Georgia College & State University
School of Nursing
Graduate Nursing Handbook

Summer 2026

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Welcome to the School of Nursing

Welcome to Georgia College & State University (GCSU), the College of Health Sciences, and the School of Nursing. At GCSU, tomorrow's nurses are educated as if lives depend on it! Students are uniquely prepared for nursing through liberal arts integration into the curriculum, leading to students' understanding of clients as unique, holistic individuals.

As a student of nursing, you will be challenged to acquire the scientific knowledge and skills of the discipline of nursing, internalize the behavior of a professional nurse, develop technical and decision-making skills, incorporate ethics into your practice, and develop an awareness of your own and others' value systems as a context for professionalism. This will require hard work and commitment on your part but will be a remarkable experience you will treasure for a lifetime, resulting in a career that will give you an endless sense of having made a difference in the world.

This is an incredible journey. We are excited that you have chosen GCSU for that journey and we, the faculty, will do everything we can to support your success as we take the journey alongside you.
- The Nursing Faculty -

Introduction and Purpose

Graduate programs at the Georgia College & State University School of Nursing are dedicated to preparing students for excellence in advanced clinical practice, leadership, and research. With two program options, the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and a comprehensive array of degree concentrations including Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP), Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP), Nurse Midwifery (NM), and Nursing Education, (NE) we allow students to forge their own individualized intellectual path.

This handbook, prepared for the Graduate students, provides specific information about the graduate nursing programs that supplement – but does not replace – the University's Graduate Catalog. Access to an electronic copy will be provided to each student during orientation/immersion. Students are expected to read this handbook, abide by the policies, and be directed by its many features to help them be successful in their graduate degree journey. Failure to read these sources will not excuse

students from abiding with the policies and procedures described in them. Students will be required to verify they have reviewed the handbook.

The handbook is prepared and revised annually for the use of administrators, faculty, students, and staff. Suggestions regarding clarification or addition of topics are welcome. The School of Nursing reserves the right to make changes to this handbook, including changes in policies and procedures as deemed appropriate and necessary. All changes will be promptly communicated to students, faculty, and staff.

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) Accreditation

Graduate Programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

The contact information for the CCNE is:

655 K Street NW Suite 750

Washington, D.C.

202-463-6930

* The Nurse Midwifery track is currently accredited by the ACME. Please see the separate Nurse Midwifery Handbook for information regarding this program.

School of Nursing Mission, Vision, Philosophy, Concepts

Mission

In concert with the Georgia College liberal arts mission, the School of Nursing is committed to the formation of nurse leaders to engage in evidence-based practice, lifelong learning, and civic participation in a health information-intensive environment through the development and mastery of clinical reasoning, professional nursing skills, and values. The Family Nurse Practitioner program prepares nursing professionals to fulfill primary care advanced practice roles in rural and underserved areas. The Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program prepares nursing professionals to fulfill mental health advanced practice roles in rural and underserved areas. The Women's Health Nurse Practitioner program prepares nursing professionals to fulfill women's health advanced practice roles in rural and underserved areas. The Nurse Educator program prepares nursing professionals to address educational needs in academic and healthcare organizational settings.

Vision

The GCSU School of Nursing aspires to be recognized as a national leader in nursing education. GCSU nurses will serve at the forefront of the changing healthcare delivery system.

Philosophy

Georgia College's School of Nursing builds the philosophy by defining the basic concepts that comprise the discipline and science of nursing. These concepts are health, nursing, environment, education, and person.

Health

Health is the dynamic integration of the physical, psychological, spiritual, cognitive, and cultural socio-cultural well-being of individuals, families, groups, and communities. The meaning of health varies between individuals and cultures and is universally accepted as more than being free of disease or infirmity. Health beliefs and practices are impacted by the affordability and accessibility of health care.

Nursing

Nursing is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, and alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response to actual or potential health problems for health promotion, disease prevention, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities, and populations *(American Nurses Association, 2010a, p. 1)*.

Environment

The environment is the accumulation of physical, physiological, social, cultural, spiritual, economic, and political conditions that interact with and influence human experience. Interaction is constant, and the environment can be altered to influence health outcomes. Nursing can create and sustain a culture of safety and quality health care that can transform the environment by creating a safe workplace that produces optimal patient outcomes.

Education

Nursing education is an active process where the student develops and masters clinical reasoning, professional nursing skills, and values that enable graduates to thrive in a health-intensive information-intensive environment. The minimal level of education for entry to professional nursing practice occurs at the baccalaureate level and mastery occurs through graduate education and life-long learning.

- Clinical reasoning is a cognitive process of thinking where data is reviewed and analyzed to improve health outcomes.

- Professional nursing skills are developed through the integration of theoretical knowledge and guided clinical practice.

- Professional nursing values are consistent demonstrations of altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, and social justice.

Person

A person is a complex, unique, holistic individual with inherent worth and dignity. The meanings a person attaches to life experiences are influenced by the environment, developmental level, group membership, culture, and ethnicity. The person has the power to identify their own life choices.

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program at Georgia College & State University offers an advanced education pathway for Registered Nurses seeking to advance their careers. Rooted in excellence and innovation, our MSN program equips students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to excel in diverse healthcare settings. With a focus on advanced clinical practice, leadership, and research, our curriculum prepares graduates to meet the evolving challenges of modern healthcare delivery. Students have the opportunity to choose from a range of specialty tracks, including Family Nurse Practitioner, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Women's Health Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Midwifery, and Nursing Education, tailored to their career goals and interests. Through a combination of rigorous coursework, hands-on clinical experiences, and mentorship from expert faculty, graduates emerge as competent, compassionate, and culturally responsive nursing leaders ready to make a meaningful impact on individuals, families, and communities.

Graduate Programs Overview

The School of Nursing at Georgia College & State University offers two graduate degree programs designed to prepare nurses for advanced clinical practice and leadership: the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). Each program includes multiple specialty concentrations that allow students to tailor their education to specific advanced practice or leadership roles. In

addition, the School of Nursing offers Post-Graduate Certificate options for nurses who already hold a nursing graduate degree and wish to gain preparation in an additional specialty area. Across these programs, concentrations include advanced practice and leadership tracks such as Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP), Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP), Nurse Midwifery (NM), and Nurse Educator (NE). This structure provides flexible pathways for nurses to advance their education, expand their scope of practice, and meet evolving healthcare workforce needs.

Graduate program outcomes are applicable across all graduate nursing programs and degree pathways. These outcomes represent the shared competencies expected of all graduates, regardless of degree level, concentration, or certificate pathway. The outcomes are designed to ensure that graduates demonstrate advanced knowledge, clinical judgment, leadership, and scholarship consistent with national standards for graduate nursing education. Collectively, the outcomes align with the AACN Essentials(2021) and guide curriculum design, course progression, and program evaluation across the MSN, DNP, and Post-Graduate Certificate programs, ensuring that all graduates are prepared to deliver high-quality, evidence-based care, lead within complex healthcare systems, and contribute to the advancement of the nursing profession.

Graduate Program Outcomes

1. Translate, integrate, and apply evidence from nursing science and the arts, humanities, and other sciences into advanced specialty clinical practice.

2. Establish a caring relationship with the individual that demonstrates effective communication, assessment, and diagnostic skills to develop a holistic plan of care that applies current and emerging evidence and ensures accountability throughout the healthcare continuum.

3. Advocate for social justice, equity in healthcare, and the protection of public health through leading redesign of regulatory, legislative, and public policy.

4. Engage in the generation, synthesis, translation, application, and dissemination of nursing knowledge to improve health and transform healthcare.

5. Demonstrate the use of established and emerging quality and safety principles as core values of nursing practice to enhance quality and minimize risk of harm to patients and providers through both system effectiveness and individual performance.

6. Facilitate intentional collaboration across professions and with care team members, patients, families, communities, and other stakeholders to optimize care, enhance the healthcare experience, and strengthen outcomes.

7. Effectively respond to and lead within complex systems of healthcare utilizing multidisciplinary collaboration to create effective healthcare delivery systems.

8. Demonstrate informatics and healthcare technology competencies to enhance outcomes for clients and populations.

9. Demonstrate formation and cultivation of a sustainable, ethical professional nursing identity, accountability, perspective, collaborative disposition, and behavior that reflects nursing's characteristics and values.

10. Demonstrate a commitment to participation in activities and self-reflection that foster personal health, resilience, and well-being, lifelong learning, and support the acquisition of nursing expertise and assertion of leadership

MSN Programs/Post-Graduate Certificates

Within the MSN program and Post-Graduate Certificate program, GCSU School of Nursing currently offers four APRN Specialty Tracks and a degree/post-graduate certificate in nursing education.

Below is a list of current offerings and the corresponding Program coordinator.

- Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) – Dr. Amelia Malcom

- Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) – Dr. Corey Claxton

- Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP) – Dr. Monica Ketchie.

- Nurse Midwifery (NM) – Dr. Monica Ketchie.

- Nurse Educator (NE) – Dr. Krystal Canady & Dr. Josie Doss

Plan of Study

After students are admitted to the University and accepted to the program, the student will work with a program coordinator to develop a plan of study (POS) depending on admission status (full-time vs part-time) and specialty track. The POS will outline the courses and recommended sequencing for each semester to ensure timely progression through the program. Standard Full time & Part time plans of study are available on the

GCSU website within the pages for each MSN & DNP concentration to assist students in planning their academic pathway.

Once the initial POS is signed, the student may not make changes to admission status (full-time vs part-time), specialty track, or course sequence without first discussing it with the assigned program coordinator and signing an updated POS. If space is available, students in the full-time program may elect to move to the part-time program after meeting with their advisor and requesting this change. Because of course sequencing, students in the part-time program cannot move to the full-time program.

Once the plan of study is on file, students should register for courses as early as possible. Registration is available by logging into your mygcsu.edu account and selecting the PAWS tile. See the [Academic Calendar](#) for registration dates and for

School of Nursing: Graduation Requirements

All MSN students are expected to demonstrate successful achievement of program outcomes before graduation. Achievement is reflected through demonstration of increasing depth and breadth of knowledge, the ability to synthesize and apply evidence, the development of progressively complex clinical skills and interventions, and growing role autonomy. These expectations represent master's-level practice and establish the foundation for the expanded systems-level leadership and scholarly practice expected at the doctoral (DNP) level. Demonstration of these competencies occurs through the integration of knowledge and skills acquired across both core and specialty courses.

In addition, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) students (FNP, PMHNP, WHNP) are expected to demonstrate that they are educationally prepared to assume responsibility and accountability for the assessment, diagnosis, and management of patients. This includes health promotion and maintenance, as well as the use and prescription of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions. The synthesis of knowledge and clinical practice develops throughout the program and culminates during the final semester.

Mastery of graduate program outcomes is evaluated using two primary methods: the Electronic Portfolio, which is required for all graduate students, and the Simulated Certification Exit Examination, which is required for APRN students.

Electronic Portfolio Requirements

Students will receive information on the program's outcomes and an introduction to the Electronic Portfolio during orientation. Once created, students will share the portfolio link

with their advisor and/or program coordinator. Each semester, course faculty will use the syllabus to identify assignments to be included in the portfolio. Emphasis is placed on demonstration of the relevance of coursework to clinical practice. Students and faculty are encouraged to arrange multiple experiences in synthesis and application to practice throughout the program. *The portfolio should demonstrate the student's mastery of the program outcomes.* This electronic portfolio must be *started at the beginning* of the program and is required for graduation. Students are required to submit their portfolio for review at the end of their program. Documentation of a satisfactory portfolio will be confirmed in the practicum course.

Simulation Certification Exit Exam Requirements

For APRN students, the Exit exam is a comprehensive exam and covers all topics that the NP student has had during their Program of Study. This exam is designed to simulate the respective Certification Board Exam.

APRN-eligible students (FNP, PMHNP, WHNP) are required to successfully complete a simulated Exit Certification Exam with a score that is within the acceptable range (see practicum course materials for program-specific requirements regarding the number of unsuccessful attempts allowed and the process for proceeding).

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

The DNP program at Georgia College & State University offers two distinct curricular pathways.

BSN to DNP

The BSN to DNP pathway is tailored for individuals holding a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) who wish to obtain a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) while simultaneously completing requirements that would make them eligible to take certification exams as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). Students in this pathway progress through a structured curriculum that integrates advanced clinical preparation with doctoral-level leadership and systems competencies. The program is completed over three years (nine semesters) of full-time study and prepares graduates for certification in one of the following specialties:

- **BSN to DNP: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)**

- [**BSN to DNP: Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)**](#)

- [**BSN to DNP: Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP)**](#)

Post-Graduate DNP

The Post-Graduate DNP (MSN/MN to DNP) pathway is designed for nurses who already hold a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) or Master of Nursing (MN) and seek to earn a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) to further advance their clinical expertise, leadership capacity, and impact on healthcare systems. This pathway emphasizes doctoral-level competencies, including the translation of evidence into practice, quality improvement, population health, and healthcare systems leadership. The program can typically be completed in five semesters of full-time study, although the exact length and course requirements are determined through an individualized review of each student's previous graduate coursework.

To earn the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree, students must complete a minimum of 1,000 supervised graduate-level clinical practice hours. This program of study has 360 clinical hours built into it. Students who enter this program pathway with fewer than 640 post-baccalaureate clinical hours will work with the DNP Program Coordinator to incorporate additional clinical hours into their individualized Program of Study. These additional hours are typically completed through NRSG 6900: Independent Study and may require the student to begin the program in part-time status to ensure adequate time for completion of required clinical experiences. See Policy #3001 for additional information.

Students enrolled in this program pathway may also pursue additional specialty certificate preparation in Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP), Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP), or Nursing Education by completing the required specialty coursework as outlined in the post-graduate MSN plans of study. These additional courses prepare graduates to meet eligibility requirements for national certification in the selected specialty area and may also provide an opportunity for students to obtain additional clinical practice hours to help meet the DNP requirement of 1,000 post-baccalaureate clinical practice hours.

Plan of Study

After admission to the University and acceptance into the program, students will work with the Program Coordinator to develop an individualized Plan of Study (POS). The POS is based on the student's admission status (full-time or part-time), program pathway (BSN–DNP or Post-Graduate DNP), specialty track for BSN–DNP students, and any clinical hour requirements for post-graduate students. This individualized plan outlines the sequence of

courses and clinical experiences required for successful progression through the program. Standard Full time & Part time plans of study are available on the GCSU website within the pages for the DNP program.

Once the initial POS is signed, the student may not make changes to admission status (full-time vs part-time), specialty track, or course sequence without first discussing it with the assigned program coordinator and signing an updated POS. If space is available, students in the full-time program may elect to move to the part-time program after meeting with their advisor and requesting this change. Because of course sequencing, students in the part-time program cannot move to the full-time program.

Once the plan of study is on file, students should register for courses as early as possible. Registration is available by logging into your mygcsu.edu account and selecting the PAWS tile. See the [Academic Calendar](#) for registration dates and for

The Translational Research and Clinical Project

Healthcare systems face ongoing challenges that require transformation in care delivery, quality, and outcomes. Nurses are expected to play a significant role in addressing these challenges through leadership, scholarship, and collaboration. Doctoral education in nursing must therefore prepare graduates to apply evidence, lead practice improvement, and work effectively with healthcare teams to advance clinical practice (AACN Essentials, 2021). As a result, students completing a practice doctorate in nursing are required to complete a scholarly project focused on improving clinical practice, ideally in collaboration with practice partners.

Clinical doctoral degrees are distinguished by completion of a Translational Research and Clinical Project, which demonstrates the student's ability to synthesize and apply knowledge gained throughout the program. The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Translational Research and Clinical Project is a scholarly experience that applies principles of evidence-based practice and implementation science under the guidance of the student's Doctoral Committee. The project integrates the student's professional interests with the competencies developed in DNP coursework. Students identify a project topic early in the program and develop it progressively throughout their doctoral studies.

Unlike a traditional research dissertation, the DNP Translational Research and Clinical Project may take several forms depending on institutional requirements and the student's specialty area. Regardless of format, all projects use evidence-based practice as the underlying methodology and focus on improving clinical outcomes or addressing gaps between evidence and practice in healthcare settings or community health policy. Examples of acceptable project types are provided in the appendix.

Key elements of the Translational Research and Clinical Project include:

1. Identification of a practice problem

2. Search, analysis, and synthesis of relevant literature and evidence

3. Translation of evidence to develop a strategy or intervention

4. Development of an implementation plan and implementation when feasible

5. Evaluation of outcomes, processes, and experiences

6. Additional elements as determined by faculty and the doctoral committee

The **DNP Project Toolkit** provides students with structured guidance and resources to support the successful development, implementation, and completion of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Translational Research and Clinical Project. The toolkit outlines expectations, timelines, required forms, and key milestones associated with the project process. It is designed to assist students in navigating each phase of the project, including topic selection, proposal development, implementation, evaluation, and final dissemination. The toolkit also clarifies the roles of the student, faculty advisor, and doctoral committee to ensure alignment with program requirements and the AACN Essentials (2021) for doctoral nursing education. Students should use the toolkit throughout the program as a reference to guide project planning, documentation, and completion.

Graduate Policies and Procedures

Orientation and Attendance

New graduate students are encouraged to attend the Georgia College and State University orientation, which provides an overview of college resources and student support services. In addition, all students are required to participate in the in-person and online School of Nursing and Graduate Program orientation Policy #3002. This required orientation provides essential information related to program expectations, policies, technology requirements, and academic progression. Full participation in the School of Nursing graduate orientation and immersion experience is mandatory for all students, and the date/time of the orientation will be included on the acceptance/welcome letter. Students unable to attend should contact the Graduate Assistant Director for instructions.

Class Scheduling and Attendance

The learning environment includes a combination of live online (synchronous) class meetings and asynchronous learning activities.

Synchronous online classes are typically held on Thursdays, as outlined in the Course Schedule in PAWS, while asynchronous activities are completed independently according to course deadlines. On-campus clinical or laboratory experiences may occur on days other than Thursday, depending on the course. These dates are generally communicated well in advance to allow for student planning. Some Nurse Educator and Simulation Certificate courses are offered exclusively on Fridays.

Synchronous online classes are conducted using online platforms such as WebEx, Zoom, or Microsoft Teams. Training on the selected platform will be provided during immersion. Students must have access to a computer that meets program technology requirements, reliable internet service, and a headset with a microphone. Students are expected to attend synchronous classes using a computer rather than a phone or tablet, and participate in an environment conducive to learning Policy #3003

Students are responsible for closely following their course calendars and schedules. Missing scheduled classes, labs, or clinical experiences may result in grade penalties and could affect progression in the graduate program (Policy #3003). Students with excessive absences or tardiness will be counseled individually.

In the event of an absence from a synchronous class, students should:

1. Notify the nursing faculty member before class if they expect to be absent due to personal or family illness, death of a relative/close friend, or for participation in approved co-curricular activities.

2. Arrange with the nursing faculty member for missed assignments in accordance with the guidelines found in the individual course syllabi or latest student exam policy. Students may or may not be given an alternate form of the examination or class. (please see testing policy #3000).

3. Understand that many graduate courses specify a percentage of course grade for class participation. Students cannot participate if absent

or late; consequently, their grades will
be adversely affected by absence or tardiness.

Academic Advising/Mentoring

The purpose of advising in the graduate nursing program is to assist graduate nursing students to be successful in their programs of study. Academic advising is a shared responsibility between students, faculty, and staff. Each graduate student will be assigned a Faculty Advisor upon admission to the program.

If you are unsure who your academic advisor is, you can locate that information by logging into your my.gcsu.edu and selecting the PAWS tab. Once in PAWS, select the Student Services tab at the top of the screen. Here you will be able to view your academic information, including your advisor's name.

Appointments (virtual or in person) with academic advisors are encouraged to discuss coursework, programs of study, and opportunities for clinical placement and to release advisor holds for registering for classes.

Specific Aims of Advising

1. Students will receive effective advising, consistent with GCSU, College of Health Sciences, and School of Nursing Guidelines.

2. Students will actively participate in the advising process.

3. Successful & timely completion of a program of study.

Advisor Responsibilities

Graduate students can expect their advisors to:

1. Understand and effectively communicate the University policies and procedures.

2. Provide information about strategies for utilizing available campus resources and services.

3. Monitor and accurately document the advisee's progress toward meeting curricular goals.

4. Maintain confidentiality.

5. Be accessible via posted office hours, scheduled virtual appointments, email, and/or telephone during regular business hours.

Advisee Responsibilities

The advisees are ultimately responsible for their educational success and are expected to:

1. Participate in mandatory graduate orientation.

2. Read the University Catalog and Graduate Handbook.

3. Schedule regular appointments or make regular contact with their academic advisor.

4. Complete Portfolio Requirements

5. Make use of campus services and resources to enhance their personal and academic success.

6. Be prepared for each advisement meeting with questions and discussion points.

7. Accept responsibility for their own decisions.

8. Respond to all university emails within 48 business hours

ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses

All professional nurses are expected to provide ethical care. All students should review the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses.

Georgia Registered Professional Nurse Practice Act

Graduate nursing students are to comply with Georgia Board of Nursing Rule 410-10-.01, Standards of Practice for Registered Professional Nurses. In addition, graduate nursing students shall understand the definition and consequences of unprofessional conduct and practice as outlined in Georgia Board of Nursing Rule 410-10-.03. Professional behavior is expected in all areas of their lives: academic, work, and personal. The professional standards expected of nurses translate to the use of social media. Students who fail to maintain an unencumbered license in their state because of unprofessional conduct will be automatically withdrawn from the graduate program.

University Policies

The School of Nursing (SON) follows the policies and procedures outlined in the University Graduate Catalog. This includes but is not limited to grievances, appeals,

and petitions; transfer and transient credit; graduation requirements, dress code; and the student code of conduct.

Transfer and Transient Credit

Transfer credit applied toward the graduate or post-graduate degree requirements from another ACEN or CCNE-accredited school may be possible. Contact the specific program Coordinator to inquire. In addition, consult the [University Graduate Catalog](#) for policies related to transfer credit. Students may transfer a maximum of 9 credit hours. Students may take classes at another University as transient students. Students should contact their academic advisor for more information.

Grievances, Appeals, and Petitions

The School of Nursing (SON) follows the policies and procedures outlined in the University Graduate Catalog regarding academic and non-academic grievances and appeals. These can be found in the Graduate Catalog under [Grievance and Appeals](#)

Student Code of Academic Conduct

Graduate students are expected to comply with all aspects of the Georgia College [Student Code of Academic Conduct](#) Policy and should understand the definition and consequences of [Academic Dishonesty](#) including the use of copyrighted materials. Additional information is located in the [University System of Georgia Copyright Policy](#).

Health Insurance and Waiver
The Georgia Board of Regents requires all nursing students to obtain student health insurance. The fee for this service is added to tuition each fall & spring unless a waiver is completed.

Graduate students who already have health insurance may complete a waiver from the USG Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP). Information about this will be distributed by the GCSU Business Office each fall and spring semester. Questions regarding the student health insurance policy and the waiver procedure should be directed to the Business Office (478-445-5254; email businessoffice@gcsu.edu.)

Readmission of Graduate Students

The School of Nursing (SON) follows the policies and procedures outlined in the University Graduate Catalog regarding [readmission of graduate students](#).

Religious Observance Policy

The School of Nursing (SON) follows the policies and procedures outlined in the catalog regarding the [observance of religious holidays](#). Students who miss a class in

observance of a religious holiday or event are required to notify each instructor with a Religious Observance Faculty Notification Form (found on the policy website) within the first week of class on the semester in which the observance occurs and to make up any missed coursework.

Assistance for Student Needs Related to Disability

If you have a disability as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, you may be eligible to receive accommodations to assist in programmatic and physical accessibility. The Student Disability Resource Center can assist you in formulating a reasonable accommodation plan and in providing support in developing appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to all GCSU programs and facilities. Course requirements will not be waived, but accommodations may assist you in meeting the requirements. For documentation requirements and more information, we recommend you contact the Student Disability Resource Center in Russell Library 109 at 478-445-5931.

Student Mental Health

To best meet the needs of students and their mental health, the University System of Georgia (USG) and Georgia College provide 24/7 counseling through GCSU Counseling and Psychiatry Services (833-855-0085) alongside on-campus Counseling Services (478-445-5331). Link to Counseling Services Page: Counseling Services

Electronic Recording Policy

Electronic video and/or audio recording is not permitted during any class unless the student obtains permission from the instructor and every student present. If permission is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited. Violation of this policy is grounds for removal from the class and referral for disciplinary action. Students granted specific electronic recording accommodations from Disability Services do not require special permission; however, the instructor must be notified. Any distribution is prohibited.

General Graduation Requirements

The School of Nursing (SON) follows the policies and procedures outlined in the University Graduate Catalog regarding graduation requirements. Questions about graduation may be directed to the student's academic advisor or the Office of the Registrar.

The graduate student is expected to adhere to the School of Nursing Policies and Procedures while in the learning environment.

Individual Learning Contracts may be implemented to support students in completing their Program of Study in a timely and successful manner when concerns arise. These contracts are considered official program documents, and failure to meet the outlined course or clinical expectations may impact student progression or result in dismissal from the program.

School of Nursing Policies & Procedures

Campus Laboratory Policy & Guidelines (Appendix 1001A – Lab Rules): Policy #1001

This policy supports safety and professional practice in campus laboratory activities.

GCSU Dress Code Policy: Policy #1002

The purpose of this policy is to outline undergraduate and graduate expectations related to the dress code.

Standard & Transmission-Based Precautions: Policy #1003

This policy provides guidelines for the prevention of pathogen transmission in the laboratory and clinical settings. Guidelines for education and post-exposure treatment are also included.

Student Accident/Injury: Policy #1004

This policy provides information and guidance to faculty and students on what to do when injury or exposure occurs. A School of Nursing incident/injury report is to be completed by the student and faculty member as soon as possible after the incident. The faculty member will notify the Director of the School of Nursing (478.445.5122) as soon as possible. The clinical agency may request that an incident report be completed there as well.
Georgia College & State University (GCSU), The College of Health Sciences, and the School of Nursing assume no responsibility for the risks or the costs because of student exposure or injury.

Student with Chemical Impairment: Policy #1005

This policy provides guidance for faculty and students related to suspected chemical impairment.

Graduate Online Testing: [Policy #3000](#)

This policy provides information and guidelines to faculty and students regarding testing in the program.

Graduate Faculty Testing: [Policy #5012](#)

This policy provides guidance to faculty regarding exam administration, test review, and exam absences.

[Graduate Student Testing](#) Policy # 3006 policy provides students with exam administration, test review, and exam absence information.

Admission, Progression, and Dismissal: [Policy #3001](#)

This policy provides faculty and student guidance regarding the application, admission, advising, progression, re-entry, and dismissal guidelines.

Student Orientation & Onboarding: [Policy #3002](#)

The purpose of this policy is to guide the onboarding process for new graduate students. Orientation will be held prior to the first semester of the program.
The entire onboarding experience is **required** for all graduate students. Students will be provided with dates and instructions once they are accepted to a graduate cohort. This policy provides general guidelines for students and faculty related to courses and clinical experiences.

Students must meet any clinical agency requirements and maintain professional liability insurance throughout the GCSU graduate program. Graduate students must hold an unencumbered license in
the state where they will complete their clinical experience. Additional criminal background checks and urine drug screens may be required by some clinical agencies. The student and clinical agency will arrange for the required screening per protocols.

Clinical hours associated with the DNP project and other precepted clinical hours earned will be documented in the electronic documentation management system. Students are expected to log hours regularly and follow the specified clinical guidelines
provided. Please see the information under the
DNP Toolkit for additional information. Please see the APRN and non-APRN clinical guidelines for any questions.

Graduate Course and Clinical Guidelines: [Policy # 3003](#)

The purpose of this policy is to provide general guidelines for students and faculty related to the course and clinical experiences including unsatisfactory behaviors. This policy complements other SON policies that address related areas.

APRN Graduate Student Safety Policy: Policy #3005

The purpose of this policy is to provide APRN students with guidelines regarding safety issues during clinical rotations.

Graduate Student Malpractice Policy: 3007 The purpose of this policy is to guide students regarding malpractice insurance requirements. As required by our clinical affiliates, all graduate students are required to maintain student-specific malpractice insurance coverage as a condition of enrollment.

Technology Requirements and Resources

A list of Student Technology Resources including computer recommendations, software downloads, and Microsoft Teams information is provided. For questions regarding minimum technology requirements for laptop and desktop computers, as recommended by GCSU, please contact SERVE at 478-445-SERV (7378) or serve@gcsu.edu.

Computer software can be purchased with significant discounts at Software Resource & Services because of a University System of Georgia contract. Approved software can be purchased online and postal mailed to the student's home. Also, students can download Microsoft Office 365 for free through my.gcsu.edu and get 7GB of storage for use while they are students at GCSU.

Laptop computers, iPods, iPads, digital cameras, and other resources are available through the GC Library and Information Technology Center (LITC). Poster printing services are also available through library services. Printing costs per square inch are payable through the pay-for-print system with a Bobcat car. ⬚It is available to both students and faculty⬚. A standard 36x48 poster would have an average cost of $34.56. Print time varies with size but may take 30-45 minutes.

The ***D2L Learning Management System*** is used to teach online portions of graduate courses. All courses use the D2L learning management system as a support tool and faculty expect that graduate students are computer-literate. Training for using this system will be provided during immersion orientation. Additional assistance can be accessed by calling the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) @ (478) 445-2520.

Beginning when the student is accepted to the program, **all communication between GCSU and the student will be managed with the student's campus email address or through the learning platform**. Campus email can be accessed by logging into my.gcsu.edu with your username and password. Course email can be accessed through Georgia View, also through my.gcsu.edu with email should be directed to the SERVE Help Desk at 478-445-7378 or a serve@gcsu.edu.

GCSU Graduate Writing Guidelines and Resources

Students enrolled in graduate programs at the Georgia College & State University School of Nursing are responsible for ensuring that assignments and major papers
meet the formatting requirements of the program of study.
The GCSU School of Nursing has adopted the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition (referred to as the APA
Manual) Professional Version as the official guide for the preparation of written work within all programs. This guide was developed to help students prepare written work in compliance with the guidelines. This resource will also guide
the student in adapting the guidelines to meet specific School of Nursing requirements.

General Criteria

Because written assignments reflect the student's knowledge of content, as well as professional communication skills, they should be prepared with care. The
following general guidelines should be followed in addition to any course-specific criteria.

1. Typewritten in Microsoft Word and saved as a .doc or .docx document. It is the student's responsibility to seek help using Microsoft Office software.

2. Contain appropriate resources that are of high quality.

a. The most current information (generally written within 3-5 years).

b. Information should be from peer-reviewed resources.

c. Seminal (important & influential) works should take precedence in certain situations.

d. Primary sources -the author who did the research was the person who authored the article – are preferred.

e. Secondary sources -the author refers to an article written by another person – may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

3. Written in accordance with the latest APA Manual guidelines unless otherwise specified by faculty. Purchase of the APA
manual is required for all graduate students.

4. Composed using correct sentences and paragraph structure.

5. Written using correct grammar and spelling.

6. Presented in a professional manner.

7. Prepared according to criteria specified in the course requirements and
The GCSU Graduate Writing Manual Guidelines.

Turnitin Plagiarism and Artificial Intelligence Detection Software

Faculty reserve the right to use plagiarism and artificial intelligence (AI) detection software. This software is built into the learning management system, and students should assume it will be active for all assignments. The School of Nursing prohibits students from using other individuals' work or ideas and passing them off as their own. Similarly, using AI to compose an assignment circumvents the intended learning process. All resources should be appropriately paraphrased and cited to avoid a charge of plagiarism. If plagiarism is detected, it is punishable by receipt of a grade of 0 for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, or possible expulsion from the university.

If the use of AI is detected, students may be required to resubmit assignments that do not indicate the use of AI. Paid versions of Grammarly and/or other writing software uses AI and may result in content being flagged as plagiarism. See the above link to the University Policy titled "Student Code of Academic Conduct."

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is a free service available to all members of the university community. They provide both synchronous and asynchronous assistance and tutoring for graduate students. A Graduate Assistant is available to assist DNP students with individual writing assignments. Information about contacting the Graduate Assistant will be provided at the orientation/immersion.

Graduate Library Services

Russell Library has dedicated research librarians ready to assist our students. Services provided include:

- One-on-one research assistance

- An overview of the library source

- Literature review instruction

- Citation assistance (primary and secondary sources etc.)

The research librarians are available by phone 478.445.0989 or email [jolene.cole@gcsu.edujolene.cole@gcsu.edu](mailto:jolene.cole@gcsu.edu)

Galileo Digital Library

GALILEO is an online library portal that allows GCSU students and faculty access to subscription-only information that is not available through free search engines or Web directories. You can access GALILEO databases with your my.gcsu.edu credentials through the Georgia View learning platform or directly through [GALILEO](). Some items or databases may prompt you for a GALILEO password or university sign-on access.

EndNote/Personal Bibliographic Software

Students are expected to use the most current personal bibliographic manager supplied by the university to retrieve citation information from digital libraries and to cite references in scholarly papers. Georgia College provides free access to EndNote personal bibliographic software. The software license allows students to [download EndNote]() to a flash drive or laptop and to install the software on students' personal computers. The software is compatible with Windows and Mac operating systems. Students are encouraged to download the software during Orientation/Immersion and will receive software training. The EndNote website provides additional [tutorials]() and [support]().

Study Abroad and Nursing International Exchange Opportunities

The College of Health Sciences has international exchange agreements with several universities. Graduate students in good standing within the University may apply for an

international exchange experience during their academic program. Academic requirements and schedules are negotiated between graduate course faculty at GCSU and the respective faculty abroad. Further information can be found on the international exchange possibilities, please visit the [GC International Exchange](#) website.

Multiple study-abroad activities are also available through the School of Nursing. For further information on the study abroad opportunities, please contact your academic advisor.

Scholarships

GCSU General information concerning scholarships, awards, prizes, and grants may be obtained from the scholarship committee. Contact the [GC Financial Aid Office](#) at 478.445.5149.

Georgia Nurses Foundation, Inc.

The [Georgia Nurses Foundations](#) offers [scholarships](#) and awards on an annual basis.

Georgia Association for Nursing Education (GANE)

GANE offers the Spillman-Bischoff scholarship for graduate nursing students. Visit their [website](#) for more information.

Theta Tau Nursing Scholarship

Sigma awards the Helene Fuld Trust Scholarship annually. See the [website](#) for more information.

Graduate Research Travel Grant

Designed to support the costs associated with the presentation of their original scholarship at professional academic conferences, the [Graduate Research Grant](#) is available in the fall and spring of each year. Deadlines are October 15 and February 15 respectively.

Graduate Assistant Traineeship

A limited number of [graduate assistantships](#) are offered within the School of Nursing. These provide graduate students with an opportunity to work directly in their program of study in exchange for a tuition and fee waiver, along with a monthly stipend.

Graduate Awards & Honors

Outstanding DNP Student

This annual student award (Spring Semester) recognizes outstanding DNP students for excellence in clinical performance, community service or service learning, and scholarly activities.

Nominations submitted by faculty or peers should clearly describe the student's achievements in the following areas:

- involvement in national or local nursing organizations,

- engagement in university or program activities,

- participation in community service or service-learning initiatives in nursing,

- development of an evidence-based practice project in the student's area of expertise that positively impacts vulnerable or at-risk populations.

The student must be in good academic standing, in the final semester of their Program of Study, and not on academic probation to be eligible. More than one student may be selected at the discretion of the program coordinator. Nominated students will be reviewed by the program coordinator and the Graduate Committee for final selection. The deadline for submission of nominations is **February 1st**.

Outstanding MSN Student

This annual student award (Spring Semester) recognizes outstanding MSN students for excellence in clinical performance, community service or service learning, and scholarly engagement. Students are encouraged to develop a portfolio that highlights their growth as a master's-prepared nurse.

Nominations submitted by self, faculty, or peers should clearly describe the student's achievements in the following areas:

- participation in national or local nursing organizations related to their specialty area,

- engagement in university or program activities,

- contributions to community service or volunteer work in nursing,

- development or application of evidence-based practice relevant to their area of study.

The student must be in good academic standing and actively enrolled in the final semester of their Program of Study to be eligible. More than one student may be selected at the discretion of the program coordinator. Nominated students will be reviewed by the program coordinator and the Graduate Committee for final selection. The deadline for submission of nominations is **February 1st**.

Participation in the University Community

University-Level Committees

Graduate students are invited to serve on several committees at the University level to provide the unique perspective of the graduate nursing student to the group's work. If you have an interest in serving on a university-level committee,
please contact the Interim Director of Nursing programs at jennifer.goldsberry@gcsu.edu

School of Nursing Committees

Several standing and ad hoc committees exist to enable much of the work of the College of Health Sciences and the Nursing Program. If you are interested in serving on
the Nursing Faculty Organization (NFO),
please contact the Interim Director of Nursing at jennifer.goldsberry@gcsu.edu.

Each cohort should work with their concentration coordinator to select a cohort representative. The representative's role is to communicate updates, concerns, and overall cohort status to the Graduate Committee.

If you are interested in serving in this role, please inform both your cohort members and your program coordinator

Student representatives will be excluded during any admission/progression deliberations.

** *Ad Hoc committees may be established by any standing committee or the Director and continue to function until their assignment is complete*.

 Appendix

Student Handbook Receipt

I have read the Georgia College Graduate Student Handbook and agree to adhere to the policies stated herein.

- Please acknowledge Handbook Receipt in Project Concert under required clinical documents.