

# Master of Science (MSN) Student Handbook

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Master of Science in Nursing Program College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS)  
Island Hall 317  
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC)  
<https://www.tamucc.edu/nursing-and-health-sciences>

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## SECTION I

### **MESSAGE FROM DR. CHRISTINA MURPHEY, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR NURSING**

Welcome to the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Programs at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi! This handbook is a document developed for students to reflect on the mission of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences as well as information on the three program options offered (Nurse Educator, Leader in Nursing Systems, and the Family Nurse Practitioner).

This handbook is designed to serve as a resource to help with your questions about the graduate programs. It is a companion for the catalog of the entry year: <https://catalog.tamucc.edu/> and in case of any contradiction, the graduate catalog of record is the true source of information, as well as the College of Graduate Studies handbook <https://www.tamucc.edu/grad-college/current-students/assets/documents/masters-student-handbook.pdf>. The Masters Student Handbook from the College of Graduate Studies handbook provides university-wide information relative to student resources, academic policies, financial assistance, information on coursework requirements, advising, professional organizations and policies and procedures are included.

Students will also use this handbook in conjunction with the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS) website and current degree planners to facilitate progression in their respective program option within the MSN degree.

### **VISION**

Enriching lives, advancing healthcare, one Islander at a time.

### **MISSION**

The TAMUCC College of Nursing and Health Sciences is committed to promoting a learner-centered and caring environment that facilitates student success and engagement in a global context. Delivering nationally recognized, evidence-based educational programs that serve a diverse student population, the college sets clinical standards of excellence in healthcare, and actively advances scholarly research and leadership. The activities are fostered in a collaborative, inter-professional, and multicultural learning community.

## SECTION II

### FACULTY & STAFF

Note: Curriculum Vitas (CVs) for graduate faculty are posted on the CONHS website (scroll down to Nursing Practice Department and click on read more below name) Link: [College of Nursing and Health Science | Faculty Directory | Texas A&M University-CC](#)

#### *Academic Program Coordinators:*

##### Nurse Educator Program

Heather DeGrande, PhD, RN, CCRN-K, Assistant Professor, Office: Island Hall 333, Phone (361) 825-3696, [heather.degrande@tamucc.edu](mailto:heather.degrande@tamucc.edu)

##### Leadership in Nursing Systems Program

Heather DeGrande, PhD, RN, CCRN-K, Assistant Professor, Office: Island Hall 333, Phone (361) 825-3696, [heather.degrande@tamucc.edu](mailto:heather.degrande@tamucc.edu)

##### Family Nurse Practitioner Program

Elizabeth Loika, DNP, PNP-C, FNP-C, USAF, Lt. Col., (Ret.), Associate Professor, Office: Island Hall, 343, Phone (361) 825-5280, [elizabeth.loika@tamucc.edu](mailto:elizabeth.loika@tamucc.edu)

#### *Faculty:*

Dixie Andelman, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, BC-ADM, Assistant Professor

Joshua Anderson, DNP, MSN, FNP-C, ANC, Assistant Clinical Professor

Faezeh Babaieasl "Dr. Naz", PhD, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor

Heather DeGrande, PhD, MSN, RN, CCRN-K, Assistant Professor

Cynthia DeLanie EdD, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor

Luis Espinoza, PhD, MPH, MCHES®, CPH, Assistant Professor

Sarah Guy, PhD, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor

Hadi Kooshlar, Ph.D., MSN, MHS, BSN, RN, Associate Professor and Department Chair Department of Nursing Practice

Melissa Leal, EdD, MSN, RN, CHSE, FSSH, Assistant Professor

Elizabeth Loika, DNP, FNP-C, PNP-C, Clinical Associate Professor

Shuhong Luo, EdD, MSN, MBA, RN, Associate Professor and Department Chair Department of Nursing Education

Christina Murphey, PhD, RN, Professor and Associate Dean for Nursing

Miguel Perez, PhD, MSHCA, Assistant Professor

Renae Schumann, PhD, RN, CNE, The Dr. Eve Layman Endowed Professor in Nursing

Tammy Walker-Smith, DNP, MHA, FNP-C, Assistant Professor

## *Staff:*

### **Administrative Assistant:**

Kirsten Meza, CONHS Department of Nursing Practice Administrative Assistant  
Phone (361) 825- 2613, email: [Kirsten.meza@tamucc.edu](mailto:Kirsten.meza@tamucc.edu)

### **Advisor:**

Sara E. Malacara, CONHS Graduate Advisor, College of Graduate Studies  
Phone (361) 825-2568, email: [Sara.Malacara@tamucc.edu](mailto:Sara.Malacara@tamucc.edu)

### **CONHS Student Success Office:**

Megan L. Kramr, Student Success Coordinator  
Phone (361) 825-2569, [megan.kramr@tamucc.edu](mailto:megan.kramr@tamucc.edu)

Ushma Saraf, Student Success Administrative Assistant  
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Bryana Cazarez, Data Entry Specialist  
Phone (361) 825-3408, [byrana.cazarez@tamucc.edu](mailto:byrana.cazarez@tamucc.edu)

### SECTION III

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES

##### *Program Description*

The Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Master of Science in Nursing degree enhances and expands the clinical competence of baccalaureate nurses. The focus of the degree is to prepare nurses for advanced nursing practice as nurse leaders, family nurse practitioners, or nurse educators. Emphasis is placed on facilitating health care delivery within a multicultural framework. The curriculum includes four core courses and specific courses related to role specialization within the three programs. Three minor areas of study are also available for students seeking to refine their skills as leaders/managers, practitioners, or educators. The variety of learning opportunities and the flexibility of options provided by the curriculum will accommodate the diverse clinical and functional interests of students who enroll in the program. Each program provides a specialty area of study that includes courses with clinical laboratory components that whenever possible, can be completed in the communities where students reside. In some cases, students may have to travel to clinical agencies to access experiences essential to course objectives.

All clinical education and training must be accomplished in the state of Texas.

##### *Accreditation*

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing/the master's degree program in nursing/Doctor of Nursing Practice program and/the post-graduate APRN certificate program at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

(<http://www.ccneaccreditation.org>)

Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi is accredited by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS -SOC)

The CONHS nursing programs are approved by:

The Texas Board of Nursing

333 Guadalupe Street, Suite #3-460, Austin, TX 78701-3944

Phone: (512) 305-7400

Fax: (512) 305-7401

## *MSN Program Goals and Expected Outcomes*

The goals of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences assist the College in implementing the University and College missions:

- To develop within the student the knowledge and skills necessary for beginning professional and advanced nursing practice, cultivating basic and specialized abilities needed to successfully pursue a career
- To promote the concept of nursing as caring and facilitate attainment of a care delivery system sensitive to multicultural communities and their health values
- To offer individuals the opportunity to increase the breadth and depth of the theoretical base for nursing practice, enhance and expand competence, prepare for role specialization, and contribute to the discovery of new nursing knowledge
- To provide an educational environment of respect within which students may evolve as broadly educated, technology competent, responsible, and accountable professionals dedicated to the principles of lifelong learning
- To build a foundation for life-long learning & systematic practice
- To serve the community as nursing experts, leaders and consultants in professional organizations, health promoters, providers of health care policy information and advocates of ethical distribution and usage of resources.

The MSN Graduate Nursing Program aims to provide baccalaureate nurses with learning experiences that will increase the breadth and depth of the student's theory base for nursing practice, enhance and expand their competence, and prepare students for role specialization. Students may complete MSN degree in three different program specialties: [Family Nurse Practitioner](#) (FNP), [Nurse Educator](#) (NE), and [Leadership in Nursing Systems](#) (LNS).

The student learning outcomes of the MSN programs are as follows:

Graduates of these programs will:

- Critically analyze, interpret, and integrate appropriate knowledge, research, and theories to meet the health care needs of diverse populations.
- Apply competent leadership and collaborative skills as members of a multi-professional health care workforce to promote high quality and safe patient care.
- Design evidence-based plans to sustain quality initiatives that promote a transparent professional environment and contribute to the delivery of safe high-quality care.
- Integrate research into professional practice through the implementation of translational processes.
- Demonstrate competence and accountability as clinicians, educators, and leaders in advanced healthcare roles.
- Model caring, sensitivity and respect in the delivery of health care to culturally diverse populations.
- Operationalize principles of ethical, legal, financial, and economic theories as applied to health care delivery systems.
- Guide the adoption and use of information, communication technologies and resources

to document patient care and improve patient outcomes.

- Evaluate the effect of legal and regulatory processes on nursing practice, healthcare delivery, and outcomes using critical analysis of policies that influence health services.

## *Program Options*

Applicants who want to earn a [Master of Science in Nursing](#) degree may enter the graduate program through one of three entry options. These options include the BSN (also referred to as traditional), RN-Bridge, and RN-MSN options.

There is no required thesis or graduate advisory committee to complete the MSN. The thesis option is available for those students interested in pursuing scholarly investigation of a research proposal topic (NURS 5399 Thesis).

**BSN-MSN:** Applicants who have earned a BSN from an accredited program can start graduate course work upon admission to the MSN program.

**RN-Bridge:** Applicants who are registered nurses with baccalaureate degrees in disciplines other than nursing can enter the MSN program through RN-Bridge MSN option. Students must complete undergraduate level courses before they can begin graduate courses that lead to the MSN.

The 16 hours of RN-Bridge undergraduate courses include: NURS 3435 Health Assessment 4 sem. hrs.  
NURS 4318 Nurse as Research Consumer 3 sem. hrs.  
NURS 4560 Nursing Care of Community 5 sem. hrs.  
NURS 4471 Leadership/Management 4 sem. hrs.

**RN-MSN:** Applicants who are registered nurses with associate degrees in nursing can enter the MSN program through the RN to MSN option. Articulation agreements exist between A&M-Corpus Christi and associate degree nursing programs to support student access to this MSN entry option. Registered nurses who have earned a diploma or associate degree in nursing from an accredited program and who meet all other requirements for admission into the MSN degree program are eligible to apply for the RN-MSN entrance option. Students who enter the MSN program through this option will not earn a bachelor's degree in nursing at any stage of their course work.

The RN-MSN student must complete 58 credit hours of designated general education and support courses in accordance with the A&M- Corpus Christi University Core Curriculum transfer policy requirements and the Bachelor of Science degree requirements for prescribed support courses, as specified in the Undergraduate Catalog. Equivalency tables are available showing which general education and nursing courses will be accepted for transfer to meet these required hours.

Prior to beginning master's level course work, the RN-MSN student must complete up to 42 hours

of specific general course work in addition to undergraduate 'leveling' course work:

NURS 3435 Health Assessment (may complete through Challenge Examination) 3 sem. hrs.

NURS 4324 Nurse as Caregiver (may complete through Challenge Examination) 3 sem. hrs.

NURS 4560 Nursing Care of Community 5 sem. hrs.

NURS 4471 Leadership/Management 4 sem. hrs.

NURS 4318 Nurse as Research Consumer 3 sem. hrs.

**Post Masters Certification.** Post-master's certification is available for students that have earned their MSN Degree. Certification will allow registered nurses to expand their scope of practice beyond the role or population focus associated with their current credentials. Students admitted to the Post-Masters-Certification will be considered to have completed the MSN core courses based on the completion of the master's degree. All progression requirements apply to students enrolled in this program.

**Non-degree-seeking students.** Non-degree status is designated for the student who wants to enroll in graduate course work to meet unique personal or career goals that do not lead to a graduate degree or certification. Colleges may place restrictions on the enrollment of students admitted in this status. Students must see the CONHS Graduate Advisor and the respective Academic Program Coordinator to discuss their related educational goals.

## SECTION IV

### ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

#### *Program Admission*

Admission information and deadlines can be found on the website:

<https://www.tamucc.edu/nursing-and-health-sciences/nursing-practice/index.php> under programs of study.

The MSN programs use a rolling admission process, process (applications are reviewed upon receipt or when there are an adequate number of applicants for review). We encourage students to apply early. This will allow for enough time to also apply for and qualify for federal student aid and scholarships. Applications will not be reviewed until all required materials have been submitted and received. Cohorts start in Fall semesters each year. Post-Master's certificate cohorts start in Summer semesters of each year.

The college reserves the right to defer admission in the case of low enrollment. Students will be notified and given options if a selected track is not offered.

To apply for admission, students should complete application requirements as outlined in the posted Application Requirements section of the MSN webpage:

<https://www.tamucc.edu/programs/graduate-programs/nursing-msn.php>

Additional Information:

- To be considered, students must have completed an undergraduate nursing program or earned a diploma from an National League for Nursing-Accreditation Commission, Accrediting Commission on Education in Nursing, or American Association of Colleges of Nursing Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education accredited school of nursing.
- Applicants who have not yet obtained a Texas nursing license can be conditionally admitted to the MSN Program but are required to obtain their Texas nursing license by the end of the first semester in the graduate program with a waiver request.
- Students with a GPA less than 3.00 may be considered for conditional admission with a waiver request.

The following program requirements apply to all nursing graduate students upon admission and throughout the program of study. Students must:

- Provide evidence they hold a current unencumbered license to practice nursing in the state of Texas throughout the program. Applicants license and disciplinary status will be

verified through a primary source verification:

<https://txbn.boardsofnursing.org/licenselookup> and <https://www.nursys.com/>.

Evidence of current unencumbered license will be verified throughout the enrollment period of the student.

- Provide evidence they have met the requirements for immunizations by uploading relevant documents to their account in the data repository maintained by the College. The data repository includes automated email messages to notify students when their immunizations have expired. Students must update immunizations while enrolled in the program as needed. Students should contact the CONHS Data Entry Specialist for additional information about these requirements.
- Hold current American Heart Association CPR Type C certification or Red Cross Healthcare Provider CPR. A copy of the student's current American Heart Association Health Care Providers card is required annually to the data repository.
- Complete a 10 panel non-chain of custody urine drug screen upon admission to the DNP program. The results of the screen must be submitted to the CONHS through the data repository maintained by the CONHS. Some agencies may require additional drug screens
- Complete a criminal background check after admission to the program. Generally, the background check is completed within the first semester of the program to meet the admission requirement. Occasionally an agency will require students to complete another background check if the time between admission and a practice experience within the agency exceeds their time for background checks. The additional background check will be a condition of the student's access to the agency and cannot be waived by the College.
- Purchase professional liability coverage through the University. Fees for this coverage are included in the fees paid at the time of registration at the beginning of each academic year.

The Texas Department of State Health Services has specific immunization requirements for students enrolled in health profession programs, the CONHS follows the: Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 97, Subchapter B, Rule 97.64 and Rule 97.65 Texas Education Code in allowing for exceptions to the immunization requirements. Some agencies where students may choose to complete clinical practice experience may have stricter requirements than the state minimum standards. Students will have to meet agency requirements to gain access to these agencies.

Additional information will be required from applicants before full admission can be granted.

### Academic Advising for MSN Students

Academic advisement for students enrolled in the nursing programs at TAMU-CC is provided by the CONHS Graduate Advisor, MSN Program Coordinator(s), and the Associate Dean for Nursing.

**Each student is responsible for awareness and successful completion of all degree requirements.**

The following individuals will facilitate student progress in accomplishing the MSN program student learning outcomes.

#### **CONHS Graduate Advisor**

- The CONHS Graduate Advisor will assist students with class registration issues, course sequencing, graduation procedures, academic progression, navigating College of Graduate Studies' (CGS) procedures and utilizing existing university facilities, such as financial aid.
- Each MSN student is responsible for meeting or holding a phone conference with the CONHS Graduate Advisor prior to or during each registration period. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the student of current offerings in the nursing program and to review the student's progress in the degree plan.
- Students should consult the CONHS Graduate Advisor when events affect their ability to complete courses, progress through the program or interfere with registration.
- The CONHS Graduate Advisor performs course inventories before graduation and students should be guided by this review of graduation requirements.

#### **MSN Academic Program Coordinator(s)**

- The MSN Academic Program Coordinator(s) are entrusted with the overall leadership of the MSN program. They are responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of the MSN program, including curriculum, clinical practice experience oversight, and compliance with national accreditation and certification standards.
- The MSN Academic Program Coordinator is responsible for administering the policies related to the MSN program and supporting students as they progress through the program.
- Students should seek assistance from course faculty as soon as they determine they are having difficulties in meeting course requirements, achieving course student learning outcomes, or meeting program student learning outcomes. Students are expected to contact course faculty, the CONHS Graduate Advisor, the MSN Program Coordinator and Associate Dean for Nursing, following chain of command as needed, in the event academic difficulties occur that may impact program progression.

#### **Associate Dean for Nursing**

- The Associate Dean for Nursing is administratively responsible for ensuring the highest quality of academic programs and student services and will support students to foster an environment that endorses student achievement including reporting and accreditation.

### ***Progression***

Admission to the CONHS is highly competitive. Students are expected to progress through the program per their degree plan. If students do not follow the prescribed degree plan, they will be re-sequenced. The process of resequencing will delay graduation timelines depending on enrollment in needed courses.

## *Course Delivery & Sequencing*

- Courses are delivered in a sequence that promotes the student's development of skills in the design of health services not acquired through master-level nursing programs.
- Courses are arranged to support working registered nurses through a part-time program that can be completed in their home communities.
- Students will be required to travel to agencies they select for practice experiences.
- Students may choose to meet faculty or other resources on the TAMU-CC campus to facilitate their learning.
- Students should consult the course faculty and the CONHS Graduate Advisor immediately when they encounter problems that may interfere with the successful completion of a course in any semester.
- To progress, students must meet prerequisites for individual courses. Course prerequisites are based on sequencing of course content. Students who do not meet these requirements risk not successfully completing a course or slowing the degree progression.
- Courses will be taught once a calendar year so students should consult the MSN Program Coordinator and the CONHS Graduate Advisor if they are unable to follow the current degree plan. An alternate degree plan may be approved.
- Students can find course sequence in the Degree Planner for individual plans.

All students must meet the standards for minimal performance and progression established by TAMU-CC CGS. See catalog section on [Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements](#). Students must also adhere to the CGS [Student Handbook](#).

Students who drop a course or do not enroll in a semester in which they are eligible to enroll will only have access to subsequent courses in their area of study when space is available. Therefore, it is highly recommended that students consult the CONHS Graduate Advisor or the graduate nursing respective academic program coordinator before withdrawing.

To ensure academic integrity and reduce conflicts of interest in the MSN program, it is highly recommended for TAMUCC CONHS faculty to pursue MSN education in another college of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi or another Texas A&M University.

### **Grading Scale**

The CONHS letter grading scales for all programs consist of the following:

- A - 90 to 100
- B - 83 to 89
- C - 75 to 82
- D - 74 to 67
- F - 66 and Below

1. When a grade lower than a C is earned, the student:
  - a. Must repeat a course in which a grade of D, F, or W (Withdrawal) was earned.
  - b. May be placed on scholastic probation if the GPA falls below 3.0 because of the D, F, or W.
  - c. Will be removed from scholastic probation in accordance with university policy.
  - See [\*Scholastic Probation and Enforced Withdrawal\*](#) in the catalog.
  - d. May not progress to courses for which that course is a prerequisite when a grade of D, F, W or I (Incomplete) was earned.
2. If the student earns a third C or below in the program, the student cannot progress further and is required to withdraw from the program even when the GPA does not fall below 3.0. (Grades earned in the RN-Bridge or RN-MSN program count in the total number of grades earned in the program. Therefore, all grades below a B will be considered in progression decisions.)
3. The student cannot progress to the next course after withdrawing from two courses in the program unless approved by the College of Nursing and Health Sciences Department of Nursing Practice Admissions and Progression Committee. A plan to complete the program must be submitted to the Committee before a progression decision can be made. Admission to courses that need to be completed will depend on space availability.
4. Students admitted conditionally to the College must earn a B or better in each of the first four MSN courses to remain in the MSN program. If a grade of less than B is earned during the period the student is classified as a conditional student, the student will be prohibited from further enrollment in the MSN program. Students pursuing the RN- Bridge or RN-MSN options are not eligible for enrollment under the conditional admission status.
5. Students in the RN-Bridge and RN-MSN programs must complete the undergraduate course work before beginning graduate classes. To progress in these entrance options, students must maintain a 3.00 grade point average. Students may earn credit for NURS 3435 (Health Assessment) and NURS 4324 (Nurse as a Caregiver) through a challenge examination process when a score of 83% or better is earned on the examination. If the challenge examination results are not successful, the student may move to the RN-BSN track and take the course in question. The student may not reenter the RN-MSN track. The student may not progress through the RN-MSN track if the challenge exam score is less than 83% and the student does not want to enter the RN-BSN option.

## ***Graduation***

The MSN curriculum is 37-40 semester credit hours. Course activities are both didactic and experiential. The didactic component of courses is delivered through the web-based, learning management system (LMS) at TAMU-CC.

### **Degree Plan**

See the relevant section University Graduate Handbook. The degree plan must be completed before the student has completed 18 credit hours. Please contact the graduate academic CONHS Graduate Advisor regarding degree plan completion.

## **Culminating Event/Exit Requirements**

There is no culminating event for the MSN unless the student chose the thesis option. The culminating event for the Nurse Educator and Leadership in Nursing Systems students is the capstone project.

- An MSN student may receive a degree upon satisfying the requirements of the catalog under which the student enrolled in the program, provided the catalog is no more than seven years old when the degree is conferred, and the University still offers programs and required curriculum described in that catalog. A student may petition to graduate under a subsequent catalog under which credit was earned because of a preference to meet newer degree requirements.
- MSN students have a maximum of seven years to complete the program, from the first semester start date.
- Students intending to have a degree conferred must notify the CONHS Graduate Advisor .
- Students who plan to participate in a graduation exercise and/or receive a diploma must complete an application for graduation by the deadline indicated in the Academic Calendar.
- An application for graduation must be obtained through the student portal, [S.A.I.L.](#)
- Students participating in the graduation exercise will also be required to obtain an appropriate cap and gown.
- The application for graduation is not transferable to a subsequent semester. If a student does not graduate, the application will be canceled. A new application must be obtained and processed through [S.A.I.L.](#)
- More information about Commencement can be found here:  
<https://www.tamucc.edu/commencement/index.php>

## ***Academic Integrity & Student Conduct***

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty is described in Article III of the Student Code of Conduct. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the university catalog and the [Student Code of Conduct](#), which explain standards for academic integrity and academic honesty. Information on [Academic Misconduct is available here.](#)

## ***Dismissal***

1. A student may be dismissed from the program without previous warning for unsafe and/or unprofessional behavior identified by college administrators and faculty. The conduct of nursing students should meet ethical standards as defined by the [American Nurses Association \(ANA\)](#) in the Code of Ethics. Personal integrity is reflected in professional judgments. Consequently, the College reserves the right to dismiss students from the program for unprofessional or unsafe behavior.
2. Students are expected to maintain Texas Board of Nursing RN licensure, immunizations, and all other compliance requirements (those required on admission) throughout the duration of the program and for entrance into and completion of clinical experiences. The CONHS reserves the right to dismiss students from the program when compliance requirements are not met.

3. Students dismissed from the program for unprofessional above and/or unsafe behavior (including #1 & or 2 above) are ineligible for the Grade Appeal process.

Please see the link for more information: [Texas Board of Nursing - Laws & Rules - Nursing Practice Act](#)

### **Social Media**

Social media has become very popular in the public's life to communicate. The student is referred to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) White Paper on Social Media 2011 for guidance in the use of social media in nursing. The DNP student will be held accountable to professional standards related to confidentiality in all activities related to program requirements.

### ***College of Nursing and Health Sciences Student Grade Appeal Process***

The CONHS adheres to the [University's Student Grade Appeal](#) Procedure.

## SECTION V

### MSN PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

All didactic courses in the MSN program are in online format. For MSN courses with a clinical component, clinical is conducted at a site appropriate to the course content. See [Preceptor Guide](#) and [FNP Clinical Guidelines](#).

#### *Course Delivery*

- Each MSN course can be accessed in a unique LMS shell through the TAMU-CC link. Course materials are organized within the shell. Links to support services including the library, tutorials, zoom presentations, and IT Help Desk are available in each shell. All course-related communication including documentation of grades, clarification of assignments, and discussions should occur in the course shell.
- Generally, in-person, face-to-face activities between faculty and classmates will not be required to complete course-specific assignments.
- Course work consists of a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities that support student learning. Faculty may use a variety of web-based technologies such as YouTube videos or group conferencing as well as the learning tools embedded in the learning management system (such as chats, discussions, assignment management) to support student learning.
- Students are expected to maintain access to the Internet so that they can regularly participate in class activities.
- The TAMU-CC IT Help Desk maintains student support services seven days a week and can be reached by email or phone. Students should contact the IT Help services when they cannot access the course shell. Additionally, students should contact the course faculty as soon as possible when they have long-term access problems that will interfere with their access to course materials through the LMS. Each course should present a class schedule, which will delineate deadlines for assignments and provide a framework for establishing a work plan to complete course requirements. Most courses include lessons presented through a text format. These lessons generally include references to material on sites outside of the course made available through links. The lessons supplement the required readings. Self-assessments are often used as activities for students to evaluate their understanding of the information covered in lessons.

#### *Written Assignment Requirements*

- Because this is a graduate level program, student performance will be assessed primarily through application activities that include the design, implementation, and defense of interventions that support quality health care. All assignments submitted to faculty must be submitted in the current APA format unless specifically instructed for that assignment. Any deviation from this requirement will be explicitly stated in a course syllabus.
- Students are strongly advised to purchase a copy of the current Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association and avoid relying solely on electronic templates. Using only

electronic aids for APA formatting may create problems because electronic templates do not always work correctly when documents are transmitted electronically.

### ***MSN Program Core Courses:***

The MSN has four program core courses, with each specialty track with role specialization courses as outlined below with required semester credit hours (SCH) and clinical hours:

|                                                           |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| NURS 5310 - Science in Nursing                            | <b>3 SCH</b>         |
| NURS 5314 - Research Methods in Advanced Nursing Practice | <b>3 SCH</b>         |
| NURS 5315 - Health Policy and Cultural Diversity          | <b>3 SCH</b>         |
| NURS 5316 - Intro to Advanced Practice Role Development   | <b>3 SCH</b>         |
|                                                           | <b>Total: 12 SCH</b> |

### ***Nurse Educator Requirements***

- MSN Core courses (above) 12 SCH
- Role specialization courses 25 SCH
- Total Clinical Hours: 180 Clinical Hours
- Degree Total: 37 SCH

For detailed course information and descriptions, please see the CGS Catalog: [Nurse Educator](#).

### ***Leadership in Nursing Systems Requirements***

- Core courses (above) 12 SCH
- Role specialization courses 28 SCH
- Total clinical hours: 225 Clinical Hours (since 2017)\*
- Degree Total: 40 SCH

\*Contact the MSN NLS Coordinator for clinical hours prior to 2017 matriculation

For detailed course information and descriptions, please see the CGS Catalog: [Nurse in Leadership Systems](#).

### ***Family Nurse Practitioner***

- Core courses (above) 12 SCH
- Role specialization course 37 SCH
- Total Clinical Hours: 630 Clinical Hours
- Degree Total: 49 SCH

For detailed course information and descriptions, please see the CGS Catalog: [Family Nurse Practitioner](#).

## SECTION VI

### STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

#### *Professional Honor Societies*

- Sigma Theta Tau International/Eta Omicron Chapter at TAMU-CC. The Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing is the only international honor society for nursing and is a member of the Association of College Honor Societies. The society recognizes achievement of superior quality, fosters high professional standards, encourages creative work, and recognizes the development of leadership qualities. The organization strengthens the individual's commitment to the ideals and purposes of professional nursing. Sigma Theta Tau is a scholarly professional nursing that promotes the best in nursing.
  - TAMU-CC students who meet the eligibility criteria for membership as outlined in Sigma Theta Tau are eligible to join induction into Eta Omicron, TAMU-CC's founding chapter. Eligible students receive invitations to join the chapter via their Islander email account. Formal induction ceremonies are held twice annually.
- Phi Kappa Phi. The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi—the nation's oldest all-discipline honor society — established its Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi chapter in 2014. The A&M University–Corpus Christi chapter is the 328th chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, which was founded in 1897 at the University of Maine. Graduate Students who meet the eligibility criteria will be invited by the chapter to join Phi Kappa Phi (no nomination letters needed). Graduate students must have completed 18 credit hours and rank in the top 10% of their class.

#### *Professional Organizations*

- [American Association of Colleges of Nursing \(AACN\)](#). AACN is the national voice for baccalaureate and graduate nursing education. AACN works to establish quality standards for nursing education; assists schools in implementing those standards; influences the nursing profession to improve health care; and promotes public support for professional nursing education, research, and practice. (requires institutional membership).
- [American Association of Nurse Practitioners \(AANP\)](#). The AANP is the national organization for nurse practitioners. Specific information for post-master's student membership is also available and may be of particular interest to you if you are an NP in TAMUCC's DNP program.
- [American Colleges of Healthcare Executives](#). The American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) is an international association of healthcare executives often including high-level hospital administrators, CEOs, nursing executives, etc. Multiple local chapters exist throughout Texas.
- [American Nurses Association \(ANA\)](#). The American Nurses Association (ANA) is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.4 million registered nurses. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, bolstering the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating on health care issues that affect nurses and the public. ANA is at the forefront of improving the quality of health care for all.
- [The American Organization of Nurse Leaders](#) provides leadership, professional development, advocacy, and research to advance nursing practice and patient care, promote nursing

leadership excellence and shape public policy for health care nationwide. AONL is a subsidiary of the American Hospital Association

- [National League for Nursing](#). For more than 100 years the NLN has been the premier organization for nurse faculty, schools of nursing, and leaders in nursing education. Currently the NLN is comprised of 40,000 individual and 1,200 institutional members representing all types of nursing programs from LPN/LVN through doctorate education.
- [National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties](#). The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) is specifically devoted to promoting high quality nurse practitioner (NP) education. Today, the organization represents a global network of NP educators.
- [Texas Nurses Association \(TNA\)](#). TNA along with the ANA empowers nurses to advance the profession. TNA speaks out on crucial nursing issues such as workplace advocacy. Membership in TNA and ANA enables you to become a full participant in defining your profession now and into the future. Many of TNA's activities occur at the local — or district — level.
- [Texas Nurse Practitioners \(TNP\)](#). The primary mission of TNP is to serve as a voice of Texas Nurse Practitioners dedicated to improving patient access to quality health care. Please refer to the listing of affiliates in your area of the state.

This list is not exhaustive of all professional organization.

### *MSN Information LMS Organization Site*

Current MSN User Guides, Documents, Tools and Resources such as the ones identified in this Handbook are housed in the MSN Organization.

### *Program/College Awards*

Every graduation cycle, graduate faculty can select an outstanding student per track: NE, NLS, and FNP.

Faculty may select a student to receive a scholarly work award from the graduating group of MSN students. The recipient of this award, will have produced scholarly work above usual expectations and the work has potential for reaching broader impacts.

### *Conferences to Attend*

Attending or presenting at annual leadership, education or nurse practitioner associate conferences is encouraged. The university may provide limited travel funds for presentations at conferences or subsidize travel to regional conferences.

## SECTION VII

### GENERAL INFORMATION

This section of the handbook includes standardized information about rules and policies pertaining to graduate education at Texas A&M University. It is not intended to be comprehensive. You are strongly encouraged to read the sections of the catalog pertaining to graduate students, which will provide more detail and additional topics that may impact you. You will also find information about your program.

#### *Graduate Admissions*

To be admitted to a program of graduate study, an applicant must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or an equivalent foreign institution. *(Note: The requirement to hold a bachelor's degree does not apply to students enrolling in the RN-MSN option in nursing.)* Decisions concerning admission to graduate study are based on all admission criteria. To be considered for a graduate program, a minimum last 60-hour GPA of 2.5 is required. Some programs may have higher GPA requirements; review specific program information in the graduate catalog or elsewhere in this handbook. All applications must be made through [Apply Texas](#). For more information about the application process, visit the [Application Process](#) page on the CGS website or see the Catalog, [Graduate Admissions section](#).

Graduate students should be aware of their enrollment status, as it may impact financial aid, veteran's benefits, or other important aspects of graduate life. In addition, international students have specific requirements about enrollment status. Enrollment status for graduate students is as follows:

|                                     |                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full-time graduate student          | Fall or spring term = 9 hours<br>Combined summer terms = 6 hours |
| Three-quarter-time graduate student | Fall or spring term = 7 hours<br>Combined summer terms = 5 hours |
| Half-time graduate student:         | Fall or spring term = 5 hours<br>Combined summer terms = 3 hours |

#### *Continuous Enrollment*

The University does not have a continuous enrollment policy for master's students. However, you should be aware of your own program's requirements, which may differ from general University requirements. Master's students should also know that if they do not attend for two years, they will be required to reapply to the University. Students should consider applying for a leave of absence (see below), especially if the time-to-degree and recency of credits requirements will be impacted by a needed absence.

#### *Leave of Absence*

Students experiencing life changing or catastrophic events should consult with their program coordinator and/or department chair and request a [Leave of Absence](#) in writing from the CGS using

the [Request for Leave of Absence form](#). A student who is in good standing may petition for a leave of absence of no more than two full academic terms. The maximum number of leave of absence requests permitted in a program is two. A request for a leave of absence requires approval in advance by the CONHS Graduate Advisor, respective Academic Program Coordinator, College Dean, and Dean of the CGS. If the Dean of the CGS approves the petition, the registration requirement is set aside during the period of time of the leave. Students should be aware that leaves of absences require suspension of all activities associated pursuit of the degree. See the catalog for more information.

### *Time Limit to Degree*

The requirements for a master's degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within seven years subsequent to admission to the program. The seven-year period begins the first semester of enrollment and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Credit that is more than seven years old will not be counted toward a master's degree. Exceptions will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as submission of a revalidation plan. Credits earned at another university are not eligible for an exception. Written approval from the major department chairperson, the dean of the college offering the degree, the dean of CGS, and the Provost are required. See the revalidation process below.

### *Academic Requirements for Graduate Work*

**Good Standing.** Graduate students, including degree-seeking, certificate-seeking, and non-degree-seeking students, are considered in “good academic standing” if they maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on all graduate course work and earn a grade of S (Satisfactory), IP (In Progress), or CR (Credit) on all course work that does not affect GPA. A higher GPA may be required by some programs. In such cases, the higher standard will be substituted for 3.0 in all other matters related to good academic standing. A complete discussion of academic requirements including but not limited to scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal may be found in the [Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements](#) section of the catalog. For information regarding the effect of scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal, see the [Financial Assistance Suspension Policy](#) in the Tuition, Fees, & Financial Assistance section of the catalog.

### *Additional Information*

Information, policies, and procedures about tuition, fees, financial assistance, scholarships, and other topics important to graduate students can be found in the catalog. In addition to the catalog, web pages for offices and services on campus provide expanded information, forms, and contact names/phone numbers.

Some of those webpages include the following:

[College of Graduate Studies](#)

[Office of Student Financial Assistance](#)

[Scholarships](#)

[GROW](#)

[Assistantships](#)