



**Francis Marion University  
School of Health Sciences  
Masters of Science in Nursing  
Graduate Learner Handbook  
2016-2017**

## PREFACE

Welcome to the graduate program at Francis Marion University. The *Nursing Graduate Learner Handbook* contains the policies, procedures, and general information of the nursing program as it pertains to graduate learners. The information in this handbook is a supplement to, not a substitute for, that which is published in the current editions of the *Francis Marion University Student Handbook* and *Catalog*. The *Francis Marion University Student Handbook* and *Catalog*, as well as the *Nursing Graduate Learner Handbook*, are not an irrevocable contract. Regulations published in them are subject to change at any time, but learners will be notified. The University and MSN program regulations are policy statements to guide learners, faculty, and administrative officers in achieving the goals of the institution.

By enrolling in the MSN Program at Francis Marion University, you agree to be bound by the policies and procedures described in this handbook. Successful completion of and graduation from the MSN Program requires adherence to all policies, procedures, and regulations as stipulated by Francis Marion University and the MSN program. If you have any questions with regard to the requirements, regulations, and/ or policies contained herein, do not hesitate to refer them to your nursing program academic advisor, the chair of the nursing program, course coordinator, Nursing Program's Office of Student Services, or other appropriate persons.

The Francis Marion MSN program is fully accredited by:

**Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)**

3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 850

Atlanta, GA 30326

(404) 975-5000 phone

(404) 975-5020 fax

<http://acenursing.org/>

## WELCOME

Welcome to the Francis Marion University MSN Program. This is an outstanding educational program that will prepare you as an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN). I would like to congratulate you on your choice of graduate education. Advanced practice registered nurses are very much needed in today's healthcare and nursing educational world that is comprised of technological advancements, evidence-based practice, and national health initiatives. Nurse Educators and Family Nurse Practitioner learners in this program will blaze the advanced practice nursing trail for the Pee Dee region. APRNs will be at the forefront of healthcare reform and educational change. Francis Marion University provides a superior education that develops learners' leadership skills in order to affect healthcare and nursing educational progress.

The faculty in the Francis Marion University MSN Program has years of experience in nursing practice and education. We are all dedicated to help you succeed in becoming an outstanding APRN. We pride ourselves on the competencies, critical thinking ability, and caring attitudes our graduates possess when caring for the citizens of the Pee Dee region and beyond. We invite you to establish a professional relationship with us so we can mentor you through this ground-breaking educational process.

The journey to becoming an APRN is exciting. Use this handbook as a resource to help you navigate the path. Remember that faculty, Dr Wittmann-Price, and Dr. Hopla are always available to assist you along the way.

On completion of this program, you will have obtained the education to be an excellent, skilled, caring APRN that will be well-received by the health care and educational communities in the Pee Dee region, South Carolina as well as beyond. Your clinical decision-making skills and pedagogical knowledge will enable you to provide your patients and family with the best care possible or nursing learners with the most up-to-date pedagogical instruction. Here in the Francis Marion University MSN Program, we prepare nurses that are not only clinically and educationally skilled, but are also knowledge workers who subscribe to the value of life-long learning.

Congratulations on being accepted into this competitive program. The next semesters will be a positive life-altering experience. We and the nursing faculty feel blessed to be able to share this journey of learning with you and will do everything possible to promote your success.

Sincerely,

**Ruth A. Wittmann-Price, PhD, RN, CNS, CNE, CHSE, ANEF**  
Dean, School of Health Sciences

**Karen K. Gittings, DNP, RN, CNE, Alumnus CCRN**  
Chair, Nursing Program

**Deborah L. Hopla, DNP, APRN-BC**  
Director MSN/FNP Track, Nursing Program

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## **I. OVERVIEW OF THE MSN PROGRAM AT FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY**

Francis Marion University (FMU) is an outstanding educational institution located in Florence, SC in the Pee Dee region. Excellence in teaching and learning is the priority of the institution. The University is accredited by the Southern Region Association of Colleges and Schools and has received national recognition for the quality of education and diversity of the learner population. FMU has outstanding science programs, an excellent library, academic computer center, and serves to support learners academically and socially.

Since 1982, FMU hosted a satellite RN to BSN program of the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), College of Nursing. Based on regional need, the South Carolina Board of Nursing and South Carolina Commission on Higher Education approved a generic BSN program and, in the fall of 1998, the first class was admitted. Throughout the twenty-two year history of the collaborative relationship, FMU provided pre-nursing courses, on-campus facilities, such as classrooms, offices, and learning laboratory, library support, and has had occasion to assist in obtaining state appropriations for the program. The program was administered as a remote campus of the MUSC College of Nursing. Faculty and staff were employees of MUSC. There was strong community support for a baccalaureate nursing program at FMU. A formal needs assessment was conducted and the Colleagues in Caring project determined that the Pee Dee was the only region in South Carolina without a free standing baccalaureate nursing program. Additionally, this region had the lowest percentage of baccalaureate nursing graduates in the State. The Office of Research and Statistics published South Carolina nursing workforce data for 2003, which showed that only 22.8% of nurses in South Carolina have the baccalaureate degree. In the Pee Dee, only 16.2% of practicing nurses had earned a baccalaureate degree. The Pee Dee also has 7.3 RN's per 100,000 people, the lowest in South Carolina.

In June 2004, FMU and MUSC signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which provided the guidelines and timeframes for the transfer of the MUSC satellite Bachelor of Science (Generic BSN and RN to BSN) to the FMU campus. Subsequently, FMU received approval from the South Carolina Board of Nursing (March 17, 2006) and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (May 5, 2006) to assume administrative direction. The program was approved by the South Carolina Board of Nursing on March 17, 2005 and by the South Carolina Commission on Education. The program received initial accreditation from the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission in Spring 2006 and reaccreditation for eight years in 2011.

In 2013, FMU Department of Nursing added two MSN program options and a post-masters certificate nurse educator option. Due to the growth in program options, a new health sciences building opened in August 2016. The Carter Center for Health Sciences (CCHS) in downtown Florence provides interprofessional opportunities for the Masters Science of Nursing/Family Nurse Practitioner (MSN/FNP) students to interact with physician assistant students, clinical graduate psychology students, and the University of South Carolina (USC) third and fourth year medical students. In July 2016, the nursing program became part of the new FMU School of Health Sciences.

The results of the feasibility study for a MSN program at FMU are most favorable. Two hundred eighty one surveys were sent to nurses in the Pee Dee region who had completed their BSN. One hundred eighty respondents (72%) wished to pursue a MSN. The majority of participants wished to attend classes part-time. Many of the participants who desired to attend the MSN program indicated an intention to enroll within five years; however, the majority of the participants said they would enroll within two years. The categories of study preferred by the survey participants were nurse practitioner (primary care), nurse educator, and clinical nurse expert. Nine of the respondents would consider pursuing a doctoral degree in nursing.

In the past, nurses seeking graduate degrees had to travel 2-3 hours one way to access educational programs in other areas of the state. FMU provides quality graduate education for nurses who are working full-time and desiring to advance their careers. The MSN program is designed so if students must be on campus

class would always be held on Wednesdays.

This MSN program is sorely needed in the region. Currently, national statistics show there is an urgent demand for Nurse Practitioners (NPs) to fill a current 30% shortage of primary-care physicians. To compound the shortage of primary care physicians, less than 10% of medical learners are choosing to become primary care practitioners (PCPs) upon graduation (Time, 2009). Former Health and Human Services Department Secretary Donna Shalala spoke of this service dilemma in an interview (NPR, 2009), “The shortage is related to primary care. We have lots of specialists in the country.” The Pee Dee region of SC is greatly impacted by the shortage of PCPs. Rural residents make up 25% of the total U. S. population and are served by only 10% of the country’s physicians. Primary care providers, specifically NPs are part of the solution to the PCP dilemma facing the Pee Dee region and other rural areas of the country.

There are several reasons that NPs are being heralded as the solution to the healthcare dilemma. Medicare, for example, reimburses nurse practitioners 85% of what is paid to doctors for the same services, thereby making their service more economical. Nurse practitioners also are well received by the public due to their focus on patient-centered care and healthcare prevention. Both are ingredients needed to assist this country out of the ever- increasing healthcare deficits that are mounting. Preventive services and healthy lifestyle promotion are an ongoing national focus (Healthy People, 2010; 2020).

Additionally, Gonzalez, director of government affairs for the American Nurses Association, states, “The law adds "nurse-managed health clinics" to the group of health centers eligible to receive up to \$50 million in grants in fiscal 2010. The clinics must be managed by advanced practice nurses, provide services to underserved or vulnerable populations without regard for insurance or income, and be affiliated with a university or another qualified health center.” This will be a great incentive for NPs to establish more freestanding clinics.

At the present time, the only deficit affecting the nursing profession that is more serious than the nursing shortage itself is the declining number of nurse educators to teach nursing learners (Joint Commission, 2010). According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2009), U.S. nursing schools turned away 50,000 qualified applicants to baccalaureate and MSN programs in 2008 and this trend has continued. This situation is a result of shortages of faculty, clinical sites, classroom space, clinical preceptors, and funding. One of the main reasons for the faculty shortage is the aging population of nurse educators. The National League for Nursing (NLN, 2011) has reported that between 2006 and 2009 the percentage of full-time nurse educators over the age of 60 grew from 9 to 16%. Overall, 57% of part-time and 76% of full-time faculty were over the age of 45 years in 2009.

The Joint Commission (2010) states: “If nursing education is to provide an adequate pipeline of well-prepared nurses for the present and in the future, the educational system itself must be overhauled. Since 2004, an estimated 200 to 300 doctorally prepared nursing faculty have been retiring annually, a projection that is expected to continue through 2012. A recent survey on vacant nursing faculty positions for the 2009-2010 academic year indicates that 56% of 554 respondents had 17 faculty vacancies; another 21% of respondents had no vacancies, but still needed more faculty. Compounding this situation, fewer nurses are going into teaching as there are a variety of better-paying career options available” (2010).

Also of concern, is the lack of diversity among nursing faculty. Men only represent 13% of full-time faculty and African Americans 7.5 percent (NLN, 2014). The Pee Dee region is rich in ethnic diversity and currently nursing program at FMU employs 16 full-time faculty members of whom 18% are of African American descent which is double the national average (NLN, 2013) and continues to strive to fill the gap between the percent of minority nurse educators and the general Pee Dee population. Expanding the pool of masters-prepared nurses in the Pee Dee region and drawing on the strengths of the programs promote the vision and mission of Francis Marion University. This program will increase the number of masters prepared nurses

and graduate nurses with advanced knowledge, skills and abilities to provide care in the rural and metropolitan areas of the Pee Dee region and teach the next generation of nurses.

In July of 2016, the Department of Nursing was incorporated into the newly approved School of Health Sciences. The graduate nursing options will be housed in the new Carter Center for Health Sciences, which will provide an interprofessional opportunity for the Masters Science of Nursing/Family Nurse Practitioner (MSN/FNP) students who will be relocated to the new building. The new downtown building was purposely developed to promote interprofessional opportunities and will house FMU graduate clinical psychology students, FMU FNP students, University of South Carolina (USC) third and fourth year medical students, and physician assistant students.

## II. MISSION, CORE VALUES, & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Mission Statement

The Francis Marion University MSN Program prepares graduates to function competently as caring professional nurses in a variety of healthcare settings. The program endeavors to instill in learners the value of lifelong learning.

### Core values

The core values of the graduate program of the Francis Marion University MSN Program include facilitating role transition from baccalaureate nursing to advanced practice, which includes excellence, holism, integrity, patient-centeredness, caring, diversity, and ethics. These core values are evident throughout the program curriculum.

### Program Outcomes

The FMU MSN program outcomes are based upon the Competencies for Graduates of Master’s programs developed by the National League for Nursing (NLN, 2010) which are:

1. Human Flourishing: Function as a leader and change agent in one’s specialty area of practice to create systems that promote human flourishing (NLN, 2010, p. 40).
2. Nursing Judgment: Make judgments in one’s specialty area of practice that reflect scholarly critiques of current evidence from nursing and other disciplines and the capacity to identify gaps in knowledge and formulate research questions (NLN, 2010, p. 40)
3. Professional Identity: Implement one’s advanced practice role in ways that foster best practices, promote the personal and professional growth of oneself and others, demonstrate leadership, promote positive change in people and systems, and advance the profession (NLN, 2010, p. 40).
4. Spirit of Inquiry: Contribute to the science of nursing in one’s specialty area of practice by analyzing underlying disparities in knowledge or evidence; formulating research questions; and systematically evaluating the impact on quality when evidence-based solutions to nursing problems are implemented (NLN, 2010, p. 40).

### The Program Student Learning Outcomes for the FMU Masters Programs are:

Program Outcomes	FNP Track	Nurse Educator Track
1. Demonstrate leadership and <i>integrity</i> in an advanced practice role that effects and changes systems to promote patient-centered care thereby enhancing human flourishing	Demonstrate leadership and <i>integrity</i> in an advanced practice nursing role that effects and changes healthcare systems to promote patient-centered care thereby enhancing human flourishing	Demonstrate leadership and <i>integrity</i> in an advanced practice role that effects and changes educational systems to promote learner-centered knowledge thereby enhancing human flourishing

2. Appraise current interdisciplinary evidence to identify gaps in nursing knowledge and formulate research questions based on the tenets of <i>evidence-based practice</i>	Appraise current interdisciplinary evidence to identify gaps in nursing practice knowledge and formulate research questions based on the tenets of <i>evidence-based practice</i> .	Appraise current interdisciplinary evidence to identify gaps in nursing education knowledge and formulate research questions based on the tenets of <i>evidence-based teaching practice</i> .
3. Develop interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration in the advanced practice nursing role in order to promote positive change in people, systems, and <i>excellence</i> in the nursing profession.	Develop interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration in the advanced practice nursing role in order to promote positive change in people, health care systems, and <i>excellence</i> in the nursing profession.	Develop interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration in the advanced practice nurse educator role in order to promote positive change in people, educational systems, and <i>excellence</i> in the nursing profession.
4. <i>Use informatics</i> to analyze underlying disparities, and knowledge; formulate research questions; promote safety and quality improvement for patient care.	<i>Use informatics</i> to analyze underlying disparities, and knowledge; formulate research questions; ensuring safety and quality improvement in advance nursing practice for patient care.	<i>Use informatics</i> to analyze educational disparities, and knowledge; formulate research questions for educational quality improvement.
5. Apply advanced concepts in science and nursing knowledge to implement <i>health promotion</i> and disease prevention.	Apply advanced concepts in science and nursing knowledge to implement <i>health promotion</i> and disease prevention in advanced practice.	Apply advanced concepts in science and educational knowledge to implement <i>evidence-based teaching practice</i> .
6. Employ knowledge in <i>health policy and financing</i> of health care in order to promote healthcare access and availability to promote human flourishing.	Employ knowledge in <i>health policy and financing</i> of health care in order for the advanced practice nurse to promote healthcare access and availability to promote human flourishing.	Employ knowledge in <i>health policy and financing</i> of health care in order to educate learners about healthcare access and availability to promote human flourishing.
7. Engage in <i>ethical</i> decision-making and utilization of theoretical knowledge in order to provide patient-centered, cost-effective care	Engage in <i>ethical</i> decision-making and utilization of theoretical knowledge in order to provide patient-centered, cost-effective advanced practice nursing care.	Engage in <i>ethical</i> decision-making and utilization of theoretical knowledge in order to provide educational concepts related to cost-effective care.
8. Value <i>cultural and ethnic diversity</i> and <i>caring</i> in order to provide <i>holistic patient-centered</i> care.	Value <i>cultural and ethnic diversity</i> and <i>caring</i> in order to provide <i>holistic patient-centered care</i> by advanced practice nurses.	Value <i>cultural and ethnic diversity</i> and <i>caring</i> in order to provide <i>holistic</i> learning to promote <i>patient-centered care</i> .

The FMU/ MSN Program embraces the *core values* set forth by the NLN (2010) depicted in which include:

- Caring
- Diversity
- Ethics



- Excellence
- Holism
- Integrity
- Patient-centeredness

The FMU MSN program will integrate these core values through the curriculum and ascribe to the six **integrating concepts** which emerge from those core values and are demonstrated in progressive learner acquisition throughout the program. The integrating concepts are demonstrated in program, track, and course student learning outcomes. Table 4.2 demonstrates how the integrating concepts are aligned with specific student learning outcomes in the course and tracks which can then be followed through to the course learning outcomes that are leveled to show increasing complexity.

1. Context and environment
2. Knowledge and science
3. Personal and professional development
4. Quality and safety
5. Relationship-centered care
6. Teamwork (NLN, 2010, p. 8).

**Integration Concepts of Program and Track Student Learner Outcomes are:**

	<b>Program Outcomes</b>	<b>FNP Track</b>	<b>Nurse Educator Track</b>
Personal and professional development is evident in the development of leadership skills.	Demonstrate leadership and <b>integrity</b> in an advanced practice role that effects and changes systems to promote patient-centered care thereby enhancing human flourishing	Demonstrate leadership and <b>integrity</b> in an advanced practice nursing role that effects and changes healthcare systems to promote patient-centered care thereby enhancing human flourishing	Demonstrate leadership and <b>integrity</b> in an advanced practice role that effects and changes educational systems to promote learner-centered knowledge thereby enhancing human flourishing
Context and environment is demonstrated in the appraisal and application of current evidence.	Appraise current interdisciplinary evidence to identify gaps in nursing knowledge and formulate research questions based on the tenets of evidence-based practice	Appraise current interdisciplinary evidence to identify gaps in nursing practice knowledge and formulate research questions based on the tenets of evidence-based practice.	Appraise current interdisciplinary evidence to identify gaps in nursing education knowledge and formulate research questions based on the tenets of evidence-based teaching practice.
Quality and safety is ensured by interdisciplinary team work. Teamwork is needed for interdisciplinary care.	Develop interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration in the advanced practice nursing role in order to promote positive change in people, systems, and <b>excellence</b> in the nursing profession.	Develop interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration in the advanced practice nursing role in order to promote positive change in people, health care systems, and <b>excellence</b> in the nursing profession.	Develop interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration in the advanced practice nurse educator role in order to promote positive change in people, educational systems, and <b>excellence</b> in the nursing profession.
Context and environment are components of using	Use informatics to analyze underlying disparities, and	Use informatics to analyze underlying disparities, and	Use informatics to analyze educational disparities, and knowledge; formulate

informatics for analysis.	knowledge; formulate research questions; promote safety and quality improvement for patient care.	knowledge; formulate research questions; ensuring safety and quality improvement in advance nursing practice for patient care.	research questions for educational quality improvement.
Knowledge and science is demonstrated in the application of best practice.	Apply advanced concepts in science and nursing knowledge to implement health promotion and disease prevention.	Apply advanced concepts in science and nursing knowledge to implement health promotion and disease prevention in advanced practice.	Apply advanced concepts in science and educational knowledge to implement evidence-based teaching practice.
Quality and safety are concepts that are considered in the context of health policy development and health financing.	Employ knowledge in health policy and financing of health care in order to promote healthcare access and availability to promote human flourishing.	Employ knowledge in health policy and financing of health care in order for the advanced practice nurse to promote healthcare access and availability to promote human flourishing.	Employ knowledge in health policy and financing of health care in order to educate learners about healthcare access and availability to promote human flourishing.
Relationship-centered care is inherent in the ethical provider-patient relationship and within the educational realm of teaching nursing students to use ethical decision-making.	Engage in <i>ethical</i> decision-making and utilization of theoretical knowledge in order to provide patient-centered, cost-effective care	Engage in <i>ethical</i> decision-making and utilization of theoretical knowledge in order to provide patient-centered, cost-effective advanced practice nursing care.	Engage in <i>ethical</i> decision-making and utilization of theoretical knowledge in order to provide educational concepts related to cost-effective care.
Relationship-centered care is congruent with holistic patient-centered care.	Value <i>cultural and ethnic diversity</i> and <i>caring</i> in order to provide <i>holistic patient-centered</i> care.	Value <i>cultural and ethnic diversity</i> and <i>caring</i> in order to provide <i>holistic patient-centered care</i> by advanced practice nurses.	Value <i>cultural and ethnic diversity</i> and <i>caring</i> in order to provide <i>holistic</i> learning to promote <i>patient-centered care</i> .

The FMU FNP program also meets the criteria of the certifying agencies which is shown in Exhibit 4.1 below:

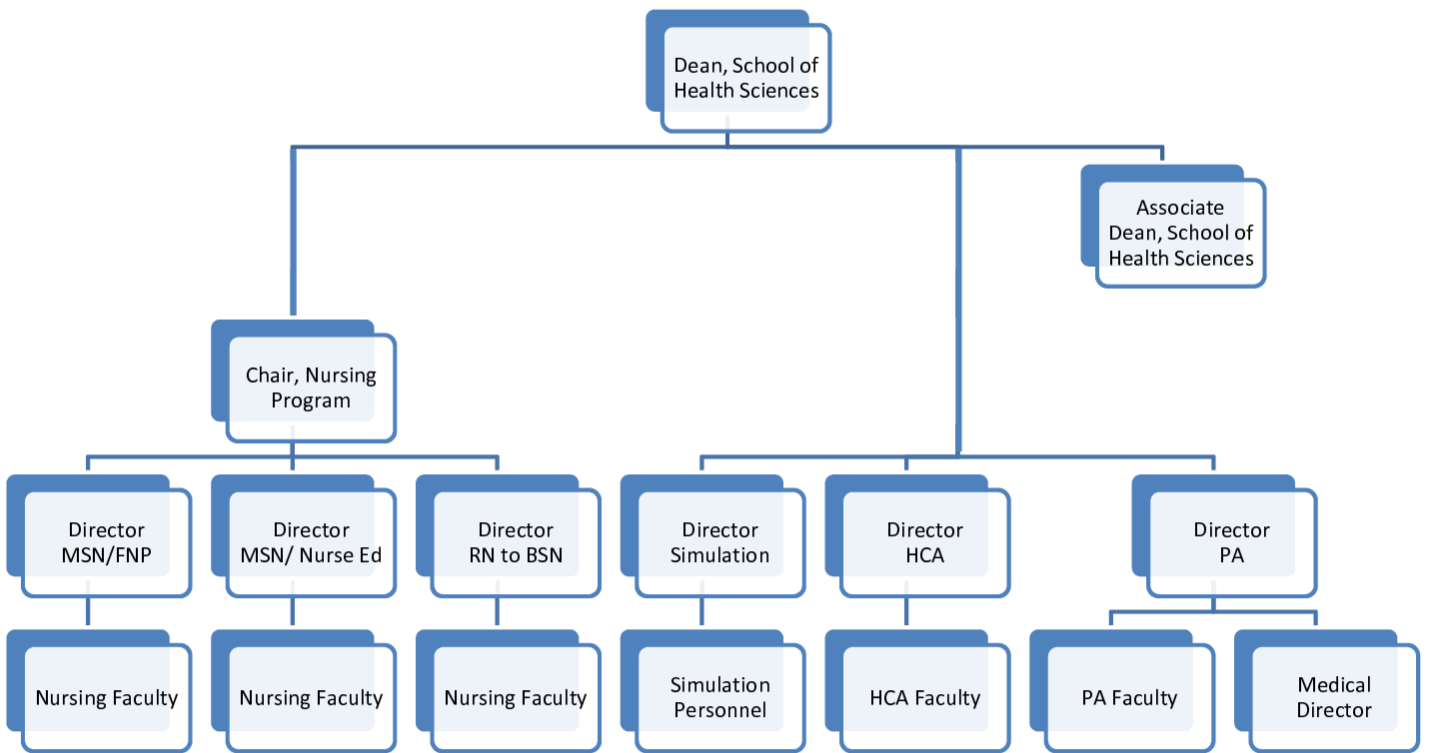
**Exhibit 4.1: Certification Agencies and Criteria:**

1. The American Nurses Credentialing Centers (ANCC) eligibility criteria for certification of Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) are:
  - i. Holds a current active RN license;
  - ii. Hold a masters', post masters', or doctorate from a family nurse practitioner program accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). A minimum of 500 faculty supervised clinical hours must be included in the FNP program.

The FNP graduate program must also include content in:

    - a. Advanced health assessment
    - b. Advanced pharmacology
    - c. Advanced pathophysiology, and content in:
    - d. Health promotion and disease prevention, and
    - e. Differential diagnosis and disease management.

### III. SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



#### IV. MSN PROGRAM ADMISSION CRITERIA & INFORMATION

##### Admission Criteria Graduate Program

All applicants must meet the admission criteria of the Francis Marion University Graduate School. Interested learners should contact the FMU Graduate Office for an admission packet. “Equal educational opportunities are offered to learners regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, physical disability, sexual orientation, or age”(FMU Catalog). To be considered for admission as a graduate degree nursing learner, an applicant must submit the following materials to the FMU Graduate Office:

- The graduate application for admission and non-refundable application fee;
- Official transcripts(s) of all undergraduate, including a BSN, and graduate work from accredited institutions;
- Two letters of confidential recommendations from professional associates or former professors who can attest to the academic potential of the applicant;
- A written statement of the applicant’s career goals, 300 to 500 words in length, including the applicant’s interest and reasons for seeking admission to the MSN/FNP or Nurse Educator track; and
- Current unencumbered license to practice nursing in South Carolina or other National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Nurse Licensure Compact state.

All of the above materials must be submitted in one packet to:

Graduate Office  
Francis Marion University  
Post Office Box 100547  
Florence, SC 29502-0547

Completed applications are reviewed for merit by the faculty of the Nursing faculty. Determination of merit is based upon consideration of all components of the application packet. In the admissions decision process, consideration is given to both the merit of each application received and to the number of slots available in the program at the time of application. Favorably reviewed applications are submitted to the FMU Graduate Council for review. Offers for admission are given to those applicants who show the most promise of success in graduate studies.

Admission to the MSN/FNP and Nurse Educator tracks are done on a rolling basis. Below is the course of study for all four (4) admission times: Spring (January), Summer I (June), and Fall (August). The academic calendar is printed in the *FMU Catalog* in the beginning pages.

Six (6) credit hours for fall and spring are considered fulltime for graduate students. Part-time program options are also available.

## V. MSN PLANS OF STUDY

*The MSN program can be completed in two calendar years if started in January (Spring) semester. If a student starts in the summer or fall it will take longer to complete.*

### FNP TRACK PLANS OF STUDY FOR ROLLING ADMISSIONS

#### Plan of Study for Spring (January) Admission

YEAR 1			
Spring	Summer I	Summer II	Fall
APRN 502 Biostatistics (3)(online) *APRN 504 Health Policy and Leadership (3)(online) APRN 601 Advanced Pathophysiology (3)(on campus) APRN 501 Advanced Practice Role: Theory and Knowledge Development (3)(online)	APRN 503 Advanced Research and Evidence-based Practice (3)(online)	APRN 603 Advanced Physical Assessment and Health Promotion (4:3-3) (45 hours)(on campus)	APRN 602 Advanced Pharmacology (3)(on campus) *APRN 504 Health Policy and Leadership (3)(online) APRN 507 Patient Education and Advocacy (3)(online) APRN 701 Primary Care of Adults (5:2-9) (135 hours)(hybrid)
YEAR 2			
Spring	Summer I	Summer II	Fall
APRN 505 Population Health & Epidemiology (3)(online) APRN 703 Primary Care of Women (2:1-3) (45 hours)(online) APRN 702 Primary Care of Infants, Children and Adolescents (4:2-6)(online) (90 hours)	APRN 704 Primary Care of Geriatric Patients (2:1-3) (45 hours)(hybrid)	APRN 707 Clinical Decision-making and Ethics (3)(online) APRN 506 Health Systems and Risk Management (3)(online)	APRN 705 Internship I (4:1-9) (135 hours)(hybrid) APRN 706 Internship II (4:1-9) (135 hours)(hybrid)

**\*Can be taken in the fall semester**

Lecture (Semester) hours = 1:1, practicum (Contact) hours = 3:1 (Conferences can only be applied to 10% of practicum).

#### FNP Plan of Study for Summer I (June) Admissions

YEAR 1			
Summer I	Summer II	Fall	Spring
APRN 503 Advanced Research and Evidence-based Practice (3)(online)	APRN 603 Advanced Physical Assessment and Health Promotion (4:3-3) (45 hours)(on campus)	*APRN 504 Health Policy and Leadership (3)(online) APRN 507 Patient Education and Advocacy (3)(online) APRN 602 Advanced Pharmacology(3)(on campus)	APRN 501 Advanced Practice Role Theory and Knowledge Development (3)(online) *APRN 504 Health Policy and Leadership (3)(online) APRN 502 Biostatistics (3)(online) APRN 601 Advanced Pathophysiology (3)(on

			campus)
<b>YEAR 2</b>			
<b>Summer I</b>	<b>Summer II</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
APRN 704 Primary Care of Geriatric Patients (2:1-3) (45 hours)(hybrid)	APRN 506 Health Systems and Risk Management (3)(online)	APRN 701 Primary Care of Adults (5:2-9) (135 hours)(hybrid)	APRN 505 Population Health and Epidemiology (3)(online) APRN 703 Primary Care of Women (2:1-3)(online) APRN 702 Primary Care of Infants, Children and Adolescents (4:2-6)(online) (90 hours)
<b>YEAR 3</b>			
<b>Summer I</b>	<b>Summer II</b>	<b>Fall</b>	
*APRN 705 Internship I (4:1-9) (135 hours)(hybrid)	Summer II: APRN 707 Clinical Decision-making and Ethics (3)(online)	*APRN 706 Internship II (4:1-9) (135 hours)(hybrid)	

\* Some students prefer to achieve all their hours during the summer.

### FNP Plan of Study for Fall (August) Admissions

<b>YEAR 1</b>			
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer I</b>	<b>Summer II</b>
*APRN 504 Health Policy and Leadership (3)(online) APRN 602 Advanced Pharmacology (3) (on campus)	APRN 501 Advanced Practice Role Theory and Knowledge Development (3) (online) *APRN 504 Health Policy and Leadership (3)(online) APRN 502 Biostatistics (3)(online) APRN 601 Advanced Pathophysiology (3)(on campus)	APRN 503 Advanced Research and Evidence-based Practice (3)(online)	APRN 603 Advanced Physical Assessment and Health Promotion (4:3-5) (45 hours)(on campus)
<b>YEAR 2</b>			
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer I</b>	<b>Summer II</b>
APRN 701 Primary Care of Adults (5:2-9) (135 hours)(hybrid) APRN 507 Patient Education and Advocacy (3)(online)	APRN 505 Population Health and Epidemiology (3)(online) APRN 703 Primary Care of Women (2:1-2)(45 hours)(online) APRN 702 Primary Care of Infants, Children and Adolescents (4:2-6) (90 hours)(online)	APRN 704 Primary Care of Geriatric Patients (2:1-3) (45 hours)(hybrid)	APRN 707 Clinical Decision-making and Ethics (3)(online) APRN 506 Health Systems and Risk Management (3)(online)

**YEAR 3**

<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	
*APRN 706 Internship II (4:1-9) (135 hours)(hybrid)	*APRN 705 Internship I (4:1-9) (135 hours)(hybrid)	

\* Some students prefer to achieve all their hours during the fall.

**VI. ADVISEMENT**

The Francis Marion University Registrar is responsible for the management of the registration process by which learners enroll in classes. Registration procedures for each term are described in the schedule of classes for that term and on the University’s web site.

It is essential that each learner obtain advisement throughout his/her plan of study in order to progress smoothly through the sequence of courses. The following policies and procedures are designed to facilitate the learner’s progression throughout the program:

- Upon enrollment in the MSN program, each learner will be assigned an academic advisor.
- The learner must meet/communicate with his/her assigned academic advisor at least once each semester prior to the pre-registration period to discuss and update the learner’s plan of study.

To change an academic advisor, the learner must submit a written request to the chair of the nursing program (Appendix B) who will assign a new advisor and notify both the previous and new advisor of the change.

**VII. REGISTRATION**

All nursing faculty members have expanded office hours during the advisement period in order to be available to all advisees. Normally advisement times are posted on faculty office doors with adequate spots and times for each advisee. Each learner should meet/communicate with his/ her nursing academic advisor to select courses to be taken. The learner may enter his or her schedules via the web or in the Office of the Registrar with advisor approval. Learners must confirm schedules and pay fees in the Cashier’s office.

Through the registration process, learners assume academic and financial responsibility for the classes in which they enroll. They are relieved of these responsibilities only by formally terminating enrollment by dropping or withdrawing in accordance with University procedures and deadlines specified in the schedule of classes each term.

**VIII. FMU ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

**Senior Undergraduate Students**

Senior undergraduate students may apply for graduate credit with program/school approval (*FMU Catalog, Current edition*).

**Legal Resident**

Charges for tuition and fees depend upon the student’s status of residence or non-residence of South Carolina (*FMU Catalog*).

**International Students**

International students must be proficient in English or have a TOEFL score of 550 paper version; 213 on the computer version or 79 on the Internet version (*FMU Catalog*).

**Transient Students**

Degree-seeking students enrolled in graduate studies at institutions other than FMU who wish to take graduate courses at FMU must complete the following requirements: 1) submit a graduate application for admission and pay the non-refundable graduate application fee; and 2) submit a transient form from the Academic Officer or Registrar of that institution (*FMU Catalog*).



## **Auditing**

Due to the professional nature of the courses auditing is not allowed.

## **Grade Point Average**

Grade points for a course are computed by multiplying the number of semester hour credits per course by the quality points associated with the grade earned (*FMU Catalog*).

## **Grade Changes**

If a mistake was made in calculating or recording a term grade, the instructor of the course may change the grade (*FMU Catalog*). A written form for grade change will be signed by the instructor of the course and by the chair and submitted to the Registrar's office.

## **Grade Appeal**

The MSN program adheres to the University policy for Grade Appeals. Please refer to the current edition of the *Francis Marion University Catalog: Academic Information*. The following procedures will be followed:

1. The student will first attempt to resolve the issue by consulting with the instructor.
2. If the issue is unresolved after consultation with the instructor, the student will then consult with the program chair/ dean to attempt a resolution.
3. If the matter is not resolved after consultation with the instructor and the chair/dean, then the student may petition the chair/dean who will forward the matter to the Grade Appeals Committee. The petition must include the following items: a completed petition form signed by the instructor or the course (unless the instructor is no longer a member of the Francis Marion University faculty), the student's advisor, and the chair/dean of the academic unit that offered the course; a letter explaining the basis for the grade appeal; and if applicable, supporting documents and a list of any other evidence to be presented. The student's argument will be limited to statements from the student and the evidence delineated in the petition. The University Grade Appeals committee will hear final course grade appeals not resolved at the level of the academic unit.

Any nursing student considering a grade appeal should fully understand that each faculty member has the academic freedom to determine grade criteria according to program guidelines and by any method chosen by the faculty member as long as those methods are communicated to every student in the class, and are applied to all students equally.

Unless the faculty member has acted in an arbitrary or capricious manner in the assignment of a final course grade in question, or unless the instructor's grading policy is in violation of the guidelines established by the University or his/her own policies as noted in the syllabus or other written documents, it is the right of the instructor to determine whether or not the final course grade should be changed (*FMU Catalog*).

## **Repeating Courses**

Students will be allowed to retake one course due to an academic failure (*FMU Catalog*). Two failed courses is grounds for dismissal from the program. No retaking of courses will be permitted for clinical failures.

## **Academic Standing**

Graduate degree students who have been accepted into a degree program must maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average for all graduate courses (*FMU Catalog*).

## **Readmission After Dismissal**

A graduate student may not continue taking courses after being dismissed from the program. By petition to the MSN program, and on recommendation of the Graduate Committee, a student may be readmitted for further graduate study, or a student may be denied admission (*FMU Catalog*).

**Time Limit**

All requirements for a master's degree must be completed within a continuous six (6) year period (*FMU Catalog*).

**Transfer Credit for Nursing Course(s)**

A maximum of six (6) credits can be transferred from a regionally accredited institution, with the permission of the chair of the nursing program (*FMU Catalog*).

**Transient Students**

Degree-seeking students enrolled in graduate studies at institutions other than FMU who wish to take graduate courses at FMU must complete the following requirements: 1) submit a graduate application for admission and pay the non-refundable graduate application fee; and 2) submit a transient form from the Academic Officer or Registrar of that institution (*FMU Catalog*).

**Attendance Policies**

It is the responsibility of the student to attend all scheduled meetings in the courses in which he/she is enrolled. If a student is absent more than twice the number of required class or laboratory sessions per week during regular semesters or 15% of required sessions during an accelerated semester, a grade of F or W will normally be assigned, unless absences have been excused for cause by the instructor. (*FMU Catalog*).

**Dropping Courses**

Graduate students may drop courses through the last day of classes for any term (students may not drop classes on Reading Day or during examinations). A student who drops a course(s) after completing one-third of the semester receives in each course a grade of W or WF based on his/her academic average at the time of withdrawal (*FMU Catalog*).

**Withdrawing From the University**

Complete withdrawals must be initiated by the student at the Registrars' Office. A complete Withdrawal grade form will be completed. Failure to file the complete withdrawal grade report Form with the Registrar's Office may result in the grades) of F for the courses(s). A learner who withdraws from the University after completion of one-third of the semester receives in each course a grade of W or WF based on his/her academic average at the time of withdrawal (*FMU Catalog*).

**Course Load**

Usual course load is six (6) or more hours with a maximum load of 12 hours (*FMU Catalog*).

**Grade Reports**

At the end of each semester and each summer term, grade reports are made available to students (*FMU Catalog*).

**Transcripts**

Official transcripts, those bearing the University seal, will only be issued with the written consent of the students (*FMU Catalog*).

**Financial**

All fees and expenses must be paid before last day to pay which is in the *FMU Catalog, Current edition*.

**Student Life**

All graduate students are eligible to participate in all student activities and organizations (*FMU Catalog*).

## **University Counseling and Testing Services**

Learner counseling and testing services are available to all learners. Faculty may refer learners to the center if behavioral indications warrant or they have documentation related to the Americans with Disability Act.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

If a learner has a documented disability and requires special assistance or accommodations, they should contact the University Counseling and Testing Center (Francis Marion University Student Handbook, current edition). Accommodations will be made with proper documentation from the University Counseling and Testing Center. The learner must provide documentation to any or all course or clinical instructors of classes or clinical rotations in which the learner would like to use the accommodations. If at any time during the semester the learner's accommodations need to be altered, the learner will provide documentation from the University Counseling and Testing Center.

## **IX. POLICIES SPECIFIC TO THE MSN PROGRAM**

There are additional requirements needed for these professional programs. FMU uses a website platform, Certified Background, which is purchased by the learner once admitted and all required documents are uploaded directly to the website. The instructions to access the website and what specific documents are needed are contained in your admission letter.

### **Background Check**

All clinical agencies utilized in the MSN program at Francis Marion University require a background check of learners before permitting clinical experiences in the agency. Clinical agency utilized for learner experiences may deny a learner with a criminal record permission to be assigned to their agency. Additionally, Learners who have a previous disciplinary action(s) and/or convictions may not be eligible to become licensed as an APRN by the State Board of Nursing, even if a BSN Degree has been conferred.

The learner who has an arrest and/or convictions documented on the background check must meet with the chair of the nursing program. If a learner is denied access to any clinical agency, it will result in the learner being withdrawn from the program. The learner will be counseled as to the nature of the offense, whether it will jeopardize the learner's status in the program, and possible alternatives regarding completion and/or withdrawal from the MSN program. The learner will have an opportunity to provide documentation regarding the offense(s). A summary statement will be placed in the Learner's Academic Record.

### **Eligibility to be Hired by the Major Pee Dee Healthcare Systems**

Graduate learners who are not eligible to be hired by the major healthcare systems in the Pee Dee due to previous work-related infractions, may not be able to fulfill the clinical requirements and will therefore, be dismissed.

### **Health History and Immunization Requirements**

The health history form will be obtained from the CasselBranch platform and then uploaded to the site when complete.

### **Immunizations Requirements**

According to the University policy, learners are required to complete immunizations and testing before being allowed to register or attend classes. To help protect the health and safety of its learners, as well as that of patients, the MSN program requires the following immunizations/tests prior to registration. Each immunization must be dated and signed or stamped by a licensed health care provider (physician, nurse practitioner, and/or physician assistant).

The clinical sites require documentation proof of immunity in the form of quantitative titers—simply

getting a vaccine is no longer enough. Therefore, each faculty member must have quantitative titers drawn, and upload copies of the official laboratory printouts containing the numerical values for Mumps, Measles, Rubella, and Varicella.

- Rubella (German Measles) – Requirements are based on your Date of Birth as follows:
  - Learners born **on or after 01/01/57** are required to have two Live Red Measles Vaccines on or after the age of 12 months **and** both after 12/31/67.
  - Learners **born on or before 12/31/56** are required to have One Live Red Measles Vaccine after 12/31/56.

In lieu of Vaccination Documentation, a Positive Rubella IgG Antibody Titer is required. A copy of the lab report must be attached to the FMU Immunization Record.

- Rubeola (Red Measles) **One** Live Vaccine

In lieu of Vaccination Documentation, a Positive Rubeola IgG Antibody Titer is required. A copy of the lab report must be attached to the FMU Immunization Record.

- Varicella (Chicken Pox) –**Two** Varicella (Varivax) Vaccines

In lieu of Vaccination Documentation, a Positive Varicella IgG Antibody Titer is required. A copy of the lab report must be attached to the FMU Immunization Record.

- Tetanus – must have had a booster within the past 10 years
- 1 Step PPD is then required yearly while enrolled in the program. If positive a chest x-ray within three (3) years.
- Hepatitis B vaccines (series of three) or titer is needed.
- Yearly influenza vaccine.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If learners object to receiving any of the above immunizations, they cannot meet the program requirements and the learner will be withdrawn. If documentation of the immunizations required by the MSN program is not presented by the start of classes, the learner shall be withdrawn from class.

### **AHA: Basic Life Support-Health Care Provider (AHA: BLS-HCP)**

Each nursing learner must provide verification of current AHA: BLS-HCP status and upload the current certification into the Certified Background system. All nursing learners are required to present official documentation prior to beginning any nursing course. This certification/ recertification must be from a certified instructor endorsed by the American Heart Association and must include infant, child, adult and AED training.

**PLEASE NOTE: Maintaining current certification is the sole responsibility of the learner.**

### **Health Insurance**

Learners are required to provide proof of Health Insurance Coverage that must be maintained while enrolled in the program. Proof will be uploaded onto the CastleBranch platform.

### **Proof of Malpractice Insurance**

All graduate students must carry liability insurance of \$1million/\$3 million coverage.

## **Mental and Physical Eligibility Criteria**

The nursing graduate program expects learners to have the physical capability to perform skills common to an APRN. Reasonable accommodations are available for learners with disabilities. Appropriate documentation of each disability is required in the form of psychological evaluations and/or medical histories and should be provided to the Office of Counseling and Testing at least two weeks prior to initial registration for classes. It is the learner's responsibility to inform the Director of Counseling and Testing of any need for services in adequate time to allow for their arrangements.

All documentation is treated confidentially and will be shared only with written permission from the learner. At the beginning of each semester, the Office of Counseling and Testing will submit a letter addressing the needed accommodations to each of the learner's professors. A copy of the letter will be sent to the learner.

It is the learner's responsibility to speak with each course coordinator and work out how his or her clinical accommodations will be met. The following items represent typical activities, and the abilities and psychomotor skills that learners will be developing while enrolled in this program. Among the other learning objectives, the learner must demonstrate safe and satisfactory performance of these abilities and psychomotor skills in order to successfully complete the clinical portion. Learners **must be capable** of successfully completing each area of the mental and physical eligibility criteria in all clinical/lab/practicum experiences.

### **Graduate learners must be able to:**

- Perform motor skills safely:
  - Positioning, and transporting patients
  - Moving efficiently enough to meet the needs of patients in a timely manner
  - Lifting, positioning, or moving obese, paralyzed, and/or unconscious patients in order to perform procedures
- Perform activities requiring manual dexterity:
  - Administering parenteral injections
  - Operating equipment and devices such as thermometers, blood pressure devices, and diagnostic machines
- Perform activities requiring accurate and effective interpretation and communication of information in English, both written and spoken.
  - Reading and recording information
  - Directing assistive staff
  - Communicating with patients and families
- Respond effectively under stress.
- Respond to clinical alarms, signals and other displays indicating an urgent patient need, and take immediate action.
- Perform activities requiring sensation, auditory capacity, and visual perception.
- Perform activities requiring interaction with interdisciplinary team members, such as:
  - Ability to be assertive
  - Ability to delegate
  - Ability to participate in role-play activities
- Demonstrate ability to analyze data, calculate, and measure appropriate assessment parameters.

### **Changing Graduate Tracks**

Learners enrolled in a graduate nursing program who wish to change to another track within the program must complete the change of track form (Appendix A) with the required information. This form is then turned into the chair of the nursing program who will then submit to the Nursing Graduate Committee for approval/denial.

If approved, only one track change within the graduate nursing program is allowed. Any students wishing to make an additional track change will have to reapply to the graduate nursing program. This includes a request to change back to the original track.

**Classroom Grading Scale:**

<b>Alphabetic</b>	<b>Raw Score</b>
A	93-100
B+	89-92
B	85-88
C+	81-84
C	77-80
F	76 or below

**Rounding**

Per program policy, only final grades will be rounded. Final grades of 0.50 or greater will be rounded up to the next whole numeric value. Therefore, a 76.5 is the minimum grade needed to pass this course, as this is rounded to a 77. Exam and quiz scores will not be rounded and will be entered in grade book in Blackboard to the nearest hundredth of a percent.

**Clinical Criteria**

A learner must receive a satisfactory rating in all aspects of clinical as indicated on the Graduate Clinical Evaluation Tool.

**Scheduled Tests/Exams**

Missed tests/exams will be handled at the discretion of the course coordinator and will be outlined in the syllabus. Any learner who misses more than one (1) scheduled course test/exam may receive a recommendation of course failure.

**Use of Social Security Number**

The MSN program adheres to the University policy on use of Social Security numbers. Refer to the current edition of the *FMU Catalog*. The learner's 9-digit learner number should be used consistently on all quizzes, test, and examinations.

**Test Taking Guidelines**

Before each quiz/test/exam learners will:

- Place all belongings at the front of the classroom
- The proctor and one other designated learner will keep their cell phone in view in case of a Swamp Fox Alert.
- Once a quiz/test/exam is started the learner cannot leave, if a learner chooses to leave the test will be scored as is.

**Posting of Grades**

All grades will be electronically posted on Blackboard Learning System™. No information with regard to the grade earned on any quiz, test, examination, clinical or classroom assignments will be given out over the phone. At the end of the each semester, final grades are made available to learners via Swamp Fox Internet. The learner's 9-digit learner number should be used consistently on all quizzes, tests, and examinations.

## **Academic Warnings**

Nursing learners will receive a written warning when unsatisfactory theory and/or clinical performance occur. Additionally, failure to turn in course paperwork at the scheduled time will result in a written warning. The academic warning will be placed in the MSN program learner's file. The academic warning includes a written plan for the student to work towards successful completion of the course/clinical requirements. Students who receive a clinical warning (for other than paperwork) will have as many site visits and evaluations by the faculty member as deemed necessary to ensure patient safety by that faculty member. Warnings are cumulative, and three warnings will result in dismissal from the program.

## **Progression Policy and Program Dismissal**

The Nursing Graduate Committee (NGC) may recommend to the Nursing Program Chair, that a learner may be dismissed from the MSN program if the learner: Examples (but not limited to):

- Fails to register for consecutive semesters,
- Has a grade point average (GPA) that indicates the learner will not be able to meet the requirement for graduation or has failed two (2) nursing courses,
- Does not complete requirements for the degree within the 6-year period after initial registration in the MSN program,
- Demonstrates unsafe/unethical clinical practice,
- Has unsatisfactory physical or emotional health,
- Has violations of the University's Student Honor Code,
- Has excessive absences in classroom or clinical areas, or
- Demonstrates conduct incompatible with the practice of professional nursing.

The learner has the right of due process and will be notified in writing at least five days prior to the scheduled meeting and provided an opportunity to address the NGC. The learner will be notified in writing of the NGC decision. Only under unusual circumstances will a learner who has been dismissed or voluntarily withdrawn under the above stated circumstances be allowed to reenter the MSN program.

## **Children on Campus**

It is the policy of the nursing program that children are not permitted in classroom, clinical settings, and/or scheduled meetings. If you do decide to bring your child to any social activity or other events in the Carter Center for Health Sciences, you do so at your own risk.

## **Cell Phones**

Cell phones may be kept on in the classroom as long as they are inaudible. During tests and exams, all cell phones must be placed in the front of the room with the rest of the learner's belongings in an inaudible setting. The proctor and one other designated learner will keep their cell phone in view in case of a Swamp Fox Alert.

Cell phones must be shut off in the clinical setting per hospital or agency policy; alerts in the hospital setting are broadcasted via open intercom. In other clinical settings without open paging systems, cell phones must be placed in an inaudible setting and are only for emergencies that involve public safety.

## **Literary Format**

In order to provide consistency, uniformity, and standardization for all written documents in nursing courses, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> edition)* (APA Style Manual) is the adopted writing style. It is strongly recommended that you purchase the book. This format should be used by all nursing learners in writing papers as part of course assignments (unless otherwise specified).

### In addition:

- All graded and/or written assignments must be typewritten (Microsoft Office: WORD) or written in black ink, double-spaced with one inch margins per APA.

- All required written assignments will be considered late if not received by faculty by the designated time and date. Late work will be accepted per faculty discretion and as outlined in the course syllabus. An exception to this policy will be made only if the learner has made prior arrangements with the respective faculty member.
- The learner must submit all written course requirements in order to receive a course grade.
- Written work should be submitted directly to the appropriate faculty member as outlined in the course syllabus. Important written work, especially graded assignments, should not be placed in faculty mailboxes or in the door boxes located outside the faculty member's office without the direct permission of the faculty member. A copy of all written work submitted to faculty should be kept by learners.
- Faculty reserve the right to request that all written assignments be electronically submitted via “Assignments” on Blackboard Learning System™.

### **Acceptable Uses of the Internet**

Francis Marion University internet guidelines are available in the *FMU Student Handbook* and on the web address <http://www.fmarion.edu>, under the academic computing link. In addition, FMU has Computer Center Rules with regard to Disk Write Rights, Piracy, Viruses, Climate, and Media. The MSN program adheres to all of the guidelines set forth by the University.

### **E-mail**

Electronic mail is an essential component of communication between the Nursing Faculty, administration, and learners; therefore, all nursing learners are required to have an active fmarion e-mail account.

### **Bulletin Boards**

Bulletin Boards are the property of the University. Learners may not post any material without permission from the course coordinator or appropriate faculty/staff.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

Francis Marion University’s Emergency Preparedness Plan is designed to guide University personnel in responding to urgent situations and crises through planned and executed series of steps that will ensure the safety of our people and property. The MSN program will adhere to all guidelines set forth in the Emergency Preparedness Plan. All learners are encouraged to register in Swamp Fox Alert.

### **Hazardous Chemical Spills**

Refer to University’s Emergency Preparedness Plan April 2005 as well as the MSDS sheets located in MSB 106, Learner Lounge, and in the Healing Arts and Science Lab. Web site reference: [http://images.acswebnetworks.com/2017/77/Hazard\\_Communication\\_.pdf](http://images.acswebnetworks.com/2017/77/Hazard_Communication_.pdf)

### **Cancellation of Classes/Clinical**

The MSN program adheres to the policies of the University with regard to scheduled class times. In the case of inclement weather or other disasters, the MSN program will follow the schedules established by the University. Learners are to activate Swamp Fox Alert in order to receive information about closures. Learners are also encouraged to listen to local radio and television for these schedule changes. Faculty may also notify learners via email, Blackboard, and or phone as written in the syllabus. Learners are also reminded that they are to utilize sound, personal judgment when deciding whether to commute for a learning experience in hazardous weather conditions.

### **Emergency Contact**

Learners should *not* provide any of the nursing program telephone numbers for routine contacts. Learners may inform a close relative or friend to contact the nursing program in case of a true emergency.



## **Employment Demands**

There is no policy limiting the number of hours a learner enrolled in the graduate nursing program may be employed, since the ability to handle the combined responsibilities of college and employment is so individual. Many learners find it necessary to work while enrolled in school to help defray living and educational expenses. The graduate nursing curriculum is demanding and requires preparation and study time in addition to scheduled classes and clinical experiences. Clinical experiences may also be held on the weekends. Certain practicum experiences involve intensive clinical work requiring the learner's full time and attention.

Learners who try to balance workloads greater than 20 hours per week and a full-time academic load often place themselves at risk for academic failure. Learners should plan for such experiences so they may reduce or eliminate other work commitments during intensive practicum experiences. Learners who fail to meet the established academic standards in the graduate nursing program due to employment cannot receive special consideration. Learners who need to work to pay for college expenses should discuss this with their nursing academic advisor before they are in academic jeopardy. Learners may need to stop academic work for a period to help ensure success.

## **References for Employment**

The faculty of the graduate nursing program support learners and graduates in their career endeavors and are willing to provide references when appropriately requested. Learners **must request permission** of faculty to list the faculty member as a reference on his or her resume and/or application.

## **X. CLINICAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **Clinical Information**

Each learner will contract with a primary care practitioner in the appropriate specialty for each semester. The learner is responsible to share with their clinical preceptor their learning objectives for that course, and the clinical evaluation criteria. Learners are responsible to schedule hours, and give those hours to the instructor who will be making site visits.

### **Transportation**

Each learner will be using various clinical sites to accomplish the graduate learning outcomes. The learner may be precepted day and/or evening clinical rotation that may occur during the week and/ or on the weekend. The learner is responsible for obtaining transportation to and from the clinical sites. Requests for accommodation in the selection of clinical sites will only be honored for extenuating circumstances. Those requests must be emailed to the course coordinator. Extenuating circumstances DO NOT include childcare, transportation, care of family members, and work schedules. Once assigned, the learner is not permitted to switch clinical sites.

### **Pre-Clinical Drug Screening:**

In order to protect the public, health care agencies are beginning to require extensive pre-employment drug screenings. In addition, health care agencies are requiring that all health care professional learners have pre-drug screening. \*The graduate nursing program reserves the right to implement drug or alcohol screening at any time without prior notification in both the classroom and clinical settings.

### **Clinical Attendance and Punctuality**

100% attendance and punctuality of all clinical experiences is expected. Exceptions, if made, will be made up at the discretion of the clinical faculty and/or the course coordinator. Faculty may request medical certification about the health status of the learner for every absence or lateness. The following policies apply to clinical absences and lateness:

- When the learner cannot attend the clinical session, the learner must:
  - Call and speak directly to the assigned clinical preceptor, one hour prior to the start of the clinical session.
  - If the learner is late related to an incident on the way they must call and notify the clinical preceptor .
- Following an absence, learners are responsible to contact the faculty member and course coordinator about make-up alternatives;
- Punctual attendance is required at all clinical sessions. Tardiness is not a professional attribute. The faculty member or preceptor has the discretion of sending the learner home for clinical lateness.
- The learner who arrives at his/her clinical setting with symptoms of illness may be dismissed by the clinical faculty or preceptor, constituting a clinical absence.
- Two clinical absences constitute a clinical failure.
- Clinical warnings can be cumulative from semester to semester.
- The learner may be dismissed for unprofessional or unacceptable clinical performance.

### **Medication policy**

The FNP student will receive education on how to manage illnesses with medications/pharmaceuticals. During the clinical experience, all medications/pharmaceuticals must be discussed with the clinical preceptor for corroboration on the choice(s) made for the patient the FNP student is evaluating. The clinical preceptor is ultimately responsible for ordering the medications/pharmaceuticals. Any medication given by the FNP student in the clinical setting must occur via an order from the clinical preceptor. When the FNP student is administering these products during a clinical experience, they are functioning under the rules and regulations established for Registered Nurses by the SC Board of Nursing and the site of the clinical experience. Medication errors that endanger the patient's live and/or actually cause patient harm will be deemed as unsafe nursing practice. This could result in immediate termination from the clinical area, as well as the course and graduate nursing program. The incident will be referred to the NGC for evaluation, and a verdict over the status of the FNP student's place in the program will be rendered.

### **Identifying a Clinical Preceptor**

Students will be asked to complete a clinical survey during each clinical semester to indicate a location where they plan to conduct clinical time. This will assist in identifying preceptors and allow learners time to seek out appropriate preceptors.

### **Criteria for MSN/FNP Preceptors**

The following are minimal criteria, which must be met by persons serving as preceptors in clinical practicum of the graduate program. The preceptor must:

1. Be nationally certified in an area of advanced practice nursing appropriate, be a licensed physician, or PA in an area appropriate to the focus of the student's area of study for the state of SC;
2. Have at least two years of clinical experience following professional education;
3. Demonstrate a sincere interest in teaching and mentoring graduate nursing students enrolled in the clinical practice;
4. Be able to allocate sufficient time and space resources to effectively fulfill the role; and
5. Show willingness to collaborate with graduate nursing faculty and graduate nursing students in planning and evaluating clinical practicum experiences.
6. Not have a familial relationship to the student, or any relationship that could hinder the objectivity of the learning experience.

**Note:** Clinical experiences may not occur at a student's current employment site/unit unless approved by the Director of the FNP program.

## Approval of Clinical Site and Preceptor

Once a preceptor (NP, PA, or physician) has agreed to serve as a clinical preceptor, the Clinical Site Approval Form must be completed and returned to the appropriate faculty teaching the course the learner is enrolled in. The course coordinator will approve all clinical sites and clinical preceptors according to the learner learning needs and specific course objectives. The Graduate Program Coordinator will verify that an Affiliation Agreement for the approved site is on file in the graduate nursing office. Prior to the start of the clinical experience, a copy of the preceptor's license and certification must also be on file in the graduate nursing office. It is the responsibility of the learner to obtain this information and return it to the course prior to beginning a clinical rotation. All clinical forms must be turned in at least 28 days prior to the start of the upcoming semester.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If a learner needs to switch a clinical site during a semester, the course coordinator needs to be notified immediately and before the clinical rotation is started. A memorandum of agreement is needed between FMU and each clinical site. If the learner does not notify the course coordinator that they are switching clinical sites and switches without approval, they will be dismissed from the program for unprofessional behavior because it jeopardizes the legal contracts of FMU.

## Initial Contact with the Clinical Preceptor

Learners should make initial contact with the approved preceptor prior to the start of clinical by making an appointment. Learners are expected to share their syllabus, clinical guidelines and the faculty contact information for the course. Learners must remember that clinical preceptors are not getting paid to precept learners. It is important to express appreciation and write a thank you note at the end of the semester.

Francis Marion University and the MSN program are committed to providing professional and cost-effective health care for its learners through Student Health Services. Refer to the current edition of the Francis Marion University Catalog for additional information

Check this Any learner suffers from an injury, develops physical or emotional problem, and takes medication that may alter critical thinking and clinical decision-making, which may interfere with safe nursing practice, has the responsibility of notifying all appropriate nursing faculty so that appropriate measures can be taken. Prior to returning to the clinical environment, the said learner **must** provide a letter to all appropriate nursing faculty from their health care provider indicating “**no restrictions**”.

“Any learner who presents problems in physical or emotional health which do not respond to appropriate treatment and/or counseling within a reasonable period of time, or any learner who demonstrates behavior which conflicts with the safety essential to nursing practice, can be dismissed from the nursing program” (*South Carolina Board of Nursing*).

## Health Costs/Coverage

The University and/or the MSN program are **not liable** for health care costs associated with a learner's illness or injury from clinical practice and/or lab activities.

## Infectious/ Communicable Disease Policies at Clinical Sites

Learners must comply with the infectious/communicable disease policy of the agency or facility with which they are currently associated for their clinical experience, as well as the policies of the nursing program. The specific agency/facility policies will be reviewed in the clinical orientation prior to clinical practice.

## Prevention and Transmission of Transmittable Disease

All learners are required to abide by the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) universal precautions and precautions applicable to individuals with infectious/communicable diseases. It is the learner's responsibility to become thoroughly familiar with these guidelines and to practice universal precautions in all clinical/lab settings. Universal precautions may be

summarized as treating all body substances; body fluids as potentially infectious. Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) should be used to reduce the risk of exposure to potentially infectious material.

### **Learner Refusal to Care for Patients with Infectious/Communicable Diseases**

Refusal to provide care to patients with infectious/communicable diseases is not in keeping with performance expectations for learners in the MSN program and is inconsistent with the ethics of the nursing profession. It is expected that learners will provide care to assigned patients with any infectious/communicable disease. In cases where continuing clinical practice presents more than a minimal risk, such as when a learner is immune-suppressed, the clinical faculty may decide to temporarily reassign the learner.

### **Exposure Incidents and Follow-up to Blood/Body Fluids**

Exposure incident means a specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or parenteral contact with blood or potentially infectious materials that result from the performance of learner activities. Learners who follow the recommendations developed by the CDC have minimal danger of contracting any infection in the course of their clinical activities. Initial and subsequent care and follow-up activities including recommendations related to counseling, prophylactic/treatment regimes, continued or restricted practice after a learner's exposure incident will be determined by the learner's health care provider. Any learner who experiences a blood or body fluid exposure incident is responsible for all medical costs incurred for his/her counseling, follow-up care/treatment and/or diagnostic tests/procedures conducted. These blood or body fluid exposures, like all incidents that occur on school time, must be reported to the supervising clinical instructor immediately.

### **Expectations of FNP Learners**

Learners' primary responsibility is for acquisition of advanced clinical knowledge and skills. If questions or problems arise, learners should contact their assigned clinical faculty. Learners are expected to see a minimum of 4-6 patients per 8-hour clinical day initially in the first clinical rotation. They are expected to work up to 8-10 patients by midterm of their second clinical course. In subsequent clinical courses, learners will be expected to see between 10-15 patients in an 8-hour period. Faculty understands that patient numbers may vary depending on the clinical site and level of acuity. Learners must see a mixture of patient populations, varying ages and gender. Clinical logs will reflect the numbers of patients seen and the date and hours of clinical time attended. Orientation and meetings do not count toward these hours.

According to the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties guidelines, "Direct patient care clinical hours refer to hours in which direct clinical care is provided to individuals & families in one of three population-focused areas of NP practice; these hours do not include skill lab hours, physical assessment practice sessions, or a community project, if it does not include provision of direct care. Clinical experiences and time spent in each experience should be varied and distributed in a way that prepares the learner to provide care to the populations served. In addition, whereas 500 direct patient care clinical hours is regarded as a minimum, it is expected that programs preparing NP's to provide direct care to multiple age groups, e.g. FNP (or lifespan), will exceed this minimum requirement." Clinical logs should be reviewed by the faculty at midterm and at the completion of the course.

### **Clinical Preparation and Conduct**

- Each semester learners will be provided specific written guidelines as to assignments.
- Learners are expected to come prepared for clinical/lab.
- If a learner is unprepared for clinical/lab or violates clinical policies, the learner may be sent home and the incident will result in a clinical counseling, a second occurrence of the same or different infraction will result in a clinical warning, and a third incident will result in a clinical/lab and course failure.
- A learner's clinical warnings and counseling are cumulative and a third one in a subsequent course can constitute a failure.

- Any grossly unsafe or negligent clinical event or unethical practice may constitute an automatic course or program failure without the learner receiving a counseling or warning.

### **Clinical Evaluation of Learner Performance**

- Learners may request a copy of each of their clinical evaluations.
- Learner performance in the clinical area will be evaluated utilizing processes outlined in the Graduate Clinical Evaluation Tool for each course. The learner must achieve a satisfactory level of performance in the lab/clinical in order to progress.
- When a learner's clinical performance in any clinical situation indicates that a learner is unable or unwilling to perform at a safe and/or professional level of practice, the preceptor in consultation with the faculty course coordinator will remove the learner from the clinical area and it will constitute a clinical counseling for that day.
- After the first clinical counseling a written action plan will be made with the course coordinator and the clinical instructor, and if the stipulations in the action plan are not met by the date and time identified, then the learner will receive a second clinical warning and if they receive a third they will fail the course.
- Learners are encouraged to continuously articulate learning needs throughout each semester in order to enhance the clinical and course faculty's ability to facilitate relevant learning assignments and opportunities.
- A clinical failure may be assigned if the learner is responsible for a sentinel event.

A sentinel event is an unexpected occurrence involving death or serious physical or psychological injury, or the risk thereof. Serious injury specifically includes loss of limb or function. The phrase, "or the risk thereof" includes any process variation for which a recurrence would carry a significant chance of a serious adverse outcome. Such events are called "sentinel" because they signal the need for immediate investigation and response. ~ The Joint Commission, 2014 ([http://www.jointcommission.org/sentinel\\_event.aspx](http://www.jointcommission.org/sentinel_event.aspx))

### **Clinical Grading Scale**

#### **Rating Code: Clinical Evaluation Tool**

- 4 Function independently with minimum supporting cues.
- 3 Function independently, requiring occasional supervision and or verbal cues.
- 2 Function with assistance, requiring frequent supervision and or verbal cues.
- 1 Function dependently, requiring continuous direct supervision and or verbal cues.
- 0 Unsafe/unethical performances as defined in the *College of Health Sciences Graduate Learner Handbook*.

### **Professional Dress Code**

In recognition of the educational and professional environment of Francis Marion University, all individuals associated with this institution are expected to maintain a neat and clean appearance at all times. In view of nursing's professional goals, all learners enrolled in the MSN program must project a professional image of nursing when engaged in clinical learning or preplanning experiences. Remember that when acting outside the university classroom, you will be seen as a guest, a representative of the MSN program, and a professional advanced practice nursing learner. The dress code is designed to protect the personal safety of learners while in the clinical area. Although this dress code is congruent with the majority of health care agencies, some have dress codes that may be different or more restrictive. The course coordinator will inform the learner of any additional agency requirements. Guidelines specific to clinical sites will be given by the preceptor during any clinical experiences. Shorts or jeans are not appropriate attire.

Learners must have proper identification (which may be a picture ID), and required equipment/supplies needed for clinical/lab experiences.

### Specific guidelines follow:

- The monogrammed FMU graduate lab coat and ID are not to be worn when learners are working in an agency as volunteers or for pay.
- Only an approved FMU MSN program identifier may be displayed. All others must be removed or covered.
- **Lab Jacket:** All learners are required to wear the white FMU graduate learner monogrammed long sleeve lab coat with tailored hemline. During pre-planning activities and specified clinical and administrative experiences, the lab coat must be worn over professional street clothes. Clothing must be neat, clean, with appropriate length skirts or trousers, professional shoes, and appropriate shirts/blouses.
- **Unacceptable attire:** Jeans, denim, open-heeled clogs, heels higher than 2 ½ inch, sandals or thongs, shorts or mini-skirts, frayed or camouflaged clothing, tight-fitting, torn, or low-cut clothes are deemed by the MSN program as unprofessional and are inappropriate.
- **Identification:** Approved Francis Marion University MSN program identification must be worn in every clinical setting. A FMU learner ID badge, an institutional ID badge, or picture ID if required.
  - **A name pin** (white lettering on blue background) as follows:

#### **Advanced Practice Nurse Learners:**

First and Last Name, RN  
FMU School of Health Sciences  
Graduate Learner

- **No chewing gum or tobacco products** are allowed in any clinical experiences.
- **Nails:** Fingernails must be short enough not to injure patients. No nail polish or artificial nails are allowed.

Failure to comply with these policies **will** result in dismissal of the learner from the clinical area. The learner will receive clinical counseling. If there is a repeated offense, the Clinical Faculty will notify the Course Coordinator and a second clinical warning will be issued, if a third occurs it will constitute a course failure in the present course or subsequent clinical courses.

### Typhon/Clinical Guidelines

Typhon is the clinical management system used by the Francis Marion University MSN program. All graduate nursing students are required to enroll in Typhon. Below are some guidelines related to clinical hours and Typhon entries.

1. Students **must** start clinical hours by the **first week** of the summer sessions and the **second week** of spring and fall sessions, but not before the first day of class. Preceptor agreements and contracts must be in place 28 days prior to the start of the upcoming semester. A clinical warning will be issued if a student is not compliant.
2. Students must enter ALL information in Typhon within three days of seeing patients. Faculty recommendations for changes must be addressed within one week, or the entries will not be counted toward clinical hours. Follow the guidelines on Bb for your Typhon entries.
3. Faculty will review Typhon entries within seven days of students' postings for completeness of entries, correct CPT/ICD coding, and appropriate numbers of patients per day for the level of the student and the acuity level of patients seen at the site.
4. Students **must** complete a wiki in each clinical course that contains information related to the clinical rotation. They **must** also contact their preceptor and clinical oversight faculty with any absences or changes in the clinical schedule.

5. All clinical hours must be documented in Typhon two days prior to the end of the semester to ensure that entries can be revised as needed and that grades can be submitted by the FMU deadline. Preceptors **must** be at the designated clinical site with the student for the clinical experience. A student **cannot** see patients if the preceptor is not at that physical location.
6. Face to face visits for evaluations will be done at clinical sites that are within 50 miles of FMU. For sites greater than 50 miles away, an evaluation will be done via distance modality.
7. Students **must** submit a written request to the FMU Nursing Graduate Committee to have a grade of Incomplete at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester if they will not be able to complete their clinical hours.

### **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 Statement**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule provides a Federal law to protect privacy and confidentiality by preventing a release of an individual's (patient's) individually identifiable health information (i.e., information in a medical record).

The Nursing Faculty at Francis Marion University recognizes the importance of protecting health information and understands the responsibility to educate the learners as to the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability And Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). HIPAA protects all health care information generated by a healthcare provider, health plan, or facility. This information is protected whether it is verbal, written or electronic. The following information is a description of the HIPAA guidelines as they apply to learners and faculty.

A nursing learner having access to individually identifiable health information must complete HIPAA Privacy Rule training. Typically, this Privacy Rule training must be completed prior to the learner beginning clinical. Records of the training sessions are maintained in the nursing graduate program.

Nursing learners may view individually identifiable health information for treatment purposes. In other words, FMU graduate learners must be involved in the care of the patient to view a patient's individually identifiable health information (i.e., the contents of a medical record).

Individually identifiable health information may be stored in a variety of formats including paper, electronic (computers), video, audio, and photographs. Regardless of the format, all individually identifiable health information must be protected. **Under no circumstances should any of this information be copied and/or removed from the clinical agency.**

### **Caregiver Responsibilities**

Caregivers (learners and faculty) must be careful with the protected information to which they have access and should be aware of the environment in which they are discussing patients. The following guidelines are required for faculty and learners in both classroom and clinical:

- Patient issues should only be discussed in a confidential area in the clinical area. There should be discussion of patient issues with as little information identifying the patient as possible. Case study presentations should be used in which the patient is described by age and diagnosis but not by name. Information (report sheet, notes, and lab) should be disposed of properly at the facility before **leaving**. No records or protected health information are to be removed from the facility.
- Information should only be shared with individuals who are directly caring for or have permission to have information regarding the patient.
- Computer security should be ensured at all times. Do not share passwords. Log off when you leave.
- Information related to patients or learner assignments should never be faxed.

FMU graduate learners can follow basic Do's and Don'ts to protect a patient's privacy. All of these are just a common sense approach to protect the privacy of individually identifiable health information.

<b><u>The Do's:</u></b>	<b><u>The Don'ts:</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do I need to look at this patient's health information to provide treatment to the patient?</li> <li>• Do keep a patient's room door closed when providing care or discussing health information;</li> <li>• Do speak softly when discussing health information while others are present;</li> <li>• Do excuse visitors when patient information is to be discussed;</li> <li>• Do follow proper procedures when disposing of a patient's health information;</li> <li>• Do log off computer systems when you are finished accessing health information;</li> <li>• Do report any privacy violations to your college or the privacy officer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't talk about a patient's health information in public places;</li> <li>• Don't choose a computer password that can be easily guessed, such as your last name;</li> <li>• Don't let faxes or other printed papers with a patient's health information lie around unattended;</li> <li>• Don't walk away from open medical records;</li> <li>• Don't give out a patient's medical condition or location. Refer the call or request to your instructor or charge nurse on the unit.</li> </ul>

In addition, each FMU graduate learner must realize that mental health; HIV/AIDS, sexual assault, and alcohol/drug abuse records are protected by additional Federal and State laws. Therefore, these types of individually identifiable health information must be protected with greater care.

### **Personal Computers**

Computers are an essential learning tool, with the cost dependent upon vendor and configuration. It is a requirement that nursing learners have access to his/her own personal computer. The minimum configuration should include access to the Internet and support a version of Windows and Windows Office Suite (Word, PowerPoint). The hardware specifications necessary should be consistent with those of your Internet Provider. Personal hand-held devices are recommended that can download eBooks for reference. If a learner does not have a hand-held device, they will be able to purchase the paper copy of the book. Wireless Internet is available throughout the Carter Center for Health Sciences.

### **Simulation Laboratory**

The simulation laboratory is located on the third floor and is primarily equipped for the practice of advanced health provider core competencies. It is equipped with otoscopes and ophthalmoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, hospital beds, and other medical equipment as well as privacy curtains. Refer to course syllabus for specific course guidelines. Open lab hours are provided but learners can schedule additional hours by contacting the Simulation Laboratory Coordinator, Dr. Crystal Graham at [cgraham@fmairon.edu](mailto:cgraham@fmairon.edu).

### **Petitions for Variance from Policies**

The NGC acts upon petitions from learners seeking exception to the MSN program academic policies and/or regulations. A written request for an exception must be submitted to the NGC in care of the MSN program with supporting rationale and documentation. **Petitions must be received no later than five days prior to the scheduled NGC meeting. All meetings are posted on the graduate nursing program's website in the beginning of the semester.** The learner has the right to present their case to the NGC. The learner will receive a letter from the NGC regarding the decision on the petition. A copy of the petition and the NGC's reply will be placed in the graduate learner's performance File



## **XI. LEARNER PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

### **Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor**

Student evaluations of course and instructor provide the opportunity to maintain and enhance educational quality (*FMU Catalog*). Every semester learners are provided the opportunity to evaluate each course and its instructor so that educational quality may be maintained and enhanced. All learners are encouraged to respond to the evaluation with honesty, sincerity, and a sense of confidentiality. The MSN program will adhere to the University guidelines in administering the evaluations. Nursing learners may be asked to evaluate preceptors in the clinical settings as well as the clinical agencies. This will provide important information that can be utilized to enhance the quality of the clinical experiences.

### **Learner Representation**

Nursing faculty is requested to submit the names of graduate learners for consideration to serve as members of the Nursing Graduate Committee (NGC). Learners who volunteer will work in collaboration with faculty to review proposed curricular changes and procedures and instruments for graduate program evaluation. A learner from each of the two tracks will be invited to assist faculty.

### **FMU Nursing Alumni Society**

The Nursing Alumni Society was begun in May 2007 with the first graduating class. The society is a subgroup of the Francis Marion University Alumni Association. All graduates are encouraged to join and to support the work of the society. Membership is a good way to keep in touch with classmates and to keep informed about changes and progress in the school. The membership elects their officers, have regular meetings, and publish a newsletter. Alumni are included in program activities, and are asked to support the program in a variety of ways.

### **FMU Nursing Honor Society**

The Nursing Honor Society, Chi Lambda, is a chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI). The society recognizes scholarship, leadership, and service, and includes in its membership learners who have completed the first half of their upper division curriculum, and community members who have demonstrated leadership and service in the community. The top 35% of the rising senior graduate class are eligible for membership. The honor society conducts scholarly meetings at least twice each year.

### **The Minority Nursing Association-Francis Marion University Chapter of the National Black Nurses Association**

The Minority Nursing Association (MNA) is a professional organization that was established in August 2013 for nurses and nursing students in the Pee Dee Region. As professional nurses, we can encourage and support one another to grow personally and professionally, and provide guidance and mentoring to minority nurses and nursing students. One of the goals of the organization is to work together as advocates to identify and address the health care needs in minority communities of the Pee Dee Region through health promotion initiatives and activities.

## **XII. ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY**

Learners, faculty members, and staff of the MSN program at FMU are responsible, as citizens, for knowing about and complying with the provisions of South Carolina Law that make it a crime to possess, sell, deliver, or manufacture those drugs designated as “controlled substances.” Any learner enrolled in the MSN program who violates this law is subject to both prosecution and punishment by the civil authorities and to disciplinary proceedings by the University and the MSN program. For a complete account, please reference the current edition of *Francis Marion University Student Handbook* in the Students’ Rights section: *Alcohol and Other Drug Policy Summary*.

## **Nursing Program Policy on Substance Abuse**

Our philosophy regarding learner substance abuse revolves around protecting the public's health and safety. To ensure patient safety, comply with clinical facility policies and the South Carolina Board of Nursing policy, the MSN program has adopted the "Alcohol and Other Drug Policy" which coincides with other University policies regarding these issues.

Substance abuse is defined as the non-prescribed use or abuse of any legal or illegal drug and/or alcohol. It is also the abuse of legally prescribed, but abusively, dangerously, illegally used drugs. The MSN program will be responsible for appropriately identifying learners who are abusing alcohol/ drugs and referring learners to appropriate programs, agencies, or resources, either on or off campus as needed. For definition of this policy, use or abuse of illicit/illegal drugs, the illegal use of alcohol, or use of any substance that disrupts the operation of the nursing program or is deemed to be unsafe in relation to patient care are prohibited. Additionally, the MSN program will refer learners to the SC Board of Nursing.

## **Drug and Alcohol Screening Program: Testing Based on Reasonable Suspicion**

- A learner may be subjected to testing at any time when, in the judgment of a faculty member, there is reasonable cause to suspect the learner is engaging in the use of alcohol, non-prescribed or illegal drugs on campus or the clinical site. Such individualized reasonable suspicion may be based on information from any source deemed reasonable by the faculty member, including but not limited to:
  - Observed possession of or use of substances that reasonably appear to be illegal drugs, legal drugs used illegally and/or alcohol.
  - Observed noticeable change in behavior, appearance, and/or conduct; slurred speech; smell of ethanol on breath.
- Individualized reasonable suspicion means: if the available facts were conveyed to a (hypothetical) reasonable person unfamiliar with the learner, that person would conclude that there is a factual basis for determining that the learner is using a prohibited drug and/or alcohol.
- When individual reasonable suspicion is found to exist, the learner shall be subject to dismissal for Unsafe/Unethical Practice.
- Individualized reasonable suspicions will be handled according to the Clinical Agency's and/or the policy of the nursing program:

Once the learner has been confronted by the faculty member of the need for reasonable suspicion drug testing, the faculty member will remove the learner from the class or clinical setting and will notify the course coordinator and the chair of the nursing program.

- If the learner is confronted in the clinical site the policy and procedures of that site will be enforced;
- If the learner is confronted on campus, Security will be notified and Carolina Hospital or Arc point will be called to come to campus to test the learner at the learner's expense (approximately \$40.00);

The learner is responsible for all expenses associated with drug/alcohol drug testing. A consent and release form will be signed by the learner for drug/alcohol testing. Validated copies of the test results will be sent to the chair of the nursing program and subsequently to the learner.

## **Consequences of Failure to Participate in or Cooperate with Testing:**

An instance of failure or refusal to participate in, or cooperate with testing, shall be deemed an occasion of impermissible drug/alcohol use that justifies dismissal under the MSN program policy on Dismissal from the Program.

## **Possession and Distribution of Drugs or Alcohol**

Any learner arrested for possession of drugs or alcohol must notify the chair of the nursing program within 12 hours of the incident and cannot participate in patient care/ clinical until the allegations are resolved. This is to be in compliance with the policies and procedures of our practice care partners. Failure to notify the chair of the nursing program, or designee within 12 hours will result in dismissal from the program.

### **Consequences of Impermissible Drug Use:**

When prohibited drug and/or alcohol use has been confirmed through positive test results, the learner shall meet with the chair of the nursing program, or designated representative, and be dismissed from the program.

Any information concerning a learner's alleged or confirmed use of drugs/alcohol shall be restricted to institutional personnel and the South Carolina Board of Nursing. No individual test results of the drug/alcohol screen will be provided to clinical agencies. No release of such information will be made without the learner's written consent, unless in response to appropriate judicial process. The institution, however, will not voluntarily disclose such information in the absence of a subpoena or court order.

## **XIII. PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS**

### **Academic Dishonesty**

See Honor Code found in the *University Student Handbook: Rights and Responsibilities Honor Code*. All learners and faculty are expected to refrain from acts of academic misconduct including, but not limited to, plagiarism, the giving or falsifying of any academic documents or related materials, cheating, and the giving or receiving of unauthorized aid in tests, examinations, or other assigned work.

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct and is the use of another person's words or ideas without providing credit to that person. It is the theft of another person's words or ideas to give the impression that you created them. These words and ideas may be from a variety of sources including printed works, speeches, presentations, and/or Internet sites and documents. Appropriate and complete referencing of words and ideas obtained from others is a requirement in ALL courses. If a work is anonymous, as may be the case with some internet documents, it still must be fully referenced

### **Code of Ethics**

The MSN program subscribes to the "Code of Learner Conduct" as defined in the "Students' Rights and Responsibilities" section of the current edition of the *Francis Marion University Student Handbook and Catalog*. The MSN program subscribes to the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics; whereby, all learners and faculty are expected to be honest and honorable in all academic and professional endeavors. It is further expected that they will refrain from any activity, which might impair the image of the University, the nursing program, or the nursing profession.

### **Professional Conduct**

Professional misconduct is construed as any violation of the following provisions:

- Faculty and learners assume responsibility for individual and professional judgments and actions. They will seek consultation and clarification on professional actions in which there is uncertainty. It is expected that they will continue to maintain competence of their practice.
- The learner nurse assumes responsibility and accountability for individual nursing judgments and actions at his/her level of knowledge and expertise.
- Nursing faculty and learners exercise informed judgment and use individual competence and qualifications as criteria in seeking consultation, accepting responsibilities, and delegating nursing activities to others.
- It is expected that faculty and learners will respect and uphold the rights of all patients.

- Provide services with respect for human dignity and the uniqueness of the whole patient unrestricted by the nature of health problems, personal attributes and beliefs.
- Judiciously protect information of a confidential nature.
- Ensure the patient's right to privacy.
- It is expected that faculty and learners will protect the patient against incompetent, unethical or illegal practice.
- Participate in the profession's efforts:
- To protect the public from misinformation and to maintain the integrity of nursing.
  - To implement and improve standards of nursing and maintain conditions of practice conducive to high quality nursing care.
  - By assuming responsibility for reporting incompetent, unethical, or illegal practice to the appropriate authority.
- It is expected that faculty will respect and uphold the rights of learners by:
  - Maintaining confidentiality of learner records.
  - Obtaining or disseminating to the appropriate persons only information strictly pertinent to learner's current academic performance.
  - Treating the learner as a human being of worth and dignity.
- It is expected that learners will respect and uphold the rights of faculty.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

The faculty and staff of the nursing program at Francis Marion University recognize the importance of protecting the private and confidential information regarding patients, their families, employees, staff, and peers as well the operation(s) of agencies within which the faculty and learners practice.

It is the legal and ethical responsibility of every faculty member and learner to maintain and abide by laws relative to privacy including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) guidelines. This policy includes materials discussed in both the classroom and clinical settings. Information pertinent to patients may be relayed only to those individuals who have authority to have that information. All information pertaining to patients is confidential, regardless of form (verbal, hard copy, film or computerized form). Unauthorized access, use or disclosure is illegal.

### **The faculty and learners agree to:**

- Follow the HIPAA guidelines including this information in the nursing program HIPAA Statement found in the *Nursing Graduate Learner Handbook*;
- Read, understand, sign and follow confidentiality and privacy policy statements before beginning each clinical experience. Policies vary from health care agency to agency; learners and faculty are responsible for reviewing them at the beginning of every clinical experience;
- Protect confidentiality of patients, families, employees, peers and agency at all times;
- Access, use or share confidential information only as it is essential and allowed by law;
- Never release protected health information to any unidentified source; know the person you are talking to;
- Never talk about patients in public; never discuss confidential information where other patients, visitors or other employees might overhear, including elevators, dining facilities and telephones;
- Never leave patient records or information where unauthorized persons might see them;
- Never copy information nor remove any part of the patient's record from the agency.
- Never use patient's names or specifics about their healthcare issues on the www including Blackboard.

Safeguards that exist to protect patient data include institutional systems of passwords that identify users and their access to privileges in the computer system. The ability to use an electronic signature is a privilege that is granted in accordance with agency policies. It is not a right to have passwords and computer access.

**Faculty and learners agree:**

- Never, lend or share his or her passwords with anyone else;
- Never, use another individual's login, ID or password;
- To report immediately breaches or suspected breaches of security to appropriate agency authority;
- To realize that E-mail is not private or secure and therefore not communicate information via this system.

**Definition of Unprofessional Behavior**

Unprofessional or disruptive behavior is defined as any behavior that is contentious, threatening, insulting, or potentially litigious or otherwise interferes or has the potential to interfere with an individual's or group's professional responsibilities, self-respect, or ability to collaborate productively with others. It is behavior that creates an unsafe, intimidating, hostile, destructive or offensive work, academic or clinical environment. Dictates of professional behavior apply to faculty, staff, and learners in the MSN program. Examples of unprofessional or disruptive behavior include but are not limited to the following:

- Shouting or using vulgar, profane or abusive language
- Abusive behavior
- Physical assault or threat thereof
- Intimidating behavior
- Refusal to cooperate with others
- Conduct that constitutes sexual harassment
- Refusal to adhere to MSN program policies
- Inappropriate comments written in official documents that impugn faculty, staff, or learners of the MSN program
- Non-constructive criticism addressed to an individual in such a way as to intimidate, belittle or suggest incompetence
- Imposition on staff of unnecessarily burdensome or idiosyncratic requirements that are generally not professionally accepted and do not result in improved efficiency
- Making or threatening reprisals for reporting disruptive or inappropriate behavior
- Inappropriate email conduct, lack of properly addressing faculty, shouting or using inappropriate language.
- Imposition of staff with unnecessarily burdensome or idiosyncratic requirements by the student and generally not professionally accepted.
- Making or threatening reprisals for reporting disruptive or inappropriate behavior.

**Student Arrest Policy**

If a student is arrested or formally charge with an infraction of the law the offending student must report the violation to the Chair within two university business days of the offense.

**Social Networking Policy**

Learners are encouraged to use their most professional judgment in regard to internet social networking sites. Information and / or pictures about the FMU nursing program, faculty, other learners, clinical experiences, and patient information, in any format, is not appropriate on social networking sites. Violations of this policy will result in dismissal from the program for lack of maintaining professional standards.

## **Disciplinary Action for Unprofessional Behavior**

Unprofessional or disruptive behavior demonstrated by an MSN program learner towards another learner, patient, faculty, or staff would be managed as follows:

- I. If possible and reasonable, the complainant should first attempt to resolve the issue by asking the individual to discontinue the inappropriate behavior. The complainant should document the attempted resolution and forward to his/her course coordinator or academic nursing advisor.
- II. If behavior is repeated and deemed as an Honor Code violation, the complainant should bring the incident to the attention of the nursing program chair and use the procedures as referred to in the *University Catalog and Student Handbook*.
- III. If behavior is repeated and is not an Honor Code Violation, the complainant should contact the nursing program chair.

## **Unsafe/ Unethical Learner Practice**

The faculty of the MSN program has an academic, legal and ethical responsibility to protect the public and health care community from unsafe nursing practice. It is within this context that learners can be disciplined or dismissed from the graduate nursing program for practice, which threatens or has the potential to threaten the safety or well-being of a patient, family member, another learner, a faculty member or other health care provider.

- An unsafe/ unethical practice is defined as:
  - An act or behavior of the type which violates the South Carolina Nursing Practice Act.
  - An act or behavior, which violates the Code of Ethics for Nurses of the American Nurses' Association.
  - An act or behavior, which violates the objectives and/or policies of the MSN program.
  - An act or behavior, which violates the objectives and/or policies of each Nursing Course.
  - An act or behavior, which violates the objectives and/or policies of the Health Care Agency.
  - An act or behavior, which constitutes nursing practice for which a learner is not authorized or educated at the time of the incident.

When an incident occurs which a faculty member believes may constitute an unsafe/unethical practice, the faculty member shall immediately notify the learner and instruct the learner to leave the clinical setting. The faculty member will then notify the course coordinator who will, in turn, notify the chair of the nursing program. The learner may receive a course failure.

The clinical faculty member in consultation with the course coordinator will review all of the written documentation involved in the incident to determine whether there are grounds that unsafe/unethical practice has occurred. If it is determined at this point that critically unsafe/unethical practice and/or behavior has occurred, the Course Coordinator will meet with the chair of the nursing program to review all the written documentation and for providing recommendations with regard to the status of the learner.

After a gravely unsafe incident a recommendation for dismissal from the nursing course and/or program is made, the chair of the nursing program will refer the matter to the NGC. The learner has the right of due process and will be notified in writing at least three days prior to the scheduled meeting and provided an opportunity to respond to the allegations. The learner will be notified in writing of the NGC decision. The learner has the right to appeal the NGC decision. Refer to the current edition of the *FMU Student Handbook* in the Student Services Section: Judicial Affairs.

## **Sexual Harassment**

The MSN program follows the general policy guidelines found in the current edition of the *Francis Marion University Catalog and Student Handbook*. In the case of a learner who believes that he or she has been the victim of discriminatory behavior, including sexual harassment, from employees of contracted clinical agencies and/or outside agents working in those agencies should report the matter to the course coordinator. The course coordinator will in turn notify the chair of the nursing program. All files and communication will be kept confidential.

## **XIV. GRIEVANCES**

### **Guidelines for Resolving Learner Concerns or Complaints**

Learners experiencing academic difficulty are strongly encouraged to schedule an appointment with faculty for assistance. If learners are unable to resolve academic issues then they should consult individuals in the following order:

1. Course coordinator, if different from above
2. Nursing Program Chair
3. Dean of the School of Health Sciences/Provost

For quicker resolution, learners are encouraged to seek resolution of conflict using this process. It is the desire of the nursing faculty to facilitate faculty-learner dialogue in order to promote a positive environment for learning.

### **Learner Concerns or Complaints Guidelines**

The MSN program adheres to the University Guidelines for Learner Concerns or Complaints as outlined in the current edition of *Francis Marion University Catalog*. Learner concerns or complaints are handled in a professional manner. Discussion and problem solving of issues should be based on facts. Resolutions should acknowledge the satisfaction of all parties, but must maintain the integrity of the nursing program. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved through the procedures below, a formal grievance may be filed as described in the current edition of the *FMU Student Handbook*.

### **Admission Grievances**

Issues/concerns related to deviations from the prescribed admission policies, progression policies, program of study, and graduation policies should be requested to the NGC. NGC procedures:

1. Requests to the NGC must be in writing and received no later than five (5) days prior to the scheduled NGC meeting.
2. The Meeting Dates for the NGC will be posted on the Francis Marion DON website at the beginning of each semester.
3. The learner will receive a letter from the NGC regarding their decision on the request in writing.
4. The learner's request and the NGC's decision will be placed in the learner's academic file in the DON.

### **Course Grievances**

Course Grievances Issues/concerns in a single course, such as the quality of instruction, fairness and equity in awarding grades should use the following procedures:

1. If the issue concerns a single course, the learner (s) should make an appointment with the course faculty, course coordinator and attempt to come to an amicable resolution.
2. If the issue cannot be settled at the course level, an appointment should be made to discuss the issue(s) with the chair of the nursing program.

### **Curriculum Grievances**

Issues involving the curriculum, sequencing and scheduling of courses should begin with an appointment with the chair of the nursing program.

## **XV. FREES & EXPENSES**

Learners are required to have all current fees paid by established deadlines in order to attend classes. The access to the Blackboard Learn system is directly linked to the financial aid department. Any learner who is not in good financial standing for the current semester is advised to leave class, resolve the problem, and return upon receipt of current fees having been paid. Classes missed due to failure to pay fees are unexcused

absences. Learners found to be delinquent will be withdrawn from all courses. The Blackboard Learn system updates roster every day.

### **Expenses Learners May Expect**

All learners may expect to incur the following additional expenses: books and supplies, lab coats, watch with a second hand, name pin, various types of equipment (specific information provided to learners by the MSN program director/course coordinator), and travel to clinical sites. A car is necessary.

### **Financial Information**

Contact the office of Financial Assistance at 843-661-1190 or by visiting the web site: “quick links” at <http://www.fmarion.edu>.

## **XVI. GRADUATION POLICIES**

### **Application for Degree**

Graduate learners are required to file an Application for Degree with the Registrar’s Office during pre-registration the semester prior to graduation. Refer to the *Francis Marion University Student Handbook* for final deadline dates and fee requirements. All learners are expected to attend the ceremony. Those learners desiring to graduate in absentia should complete the appropriate information on the degree application.

### **Requirements for graduation and for the award of the Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree as follows**

To receive a master’s from FMU a learner must fulfill the following requirements (*FMU Catalog*, p. 198):

- 1) Complete the number of graduate hours and specific courses required in the learner’s approved program;
- 2) Achieve a 3.0 cumulative GPA on all graduate courses; and
- 3) Satisfactory completion of all the other requirements of the program which includes completing all clinical hours successfully prior to graduation.



## **XVII. GRADUATE FACULTY AND STAFF**

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**School of Health Sciences  
Graduate Nursing Program  
*Track Change Application***

Use this form to apply to change your track within the graduate nursing program. Before changing your track, consult your academic adviser. Complete this form and return to the Nursing Program Chair. This form will be presented at the Graduate Nursing Committee for approval/denial.

***Personal Information***

Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

FMU Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Current Track \_\_\_\_\_

New Track \_\_\_\_\_

**Please give a brief explanation of reason for change.**

**By signing below, I confirm my understanding that should I decide to make an additional track change, I will have to re-apply to the MSN Program.**

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**School of Health Sciences  
Graduate Nursing Program  
*Change of Advisor Request***

Use this form to apply to change your advisor within the graduate nursing program. Complete this form and return to the Nursing Program Chair. Thank you.

***Personal Information***

Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

FMU Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Current Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

**Please give a brief explanation of reason for change.**

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_