for dismissal. The typed statement must include the following:

1. A statement of the issue;
2. Specific steps that have already been taken to resolve the issue with the faculty, course coordinator and/or Graduate Program Director.
3. Evidence supporting why the student believes the decision made was inconsistent with existing Research College of Nursing or course policy, was arbitrary, or lacked sufficient evidence.

In preparing the appeal, it is the student's responsibility and burden to prove that the action taken by the faculty was inconsistent with existing policy, arbitrary, or lacked sufficient evidence. The student may seek assistance from a Research College of Nursing faculty member as an advisor in preparing the statement for an appeal. The role of the advisor is to assist the student in understanding the policy and procedure. The advisor's role does not include gathering information or presenting evidence.

The student will submit the letter of appeal with supporting documents to the Chair of the APG Committee. The Chair will forward appeal documents to faculty involved in the subject matter of the appeal or its resolution. Faculty will submit to the Chair of the APG Committee within five (5) College working days their

response to the appeal document including their supporting documentation. The Chair of the APG Committee will forward the faculty's response to the student.

The APG Committee will meet within seven (7) College working days of receiving all the written appeal documents to hear the appeal. The student may request one continuance, not to exceed one week, for good cause.

The student and faculty will be notified 72 hours before the hearing of the time, date and location of the hearing. It is preferable that students and faculty attend the APG committee hearing in person. However, the College will accommodate the use of speakerphone or other electronic transmission method for students who are unable to participate in a face to face hearing. The appeal will be heard by members of the APG Committee, the involved student and faculty and the student's faculty advisor. The meeting is confidential and restricted to those persons listed. If an incident involves more than one student, each student will be heard individually.

An APG Committee member, who has been directly involved in the awarding of a failing course grade or recommending dismissal will be replaced by a faculty member appointed by the Dean. If an APG Committee member is the involved student's faculty advisor, a replacement APG Committee member will be assigned by the Dean for the purpose of the appeal.

The student may be accompanied to the APG Committee hearing by his/her faculty advisor. When the APG Committee has heard all the evidence, the APG Committee members will meet, in private, to discuss the appeal. The APG Committee will make a decision within seven (7) College working days after the hearing.

In an appeal of a failing course grade, the APG Committee can either: 1) uphold the assigned grade or 2) return the grade to the faculty for reconsideration. If the faculty is asked to reconsider a grade by the APG Committee, the faculty can uphold the assigned grade or change the grade. The faculty member will notify the APG Committee of their decision within 72 hours. The faculty's decision is final. The APG Committee will notify the Associate Dean and the student of the outcome of the appeal. The student can receive and sign for the APG Committee's written decision or the decision will be sent by certified mail to the student.

If the outcome of an appeal results in dismissal from the program, the student may make one last appeal to the President/Dean. The President/Dean of the College may take any action she/he deems is appropriate under the circumstances of the case. The decision of the President/Dean is final.

Readmission Following Dismissal

Dismissal from the graduate program is a serious action and results when two (2) grades of C or below are earned in any graduate level nursing course, or when a failure in a clinical practicum course occurs, regardless of the cumulative grade point average. Therefore, a student who has been dismissed from the graduate program should not expect to be readmitted.

A student who is dismissed from the graduate program may choose to apply for readmission through the Admission, Progression and Graduation (APG) Committee. The APG Committee may consider an application for readmission if there is clear evidence of probable future academic success.

It is the student's responsibility to support the application for readmission by submitting the following materials to the chairperson of the APG Committee:

1. A letter indicating the student's interest to be considered for readmission and including a written plan for achieving future academic success in the program.
2. Letters of recommendation for readmission from both the academic advisor and another graduate faculty member from the most recent course taken.

The APG Committee reviews these materials and the student's overall academic record in making a decision and reserves the right to stipulate additional requirements for readmission.