



POST – GRADUATE NURSING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

**Georgia College & State University
School of Nursing**

**Family Nurse Practitioner
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner
Nurse Educator**

Updated Summer 2022

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Welcome to the Post-Graduate Nursing Certificate Program

Welcome to the Georgia College & State University, the College of Health Sciences, and the School of Nursing. At Georgia College, tomorrow's nurses are educated as if lives depend on it! Students are uniquely prepared for nursing through liberal arts integration in 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 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 -

Purpose of the Post Graduate Certificate Handbook

This handbook, prepared for the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) students admitted to the program with concentrations in Family Nurse Practitioner, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Women's Health Nurse Practitioner, and Nurse Educator- provides specific information about nursing that supplements – but does not replace – the University's Graduate Catalog. You are expected to read this handbook, abide by the policies, and be directed by its many features to help you be successful in your MSN journey. Failure to read these sources will not excuse students from abiding by policies and procedures described in them. As part of your orientation to the MSN program you will be required to take a validation exam that indicates your receipt, review, and intent to follow the policies in this 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

The MSN 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 currently holds ACME Pre-accreditation status. Full accreditation will be pursued following graduation of the first cohort of students. 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 GC School of Nursing aspires to be recognized as a national leader in nursing education. GC 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 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, 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 the human experience. The 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 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 integration of theoretical knowledge and guided clinical practice.*

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

Person

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.

Approved NFO, last updated 4/4/2011

MSN Program Outcomes with Relationship to Program Concepts

(Approved by Graduate Committee: January 2019)

- 1. Integrate liberal arts foundation with scholarly inquiry and client values as a basis for problem solving.**
Essential II (Leadership) and III (Quality/Safety)
NONPF Leadership Competencies and Quality Competencies
NLN 5 (Leadership)
- 2. Demonstrate leadership in the advanced specialty role through legal and ethical decision-making, accountability, and a commitment to quality improvement and safety.**
Essential V (Informatics)
NONPF Technology and Information Literacy Competencies
NLN 3 (Assessment and Evaluation)
- 3. Demonstrate informatics and healthcare technology competencies to enhance outcomes for clients and populations.**
Essential VI (Policy/Advocacy)
NONPF Policy Competencies and Ethics Competencies
NLN (Policy)
- 4. Advocate for ethical policies that promote access, equity, quality, and cost effectiveness.**
Essential VII (Collaboration) and VIII (Clinical Prevention/Population Health) NONPF Health Delivery Systems Competencies
- 5. Collaborate within nursing and inter-professional teams to improve client and population health.**
Essential IX (Master's Level Nursing Practice)
NONPF Independent Practice Competencies
NLN I (Facilitate Learning), II (Facilitate Learner Socialization and Development), VI (Curriculum)
- 6. Demonstrate the competencies associated with the graduate nursing specialty role.**

Programs of Study

After students are admitted to the University and accepted to the MSN program, the student will work with an MSN program coordinator to develop a program of study (POS). Post-Graduate student transcripts will be evaluated by the MSN Coordinator of the specialty area to which students are accepted to determine which MSN courses are required to meet certificate requirements. The POS will outline the courses required each semester.

GC School of Nursing currently offers five MSN Specialty Tracks, all of which are available as Post-Graduate Certificates. Below is a list of current offerings and the corresponding MSN coordinator.

- Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) – Dr. Krystal Canady. See Appendix A for the POS.
- Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) – Dr. Gail Godwin. See Appendix B for the POS.

- Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP) – Dr. Monica Ketchie. See Appendix C for the POS.
- Nurse Midwifery (NM) – Dr. Monica Ketchie. (See separate handbook)
- Nurse Educator (NE) – Dr. Debbie Greene. See Appendix D for the POS.

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 with the assigned program coordinator and signing an updated POS.

Academic Advising/Mentoring

The purpose of advising in the graduate nursing program is to assist the graduate nursing students to be successful in their programs of study. Academic advising is a shared responsibility between students, faculty and staff. Each MSN student is 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 [Unify account](#) and selecting the PAWS tile. 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 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 GC, College of Health Sciences, and School of Nursing Guidelines.
2. Students will actively participate in the advising process
3. Successful completion of 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 and 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.

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. Make use of campus services and resources to enhance your personal and academic success.
5. Be prepared for each advisement meeting with questions and discussion points.
6. Accept responsibility for own decisions.

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
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Practice for Registered Professional Nurses. In addition, graduate nursing students shall understand the definition and consequences of unprofessional conduct and practice as outline 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 that are expected of nurses translate to the use of social media as well. Students who through unprofessional conduct are unable to maintain an unencumbered license in their state of practice will be 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, and the student code of conduct.

Transfer and Transient Credit

Transfer credit applied toward MSN degree requirements from another ACEN or CCNE accredited school may be possible. Contact the Assistant Director of Graduate Programs 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](#).

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.

Graduate students who already have health insurance may complete a waiver from USG Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP) by completing a form found [HERE](#). 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.)

Nursing Policies

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

Campus Laboratory Policy & Guidelines: [Policy #1001](#)

The purpose of this policy is to support safety and professional practice in campus laboratory activities.

- Also see Policy Appendix 1001A – Lab Rules

GC Dress Code Policy: [Policy #1002](#)

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

Standard & Transmission-Based Precautions: [Policy #1003](#)

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the prevention of pathogen transmission in the laboratory and clinical setting. Guidelines for education and post-exposure treatment are also included.

Student Accident/Injury [Policy #1004](#)

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance to faculty and students regarding what to do when injury or exposure occurs.

- All students are required to carry personal health and medical insurance. Neither the University nor clinical agencies are liable for costs incurred if an injury or illness occurs because of clinical practice in the student role.
- Georgia College, the GC College of Health Sciences, and the School of Nursing assume no responsibility for the risks of exposure if the student chooses not to inform the appropriate faculty member or clinical preceptor and/or follow the Injury/Occurrence Policy.
- Also See Policy Appendix 1004A – Accident and Injury Form

Student with Chemical Impairment: [Policy #1005](#)

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for faculty and students related to suspected chemical impairment.

SON Approval Process for Special Projects: [Policy #1006](#)

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance regarding printing of resources using the GC&SU name and/or logos.

GC Sim Policy and Procedure Manual: [Policy #1010](#)

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance related to the Simulation and Translational Research Center and the Campus Skills Lab.

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

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to faculty and students regarding testing in the program.

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

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the student and faculty regarding exam administration, test review, and exam absences.

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

The purpose of this policy is to provide faculty and student guidance regarding the application, admission, advising, progression, re-entry, and dismissal guideline.

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

The purpose of this policy is to guide the onboarding process for new graduate students.

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

The purpose of this policy is to provide general guidelines for students and faculty related to course and clinical experiences.

- Click [HERE](#) for additional Class and Clinical Guidelines (class attendance, criteria for selection of preceptors, clinical hours, clinical requirements, Expectations of Clinical Preceptors).

APRN Graduate Student Safety: [Policy #3005](#)

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

- Click [HERE](#) for additional safe practice guidelines.

Synthesis Requirements

All MSN students are expected to demonstrate successful achievement of program outcomes through a comprehensive synthesis of skills and knowledge acquired through core and specialty courses. In addition, the Advance Practice RN student (FNP, PMHNP, WHNP) is expected to demonstrate that they are educationally prepared to assume responsibility and accountability for the assessment, diagnosis, and management of the patient, which includes health promotion and/or maintenance as well as the use and prescription of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions. The process of synthesis should be a scholarly experience that threads throughout the program and is finalized in the last semester. The MSN programs use two methods to demonstrate mastery of program outcomes. The Electronic Portfolio (all MSN students), and the Simulated Certification Exam (APRN only).

Electronic Portfolio Requirements (Portfolium)

Students will receive information on the program 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. **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.**

Exit Exam Requirements

The APRN students (FNP, PMHNP, WHNP) are required to successfully complete the Simulated Certification Exam on the first attempt with a score within the acceptable range (see course materials). Those students not passing the Simulated Certification Exam on the first attempt will be given the option of completing an Oral Examination or working with faculty in a remediation course that includes another simulated certification exam.

GC Graduate Writing Guidelines

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 Georgia College School of Nursing has adopted the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition (referred to as the APA Manual) as the official guide for preparation of written work within all programs. This guide has been developed to assist students in preparation of written work in compliance with the guidelines. This document will also guide the student in adapting the guidelines to meet specific School of Nursing requirements.

Criteria for Written Assignments

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 assistance with using the Microsoft Office software.)
2. Containing 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 wrote 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.
 - a. Purchase of the APA manual is required for all graduate students.
4. Composed using correct sentence 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 GC Graduate Writing Manual Guidelines.

Turnitin Plagiarism Detection Software

Faculty reserve the right to use plagiarism 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 individual's work or ideas and passing them off as their own. 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. See above link to the University Policy titled "Student Code of Academic Conduct."

Technology Requirements

If you have questions regarding minimum technology requirements for laptop and desktop computers, as recommended by GC, please contact the Serve Help Desk at 478.445.7378 or via email at serve@gcsu.edu.

Technology Resources

- **Laptop computers, iPods, iPads, digital cameras, and other resources** are available through GC Library and Information Technology Center (LITC).
- **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. Additionally, students can download Microsoft Office 365 for free through UNIFY and also get 7GB of storage for use while they are a student at GC.
- **Bibliographic software** GC provides free access to bibliographic software used to retrieve citation information from digital libraries and to cite references in scholarly papers. The software is compatible with Windows and Mac operating systems. Software can be downloaded from all GC campus sites at <http://software.gcsu.edu> . Contact SERVE if you need help in downloading the software from off campus locations (serve@gcsu.edu).

- The ***GALILEO Digital Library*** database is available for accessing peer reviewed resources. The password access to GALILEO changes every semester. Students can retrieve the password from [PAWS](#). From the Main Menu in PAW, click on the GALILEO link.
- The ***D2L Learning Management System*** is used to teach on-line portions of graduate courses. All courses use D2L learning management system as a support tool and faculty expect that graduate students are computer-literate.

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 scheduling are negotiated between graduate course faculty at GC and the respective faculty abroad. For further information on the international exchange possibilities, please visit the [GC International Exchange](#) website and consult Dr. Sallie Coke/sallie.coke@gcsu.edu.

Multiple study abroad activities are also available through the School of Nursing. Every fall, students are encouraged to participate in a study abroad to Honduras and every spring to Tanzania. Cost and academic credit vary depending on experience and course registration. For further information on the study abroad opportunities please contact Dr. Sallie Coke (sallie.coke@gcsu.edu) for Honduras, or Dr. Catherine Fowler (catherine.fowler@gcsu.edu) for Tanzania.

Scholarships

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 on an annual basis. See the [website](#) for more information.

Awards and Honors

Outstanding Graduate Student

The purpose of the award is to recognize an outstanding graduate student in the areas of clinical performance, community service or service learning, and scholarly activities. Students are encouraged to develop a portfolio which documents their development as a master's prepared nurse, emphasizing the following areas: involvement with national or local nursing organizations in their area of expertise, university involvement, community service in the area of nursing, and the development of an evidence based practice in their area of expertise.

The award is given each spring to ONE MSN and ONE POST-MSN student who is graduating.

1. Students whose graduate grade point average falls between a 3.50 and 4.00 will be notified that they are eligible to apply for this award by 3/15.
2. Eligible students will submit the following documents by 4/1:

- a. A cover letter addressing the criteria
 - b. A current curriculum vitae
 - c. At least one supporting letter from a preceptor
 - d. At least one supporting letter from a faculty member
 - e. Other relevant documents
3. The Graduate Committee will review applications and make recommendations no later than 4/15.
 4. One representative from each specialty will be recognized at the Nursing Graduation Celebration.

Participation in the University Community

University-Level Committees

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

**Student representatives will be excluded during 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.*

Information for Accessing Certification Applications

Family NP	American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) 8515 Georgia Avenue; Suite 400 Silver Spring, MD 20910 800.274.4ANA American Academy of Nurses Practitioners (AANP) Certification Program, Inc. P.O. Box 12926 Austin, TX 78711 512.637.0500 512.637.0540 (facsimile)
Psychiatric Mental Health NP	American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) 8515 Georgia Avenue; Suite 400 Silver Spring, MD 20910 800.274.4ANA
Women's Health NP	National Certification Corporation 676 N. Michigan Ave Suite 3600 Chicago, IL 60611
Nursing Education	Certified Nurse Educator (CNE) Examination National League for Nursing The Watergate 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20037 800-669-1656

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Georgia College School of Nursing

Exam Absence Form

Request must be submitted to the course lead within 72 hours of the missed exam. Faculty will review the form and determine if the absence is excused. Refer to policy #5---- Testing Policy.

Student's Name: _____

Date of Incident/Illness: _____

Course Name: _____

Description of the Incident/illness:

Printed Name and Contact Information of Responsible Professional (medical provider, judge, etc.)

Please attach proof of official documentation (police report, provider's statement, etc.)

Student Handbook Receipt

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

Student Name (Please Print):

Student Signature:

Student Signature Date:
