



 | NORTHWESTERN STATE

**Master of Science in Nursing
Post Master's Certificate
Handbook**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Program Goals.....	2
Beliefs and Values	2
MSN Program Objectives	3
Program Requirements	3
PMC Program Goals and Objectives	4
Academic Mentors and Advisors.....	4
Functional Role Concentrations	4
Nurse Practitioner	
Family Nurse Practitioner	5
Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner	5
Women’s Health Nurse practitioner	5
Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner	5
Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner	6
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner... ..	6
Education and Administration	
Adult-Gerontology Nursing	6
Maternal Child Nursing	6
Post Master’s Certificate	
PMC Family Nurse Practitioner.	7
PMC Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner... ..	7
PMC Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner	8
Curriculum Patterns	9
Course Descriptions.....	9
Admission to the Graduate School and Graduate Nursing Program.....	9
Graduate Record Examination	9
Graduate School Application Deadline	9
Regular Admission to Graduate Nursing Program.....	10
Admission for Post-Master’s Students	11
Admission To Clinical Sequence of Courses	11
Readmission To Clinical Sequence of Courses.....	12
Registration	12
Financial Assistance.....	13
Revalidation of Expired Credits	13
Transferred Credits	14
Progression.....	14
Non-Progression	15
Probation, Suspension, & Dismissal	16
Graduation Requirements	17
CONSAH Policies.....	18
Dress.....	18

Eligibility for Advanced Practice Licensure	17
Social Media	17
Drug Policy.....	19
University Policies	21
Adding or Dropping Courses	21
Access to Educational Records.....	22
Academic Honesty.....	22
Classroom Civility	23
Diversity.....	23
Title IX Statement.....	23
Social Media	24
Students with Disabilities	24
Sexual Harassment and Assault	24
Attendance	25
Student Complaints.....	26
Student Appeals	27
Smoking Policy.....	28
Statement on Mental Health and Wellness.....	29
Research of Human Subjects.....	30
Appendices	
Appendix A	
Additional Links and Resources.....	31
Appendix B	
Vision, Mission Statement, and Values.....	32
Appendix C	
Drug Policy.....	33
Appendix D	
CONSAH Organizational Chart.....	36
Appendix E	
CONSAH Internal Organizational Chart.....	37

**NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF NURSING
GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN NURSING
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING (MSN) PROGRAM

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program at Northwestern State University (NSU), College of Nursing and School of Allied Health in Shreveport (CONSAH), Louisiana provides learning opportunities for registered nurses to build upon baccalaureate nursing education, as well as experiential professional knowledge, attitudes and skills. The MSN program at NSU prepares registered nurses to function and excel in various advanced nursing roles. Graduates of the MSN program are educationally prepared to make significant contributions to the improvement of healthcare and to the advancement of nursing knowledge and practice. The MSN Program provides the student who holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing the opportunity to develop advanced knowledge, intellectual skills and clinical competence necessary for the role of the advanced practice nurse. The clinical concentrations of study (with major codes) include:

I. Nurse Practitioner (NP)

Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) (546N)
Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPCNP) (546P)
Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) (546C)
Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PCPNP) (546M)
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner cross the Lifespan (PMHNP) (546R)
Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP) (546H)

II. Education

Adult Gerontology Nursing (546K) (546U)
Maternal, Child, and Family Nursing (546D) (546W)

III. Administration

Adult-Gerontology Nursing (546K) (546T)
Maternal, Child, and Family Nursing (546D) (546V)

IV. Post Master's Certificates (PMC)

Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) (051)
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner cross the Lifespan (PMHNP) (053)
Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) (054)

The master's degree program in nursing and post-graduate APRN certificate programs at Northwestern State University of Louisiana are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791.

The Master's Program is offered online and in-class on the Shreveport Campus, CENLA Campus, and other outreach campuses. General requirements for the Master's Degree at Northwestern State University may be found in the current issue of the Northwestern State University Catalog found at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>.

The primary administrative offices of the College of Nursing are located at 1800 Line Avenue in Shreveport, LA. Another administrative office is located at the Rapides Regional Medical Center Campus in Alexandria, LA. All other university administrative offices and the graduate school are located in Natchitoches, LA. Additional resources and links are provided in Appendix A.

MSN PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the MSN program are to: (a) prepare graduates with knowledge, skills, and attitudes for advanced nursing practice as an educator, administrator, or nurse practitioner (b) prepare graduates to function and excel in various advanced nursing roles (c) prepare graduates to make significant contributions to the improvement of healthcare and to the advancement of nursing knowledge and practice (d) provide a foundation for doctoral study.

BELIEFS AND VALUES

The faculty of the Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing Program subscribe to and are guided by the mission of NSU and the mission and philosophy of the College of Nursing. The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program at Northwestern State University (NSU), College of Nursing and School of Allied Health (CONSAH) provides learning opportunities for registered nurses to build upon baccalaureate nursing education, as well as experiential professional knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The MSN Program prepares registered nurses to function and excel in various advanced nursing roles such as: nurse educator, nurse administrator, or nurse practitioner. The PMC program prepares master's prepared advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to sit for national certification for either the FNP, AGACNP, or PMHNP concentration. Graduates of the MSN Program and PMC programs are educationally prepared to make significant contributions to the improvement of healthcare and to the advancement of nursing knowledge and practice.

The master's prepared nurse is one whose expert practice demonstrates advanced skills and knowledge in the provision of health care through direct and indirect client care activities and in the scientific endeavors concerned with nursing. The MSN Program fosters the growth and development of the nurse's clinical skills and knowledge specific to his or her advanced practice concentration and role. By providing a societal, historical, and ethical perspective of professional nursing, the graduate level nurse is prepared to assume influential roles in the profession and within the healthcare system as a whole.

The theory and practice of nursing is fundamental to graduate nursing education. Students are provided with opportunities to critically examine and expand their knowledge of nursing

theory, and its application as a foundational component for advanced practice nursing. Additionally, the graduate level nurse is trained in the research process allowing for the evaluation and application of existing research. Furthermore, knowledge of scientific method will prepare the student to contribute to the body of evidence in nursing research.

Teaching-learning at the master's level in nursing education is facilitated through the utilization of collegial relationships which focus on the dialogue between teacher and learner. The learner is viewed as a unique individual who brings to the learning situation a concept of self which includes a cluster of understandings, skills, values and attitudes which have personal meaning; the learner's activities are motivated by a drive to develop and enhance this perceived self. Teaching-learning is an active process, requiring total involvement of both teacher and learner; it is a profoundly personal experience in which personal meaning is explored and discovered; and it is a social phenomenon, requiring dynamic interaction between teacher and learner. The most important function of the teacher is to facilitate the optimum conditions under which the learner is free to learn. Faculty members believe this concept of teaching-learning is conducive to the development of self-direction and a sense of personal autonomy, which provide motivation for continued lifelong learning.

The graduate faculty also adhere to the CONSAH values which are located in Appendix B.

MSN PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Integrate theories, knowledge, skills and findings from nursing science, scientific disciplines, and humanities to guide the delivery of culturally sensitive care to clients, families, and communities within the professional scope and standards of the advanced practice of nursing.
2. Demonstrate responsibility and accountability as a practitioner of advanced nursing and consumer advocate to affect relevant change that will improve the health of citizens at a local, state, and national level.
3. Utilize a scholarly inquiry process, grounded in evidence-based research, to become a producer and consumer of research evidence which contributes to the development and improvement of nursing theory, nursing practice and ultimately client and healthcare outcomes.
4. Analyze the effect of historical, cultural, economic, ethical, legal and political influence on nursing and health care delivery.
5. Manage resources within a health care delivery system through collaboration with other health care providers, communities, and clients.
6. Contribute to the continued professional development and improvement of self, client, community and healthcare delivery systems.

MSN PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Master of Science in Nursing Program requires a minimum of 39 to 44 semester credits. The student selects predetermined courses that will support his/her **functional role area** (education, administration, or nurse practitioner). Additionally, each functional role has a predetermined number of required clinical hours.

PMC PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the PMC program are to: (a) prepare graduates with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for advanced nursing practice as a nurse practitioner (b) prepare graduates to function and excel in the advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) role of nurse practitioner (NP) (c) prepare graduates to make significant contributions to the improvement of healthcare and to the advancement of nursing knowledge and practice (d) provide a foundation for doctoral study.

PMC PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Synthesize theories from nursing sciences and related disciplines to guide the design and implementation of culturally sensitive care to client, families, and communities within the respective professional scope and standard of advanced nursing practice.
2. Demonstrate responsibility and accountability as a practitioner of advanced nursing and consumer advocate to effect relevant change that will improve the health of citizens at a local, state and national level.
3. Utilize a scholarly inquiry process, grounded in evidence-based practice, to become a producer and consumer of research evidence which contributes to the development and improvement of nursing theory, nursing practice and ultimately client and healthcare outcomes.
4. Analyze the effect of historical, cultural, economic, ethical, legal and political influence on nursing and health care delivery.
5. Manage resources within a health care delivery system through collaboration with other health care providers, communities, and clients.
6. Contribute to the continued professional development and improvement of self, client, community and healthcare delivery systems.

ACADEMIC MENTORS AND ADVISORS

All graduate nursing students are assigned an academic mentor. The primary purpose of the academic mentor is to counsel students regarding the academic course load and to facilitate progression through the MSN Program. Academic mentors are also advisors; however, students may be advised by any advisor. Students are expected to make an appointment with an advisor prior to each semester for curriculum plan maintenance. The student is responsible for adhering to all graduate admission information in the *University Catalog* and for arranging advising with an advisor. Advising appointments can be made by calling (318) 677-3131. Every student should receive advising prior to registration.

FUNCTIONAL ROLE CONCENTRATIONS

The Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing Program at Northwestern State University is designed to accommodate flexibility for students in meeting degree requirements. Encouragement of collegial relationships between faculty and students is an important aspect

of the learning experience. University policy allows students up to six years to complete the degree requirements. However, with the rapid evolution of nursing and scientific knowledge and technology, nursing students are encouraged to complete the degree requirements in less time when possible.

Full-time students in all clinical areas, except the nurse practitioner concentrations, may complete the course of studies in four consecutive semesters with admission in the fall semester. The nurse practitioner specialties require five semesters for completion of all program requirements. Part-time study is available.

NURSE PRACTITIONER

The nurse practitioner clinical sequence has one functional role: Role of the Nurse Practitioner. The MSN program prepares the advanced practice registered nurse in the following NP concentrations: *Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)*, *Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PCPNP)*, *Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP)*, *Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner*, and *Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP)*, *Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Across the Lifespan (PMHNP)*.

Students who pursue this curriculum option will be required to complete courses in advanced assessment, advanced pharmacotherapeutics, and advanced pathophysiology. Nurse practitioner students will be required to complete MSN core courses, NP role courses, concentration specific NP clinical courses and a clinical practicum course in the final semester. Additionally, the student will be required to complete a family dynamics course and research paper-in-lieu-of-thesis (PILT). The nurse practitioner clinical sequence of studies requires a minimum of 42 credits (44 credits for PMHNP) and leads to the MSN degree.

Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)

Family Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Family Nurse Practitioner certification examination, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners' Family Nurse Practitioner certification examination, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in family nursing practice who can function in primary care settings with people of all ages.

Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PCPNP)

Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board Pediatric Nurse Practitioner certification examination. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in pediatric nursing practice who can function in primary care settings to care for children of all ages.

Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP)

Women's Health Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the National Certification Corporation (NCC) Women's Health Nurse Practitioner certification examination and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in women's health who can function in primary care

settings to provide comprehensive care to women.

Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPCNP)

Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner certification examination, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners' (AANP) certification exam, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses who can function in primary care settings to care for adults of all ages.

Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP)

Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Acute Care Nurse Practitioner certification examination, the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) certification exam, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses who can function in acute care settings to care for adults of all ages.

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Across the Lifespan (PMHNP)

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Across the Lifespan graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (Across the Lifespan) National Certification exam, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in psychiatric mental health practice who can function in various settings with people of all ages.

EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The MSN program offers two functional roles of education or administration with a clinical focus in *Adult-Gerontology Nursing* or *Maternal-Child Nursing*. Students who pursue this curriculum option will be required to complete a minimum of 39 credits that include MSN core and clinical courses that support the chosen functional role. Additionally, the student will be required to complete a research paper-in-lieu-of-thesis (PILT).

Adult-Gerontology Nursing

The clinical sequence in Adult-Gerontology Nursing prepares graduate nurses for the practice of advanced nursing, such as to function as educators in institutions of higher education (*education*) and as leaders in clinical nursing settings in nursing of adults (*administration*).

Maternal, Child, and Family Nursing

The clinical sequence in Maternal-Child Nursing prepares graduate nurses for the practice of advanced nursing, such as to function as teachers in institutions of higher education (*education*) and as leaders in clinical nursing settings for childbearing women and their families (*administration*).

POST MASTER'S CERTIFICATE FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER

The Post Master's Certificate in Family Nurse Practitioner (PMC FNP) curriculum provides master's prepared registered nurses (RNs) the didactic and clinical education necessary to become family nurse practitioners (FNPs). The objectives of this certificate program are to prepare the certificate holder to 1) apply advanced practice skills, abilities and knowledge to provide holistic family centered primary health care to populations across the lifespan in a variety of ambulatory care settings as an advanced practice nurse specializing in family nursing, 2) provide culturally competent, population-based primary care for minor acute and chronic conditions for the family unit, and 3) demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities to sit for an FNP Certification Examination in order to apply for a state licensure as an APRN, practicing as board certified FNP with the ability to attain prescriptive authority.

The curriculum plan for each PMC FNP student is based on the MSN FNP curriculum pattern, but will vary depending upon course work already completed during the student's prior graduate program. Each student's formal graduate transcript is reviewed, and a gap analysis is completed to compare previous course work and supervised clinical experiences to the requirements of the MSN FNP curriculum pattern. Courses on the MSN FNP curriculum pattern may be waived if the required course or its equivalent has already been completed. Depending on the course and clinical requirements, the PMC FNP may be obtained in one to five semesters.

POST MASTER'S CERTIFICATE PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

The Post Master's Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMC PMHNP) provides the didactic and clinical education necessary to master's prepared registered nurses (RNs) to become psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners. This program prepares the certificate holder to 1) apply advanced practice skills, abilities and knowledge to promote optimal mental health across the lifespan; 2) apply advanced practice knowledge on differential diagnosis and disease management in patients across the lifespan who are at risk for, or have psychiatric/mental health illness, including the use and prescription of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions; 3) provide culturally competent, population-based psychotherapeutic treatment modalities, and 4) demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities to sit for a PMHNP National Certification Examination.

The curriculum plan for each PMC PMHNP student is based on the MSN PMHNP curriculum pattern but will vary depending upon course work already completed during the student's prior graduate program. Each student's formal graduate transcript is reviewed, and a gap analysis is completed to compare previous course work and supervised clinical experiences to the requirements of the MSN PMHNP curriculum pattern. Courses on the MSN PMHNP curriculum pattern may be waived if the required course or its equivalent has already been completed. Depending on the course and clinical requirements, the PMC PMHNP can be obtained in as little as four semesters.

POST MASTER'S CERTIFICATE ADULT GERONTOLOGY ACUTE CARE NURSE PRACTITIONER

The Post Master's Certificate in Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (PMC AGACNP) provides the didactic and clinical education necessary to master's prepared registered nurses (RNs) to become adult gerontology acute care health nurse practitioners. This program prepares the certificate holder to 1) apply advanced practice skills, abilities and knowledge to promote optimal acute care to adults of all ages; 2) apply advanced practice knowledge on differential diagnosis and disease management in adults with acute disease processes or at risk for acute care illnesses, including the use and prescription of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions; 3) provide culturally competent, population-based treatment modalities, and 4) demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities to sit for a ACAGNP National Certification Examination.

The curriculum plan for each PMC AGACNP student is based on the MSN AGACNP curriculum pattern but will vary depending upon course work already completed during the student's prior graduate program. Each student's formal graduate transcript is reviewed, and a gap analysis is completed to compare previous course work and supervised clinical experiences to the requirements of the MSN AGACNP curriculum pattern. Courses on the MSN AGACNP curriculum pattern may be waived if the required course or its equivalent has already been completed. Depending on the course and clinical requirements, the PMC AGACNP may be obtained in as little as four semesters.

CURRICULUM PATTERNS

Curriculum Patterns for the MSN concentrations are posted on the MSN Website at <https://www.nsula.edu/academics/nursing-allied-health/nursing-program/> and in the *Northwestern State University Catalog* found at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>. Consult an academic advisor for specific information regarding offerings of courses each semester.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Students are directed to the current *Northwestern State University Catalog* found at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/> for specific course descriptions for the MSN program.

ADMISSION TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AND THE GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM

Admission to the MSN Program begins with admission to NSU's Graduate School. **Please note that admission to the Graduate School does not imply admission to the MSN Nurse Practitioner clinical programs.** The application can be found at Northwestern State University's Graduate School <https://graduateschool.nsula.edu/>.

GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATION

Students do not need to take the GRE if their undergraduate GPA is 2.5 or higher OR if GPA in last 60 hours is 2.75 or higher. Students who do not meet at least one of these criteria must obtain a GRE score of 284 combined verbal and quantitative score. Students can schedule the GRE through designated professional testing centers. Applications and information may be obtained from the College of Nursing Student Services Office, the CENLA nursing office, or from the Testing Center at Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana. The mailing address for the GRE is GRE-ETS, P.O. Box 6004, Princeton, NJ 08541-6004. The GRE Web site is <http://www.ets.org/gre/>.

GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION DEADLINE

The application deadline for The Graduate School is **June 1st**. The application can be found at Northwestern State University's Graduate School <https://graduateschool.nsula.edu/>. Applications must be submitted along with the application fee to Northwestern State University, Office of Admissions in Natchitoches, Louisiana. The application may also be completed online using a credit card for the fee. If the student has not been enrolled in the previous year, a new application with application fee must be submitted to Northwestern State University Office of Admissions at Natchitoches.

Graduate students are responsible for reading and following the regulations and requirements of the Graduate School at Northwestern State University. Prior to enrollment in MSN courses, all Graduate School requirements must be met and verified. A student may be admitted by the Graduate School for graduate study; however, as stated above, admission into the Graduate

School does not imply admission into the MSN program. Students may take up to 9 hours as a non-degree seeking student; however, graduate nursing courses must be approved by the MSN/PMC Program Director.

After the admission process is initiated, a major professor form with designation of degree seeking status is completed for each student. The student should receive a copy of the major professor form after the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research has approved the form and the student's admission into the graduate program.

The requirements for eligibility for admission to the Graduate School and to the Master of Science in Nursing program are found in the current *University Catalog* (see below).

Regular Admission to the College of Nursing for MSN Students

1. Bachelor's degree in nursing from an accredited college or university
2. Application on file prior to registration
3. Official transcripts on file prior to registration
4. An undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale OR GPA of 2.75 in last 60 hours pursued OR GRE of 284 combined verbal and quantitative score.
5. Current unencumbered, unrestricted Louisiana RN license or compact license that includes Louisiana.

Additionally, all student in a nurse practitioner concentration must make a B or better in NURG 5280: Advanced Human Physiology and Pathology and NURG 5710: Pharmacotherapeutics. If the student makes less than a B in either or both courses, the student must repeat the courses at the next offering and make a B or better.

Calculation of the last 60 undergraduate credit hours pursued will not include courses with a grade of "P." If the student's undergraduate GPA cannot be calculated due to "P"s, the student will be required to take the GRE and obtain a score of 284 combined verbal and quantitative score.

All students admitted into the MSN program must provide proof of current, unencumbered LA registered nurse licensure or compact licensure that includes Louisiana. If the MSN student is a nurse practitioner student or will be performing clinical learning in the state of Louisiana, proof of current, unencumbered registered nurse licensure in the state of Louisiana or compact licensure is required once the clinical courses begin.

ADMISSION FOR POST-MASTER'S GRADUATE STUDENTS

Post master's graduate students may pursue the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP), or Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) across the lifespan certificate. Post master's graduate student admission requirements are the same as admission requirements for all students, with exception of GRE Requirement. PMC students are not required to take the GRE.

1. Master's degree in nursing from an accredited college or University.
2. Application on file prior to registration.
3. Official transcripts on file prior to registration.
4. A graduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
5. Current unencumbered, unrestricted Louisiana RN license, compact license that includes Louisiana, or LA APRN license.

Proof of current, unencumbered registered nurse licensure in the state of Louisiana or compact licensure that includes Louisiana is required once the clinical courses begin.

ADMISSION TO CLINICAL SEQUENCE OF COURSES FOR MSN STUDENTS

Students may take nonclinical courses after acceptance in the College of Nursing Graduate Program; however, to begin the clinical sequence of courses, students must complete a clinical application. The clinical application can be found on the MSN website: :

<https://www.nsula.edu/academics/nursing-allied-health/nursing-program/>

The clinical application must be filled out completely and submitted per the instructions on the website. Students applying for clinical must be accepted to the Graduate School **and** the Graduate nursing program prior to application.

Admission to clinical sequence of courses is based upon a competitive, selective process. While the College of Nursing desires to accept all eligible students into the clinical sequence of courses for their chosen role and concentration, acceptance is based on qualified faculty and clinical site availability. Factors taken into consideration for the selection process include undergraduate GPA, numbers of graduate hours pursued at NSU, and years of experience as an RN. Factors for consideration into the PMHNP concentration may vary from other concentrations.

Clinical application deadline for MSN degree seeking students is June 1st-each academic year. Accepted students will begin the clinical sequence of courses the same Fall semester. Clinical hours must be obtained in Louisiana unless approved by the clinical coordinator.

ADMISSION TO CLINICAL SEQUENCE OF COURSES FOR PMC STUDENTS

Post master's certificate students applying for clinical courses must be accepted to the Graduate School **and** the Graduate nursing program prior to application for clinical. Students must complete the clinical application completely (found on the Graduate Nursing website) and

submit the application per the instructions on the website. Prior to taking courses at NSU, a completed GAP analysis should be discussed with the PMC student, so it is clear what course work is required.

Post master's certificate students will enter the clinical sequence at various semesters depending on previous course work and supervised clinical hours completed. The PMC student should apply for entry for the appropriate semester. For example, a PMC student who needs to take NURG 5700 Advanced Physical Assessment must apply by June 1st to start in the Fall. Because clinical acceptance is competitive, these PMC students will compete with the MSN degree seeking students for admission. If a PMC student will start in the Spring semester, or January, application must be made by June 1st prior to the Spring semester. These PMC students will compete with all other PMC students who are applying for the same concentration at that time. The application deadline is **June 1st of each academic year for entry into clinical courses.**

*** Clinical hours must be obtained in Louisiana unless approved by the clinical coordinator.**

READMISSION TO CLINICAL SEQUENCE OF COURSES

If students were unsuccessful in a clinical course, application for readmission for entry into clinical courses is required. It should be noted that readmission is on an individual basis. Students who have been unsuccessful twice in the same clinical course will not be readmitted. Students must reapply using the same clinical application (found on the Graduate Nursing Website). The readmission deadline is **June 1st of each academic year for entry into clinical courses.**

All admissions to the MSN or PMC programs are contingent upon verification of licensure, outcome of background check, and submission of health form.

REGISTRATION

Registration deadlines and other information is available prior to each semester at the Student Services Office on the Shreveport campus or Nursing office on the CENLA campus, and on-line on the University website under the Registrar's office at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>.

The Graduate nursing major Code is 546 for MSN degree seeking students. The graduate nursing major code for post master's students seeking a post master's certificate in Family Nurse Practitioner is 051; post master's certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner is 053; and post master's in Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner is 054. The graduate code for non-degree seeking graduate students is 500N. Each graduate nursing course begins with NURG. In addition, each graduate course number has a designated section.

Internet courses will contain an "I" such as 01I or etc. Each course section has a CRN number that is used for registration. Please see your advisor prior to registration each semester.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The MSN Program has professional traineeship funds available on a limited basis for students in need. To be eligible a student must:

1. Be a resident of the United States
2. Be a full-time student in the MSN Program in the clinical sequence of coursework
3. Have Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores on file.

The **Professional Traineeship Application Form** for the Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship grants may be obtained from the MSN/PMC Program Director, the MSN/PMC graduate secretary, or on-line. The awarding of these funds is contingent upon funding availability and is determined on a yearly basis. In special situations, the Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing program may request a Graduate Assistant. When available these positions are designated for graduate nursing student employment. The request for **Appointment for Graduate Assistant** is also available from the MSN/PMC Program Director, the graduate secretary, or on-line. For information concerning other funds available for graduate nursing students, contact the Student Financial Aid Office.

REVALIDATION OF EXPIRED CREDITS

In some circumstances, expired courses may be revalidated by examination or other approved documentation. The request to revalidate courses must be recommended by a graduate advisor/mentor and approved by the MSN/PMC Program Director and the Dean of the Graduate School. Courses will be considered for revalidation based on the following criteria:

1. Transferred credits MAY NOT be revalidated.
2. The examination must be a written form (test or papers), must measure the topics currently taught in the course and must be evaluated as if the student had just completed the course. The student's written examination paper must be filed in the Graduate School office.
3. Test construction and evaluation will be done by the instructor who is currently teaching the course or who has most recently taught the course.
4. Courses with a clinical component may not be revalidated.
5. Revalidation will be on a satisfactory-unsatisfactory basis. For grade-point average purposes, the initial grade will be utilized.
6. The student will be charged a fee for revalidation.

The Revalidation of Expired Course Form must be completed by the student then submitted to the graduate advisor, MSN/PMC Program Director, and the College Dean for approval. Once signatures have been obtained, the form is then submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School for final approval. The fees must be paid to the Bursar in Natchitoches prior to revalidation.

TRANSFERRED CREDITS

Semester hours earned at an institution accredited by a regional committee on colleges, or the equivalent, will be accepted at NSU with the following exceptions:

1. At least 2/3 of the credit hours for the degree must be taken in residence during the required time limit.
2. Transfer credit will not be accepted as credit for a course in which a failing grade was received at NSU.
3. The academic dean will determine how transferred credits may be applied to degree requirements.
4. Credits earned at a non-accredited institution will not be accepted at NSU until the student has demonstrated knowledge of the subject through tests or by other suitable means. This determination of acceptability will be made by the Registrar and the academic dean. If a student has earned credit for courses not usually accepted at NSU and feels that the content of the courses might be acceptable to NSU degree requirements, the courses will be reviewed by the Registrar and the academic dean.
5. Any student enrolled at NSU must secure the academic dean's permission **in advance** to take required course work at another institution.
6. The Graduate office will not accept transfer courses for graduate credit if those courses were taken at a college or university that does not grant graduate degrees.
7. A form is to be completed by the student and academic advisor. The form entitled ***Application for Transfer of Graduate Credit*** on the Graduate School website is to be completed in advance of taking the course with approval of the academic dean or advisor, or when requesting academic credit for a course previously completed. An official transcript, documenting successful completion of the course, must be submitted to the Graduate office. **Students must also submit a catalog description of the course and a course syllabus for evaluation** to the MSN/PMC Program Director.

***No more than 12 semester hours may be accepted as transfer toward degree requirements.**

PROGRESSION

Policies governing progression in the Graduate Studies and Research in Nursing Program for MSN and PMC students are:

1. All general requirements of Northwestern State University for progression toward the master's degree are met. See **Regular Admission to the College of Nursing for MSN Students** or **ADMISSION FOR POST-MASTER'S GRADUATE STUDENTS** in earlier section in this MSN/PMC Handbook.
2. Evidence of current unrestricted, unencumbered licensure as a registered nurse, or APRN if applicable to PMC students.

3. A grade of "B" or better is required in all role and clinical nursing courses for all concentrations. If the student is a nurse practitioner student, a grade of "B" must also be earned in NURG 5700 Methods of Clinical Nursing Assessment, NURG 5280 Advanced Human Physiology and Pathology, and NURG 5710 Pharmacotherapeutics. Additionally, a student may not progress in the clinical nursing sequence of courses with a grade of "C" or below in the course. The clinical nursing courses, NURG 5700, NURG 5280, and NURG 5710 may only be repeated once.
4. All coursework credits being transferred to NSU must show a grade of "B" or better.
5. If a student makes a "D" in a required course, that course must be repeated at NSU. Such courses may not be taken and transferred from another university.
6. If a student makes an "F" in a required course, the student is dismissed from the graduate program of current enrollment. This action is subject to the appeal process.
7. In order for the conferral of a degree, all MSN degree-seeking students must pass a comprehensive role exam. This exam is given in the last semester of studies. This exam may be taken and may be repeated once in the same semester if necessary.
8. PMC students must pass a role exam based on the functional role, scope, and standards of practice of the concentration for which they are receiving the post master's certificate. This exam may be taken and repeated once in the same semester if necessary.

All MSN and PMC students must meet the University and CONSAH health requirements, CONSAH Essential Academic Performance and Technical Standards for Didactic and Clinical Settings, MSN and PMC Program expectations as published in the Program Handbook and abide by the Student Code of Conduct as published in the University Student Handbook.

NON-PROGRESSION

If a student fails to meet one or more of the requirements for progression, the student is in non-progression. Students may return to progression by following the re-entry procedures, provided they have not been dismissed from the nursing program. Students will be in non-progression for:

- Failure to obtain and maintain current, unencumbered licensure to practice as a registered nurse (RN) or APRN.
- Failure to achieve a minimum grade of "B" in all clinical courses.
 - If the student earns a second "C", "D", or "F" in a clinical course, the student will be dismissed from the program.
- Failure to maintain continuous enrollment in the MSN or PMC Program.
 - Students who are voluntarily or involuntarily withdrawn from a MSN or PMC clinical course are considered out of progression.
- Failure to meet the University and CONSAH health requirements.
 - Students will be withdrawn from courses if they fail to meet the requirements outlined for nursing students by Student Health Services.
 - Students who are withdrawn will not be automatically re-enrolled once they have met

the requirements.

- Failure to meet the *CONSAH Essential Academic Performance and Technical Standards for Didactic and Clinical Settings*.
 - Students must meet the *CONSAH Essential Academic Performance and Technical Standards for Didactic and Clinical Settings* for admission and continue to meet these standards throughout program enrollment.
 - A student will be withdrawn from courses and/or dismissed from the program for failure to meet *CONSAH Essential Academic Performance and Technical Standards for Didactic and Clinical Settings*.
- Failure to abide by the *Student Code of Conduct* as published in the University Student Handbook and/or meet *MSN and PMC Program Expectations* published in the MSN Program Handbook.
 - Upon admission to the University and throughout MSN and PMC program enrollment, students must abide by the *Student Code of Conduct* and *MSN and PMC Program Expectations*.
 - A student will be withdrawn from courses and/or dismissed from the program for failure to meet *MSN and PMC Program Expectations*.
 - A student will be referred to the Dean of Students for *NSU Code of Conduct* infractions.

PROBATION

A student whose graduate cumulative grade point average or semester average falls below 3.0 on a 4.0 scale shall be placed on probation. Probation status will be retained until the cumulative grade point average is 3.0 or above. A student on probation who fails to make a minimum average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during the next semester shall be suspended. The first suspension is for one full academic session and the second is for one calendar year.

SUSPENSION

Upon suspension from graduate studies, a student may appeal for readmission on probation by submitting to his/her advisor a letter addressed to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The advisor, after consulting with the other members of the student's graduate committee, is to append a written recommendation and forward it with the letter to the Dean, who makes the final decision.

DISMISSAL

A student on probation with two previous suspensions who does not make a 3.0 on all hours attempted for the semester will be dismissed. ***Such dismissal is a final action.***

Earning the grade of F in any graduate-level course will result in dismissal from the student's degree program, regardless of the student's overall grade point average. This dismissal is subject to appeal. As outlined in the non-progression policy, a student will be dismissed for failure of didactic, and /or clinical courses, and/or loss of unencumbered Registered Nurse licensure status. Furthermore, a student who violates the Academic Honesty policy is subject to dismissal from the MSN or PMC programs as outlined in the University Catalog and Student Handbook.

Graduation requirements

For graduation, MSN students must complete all university, Graduate School, and MSN program requirements.

CONSAH POLICIES

While the policies set forth in the student handbook are kept current to the best of our ability, please be aware that as policies change, there may be a reasonable lag time before this handbook is updated. Always refer to your course syllabus for specific policies.

Dress

The MSN/PMC Programs do not have a specific uniform/dress code for classroom attendance. Certain clinical agencies may require a specific uniform or dress attire; if so, students will be expected to comply. Clinical students are required to wear professional jackets, lab coats, or agency approved attire. Blue jeans, halter tops, clothing that inappropriately exposes the body, shorts, and flip-flops, are not appropriate clinical attire. Scrub suits, unless specifically approved by the course coordinator, are not appropriate attire for the clinical learning setting. During the COVID pandemic, students will be required to wear additional personal protective equipment (PPE), including face masks, goggles, and hair coverings as determined by clinical agencies. Facial hair must be trimmed enough to not interfere with the proper fitting of the student's face mask.

Eligibility for Advanced Practice Nursing Licensure

A student who (1) has ever been arrested, convicted of, pled guilty or no contest to, a charge of drug possession with the intent to distribute or a charge of violence or (2) has any physical or mental impairment which may affect one's ability to practice safely as a registered nurse MUST receive approval from the Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) (telephone: 225-755-7500) to receive licensure as an advanced practice nurse. Failure to disclose this information may result in denial of advanced practice nursing licensure.

Any student currently in the LSBN Recovering Nurse program shall notify and provide a copy of the LSBN contract to the MSN/PMC Program Director IMMEDIATELY.

If a student is admitted to the clinical sequence of the program, any subsequent disciplinary action, arrest, criminal charge or conviction, addiction, or impairment shall also be reported IMMEDIATELY to the MSN/PMC Program Director and to the LSBN. It is the professional responsibility of the student to forward all required documents to the LSBN for determination of eligibility for advanced practice licensure.

Social Media Policy

Social networking websites provide unique opportunities for students to get to know one another, share experiences, and keep in contact. As with any public forum, it is important that users of these sites are aware of the associated risks and thus act in a manner that does not embarrass other students, the College of Nursing and the School of Allied Health, nor Northwestern State University. It is also important to ensure patient information is not made publicly available. Therefore, the following guidelines were developed to assist students and faculty/staff in safely using social networking sites.

A. Personal Privacy

1. Set profiles on social networking sites so that only those individuals whom you have provided access may see your personal information.
 2. Evaluate photos of yourself that are posted to social networking sites and “untag” photos that depict you in what may be perceived as *compromising situations*.
 3. Be aware of the security and privacy options available to you at any site where personal information is posted. Keep in mind that privacy settings are not impervious, and information can be shared willingly or unwillingly with others—even with “Friends Only” access.
- B. Protection of Patient Information
1. Comments made on social networking sites, regarding patients or clinical environments, should be considered the same as if they were made in a public place.
 2. HIPAA rules apply online and students may be held criminally liable for postings that violate HIPAA.
 3. Remember that simply removing the name of a patient does not make them anonymous. Family members or friends of that patient or of other patients you are caring for may be able to determine whom you are referring to based on context.
- C. Professionalism
1. Use of social networking sites can have legal ramifications. Comments made regarding care of patients, or comments that portray you, a faculty-staff member, or a colleague in an unprofessional manner can be used in court or other disciplinary proceedings.
 2. Statements made under your profile are attributable to you and are treated as if you verbally made that statement in a public place.
 3. Use discretion when choosing to log onto a social networking site at school. Keep in mind that use of social networking sites during lecture and clinical courses is prohibited.
 4. Photographs and statements made on social networking sites are potentially viewable by future employers.
 5. Students may be subject to disciplinary actions within the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health for any comments that are either unprofessional or violate patient privacy.
 6. Remember that some viewers may think you are representing NSU’s CONSAH when you log onto a site and make a comment or post a photograph.

In summary, “Students who meet on social networking sites and who chose to discuss NSU faculty, other students, courses, or NSU in general are expected to conduct themselves in a civil and professional manner. If students should conduct themselves in a verbally abusive, disrespectful or aggressive manner while posting to a public forum of any kind, and it is brought to the attention of NSU faculty or staff, said student(s) may be asked to leave the class/university and are subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct and

Sanctions (*Article VII Sanctions*)."

Drug Policy

Northwestern State University and CONSAH believe that substance abuse is a danger to the well-being of clients, students, faculty/staff, and health agency employees. Therefore, to insure public and professional trust, safety, and to ensure fitness for duty, the unlawful and/or unauthorized use, abuse, possession, distribution, transportation, manufacture, concealment, consumption, promotion or sale of alcohol, illegal drugs, legal drugs obtained illegally, controlled substances, or designer drugs by students will not be tolerated. Individuals found to have committed such infractions shall be subject to sanctions including suspension or dismissal from the CONSAH.

This policy (Appendix C) supersedes the policies published in the current Student Handbook from NSU. This policy reflects additional requirements of curricula for professional nursing. The Dean of the CONSAH or his/her designee may authorize drug or alcohol testing of students. In addition to the College of Nursing drug policy, the MSN/PMC program administration reserves the right to conduct random drug testing.

University Policies

Important University policies are outlined in the University Student Handbook and the University Catalog. The Handbook can be found at <http://www.nsula.edu/studenthandbook/> and the University Catalog can be found at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>. For your convenience, some policies are outlined below; however, university policies listed in this MSN/PMC handbook may be superseded by the current University Catalog.

Adding or Dropping Courses

Students may drop and add courses on or before the seventh day of classes (see University Academic Calendar at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>). When a course is “dropped” it no longer appears on the student’s record, and fees for the class may be refunded or adjusted (See University Catalog at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>). After the seventh day of classes, and before the “last day to withdraw or resign from the University” (see the University Academic Calendar <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>), a student can withdraw from a course on-line using NSUConnect. It is recommended that you consult the Registrar’s office at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/> to be sure you have properly completed all required forms.

It is recommended you speak with an advisor before withdrawing from any course. Some students are not allowed to withdraw from courses without prior approval (graduating seniors, international students, student-athletes, graduate students). Upon submission of the on-line request by the deadline posted in the University Academic Calendar, a grade of “W” is assigned to each withdrawn course. Although “W” grades do not affect the grade-point average, excessive withdrawals reflect negatively on the student’s record, interfere with the student’s progress toward graduation, and may result in the loss of scholarships and other types of financial aid. Students should see the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Regulations in the University Catalog.

Students who drop all courses in which they are registered must officially resign from the University. Students must initiate the resignation process in the office of their academic dean by completing a resignation/cancellation form through the Registrar’s Office at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>. A student may resign from the institution with grades of “W” prior to a date specified in the official University Academic calendar. Again, it is recommended you speak with an advisor before withdrawing from any course.

Access to Educational Records

In accordance with Northwestern State University's Policy on Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, information about a student generally may not be released to a third party without the student's written permission. Exceptions under the law include state and federal educational and financial institutions, and law enforcement officials. The policy also permits student to review their educational records and to challenge the contents of those records.

Student Academic Honesty Statement

If knowledge is to be properly evaluated, it must be pursued under conditions free from deceit and misrepresentation, which are incompatible with the fundamental activity of this academic institution. Northwestern State University expects students to fulfill academic requirements independently and with integrity. Academic integrity is founded on values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Violations include, for example, cheating or deception in any form, plagiarism (including duplicity), misuse of resources, falsification, and facilitating another student's academic dishonesty. Acts of academic dishonesty violate the ethical principles of the University community and compromise work completed by others. For violations of academic honesty, a student may receive a grade of zero (0) on the assignment and/or a grade of F in the class and will be referred to the Office of Accountability & Student Conduct to create a disciplinary record and/or receive any additional sanctions. For a comprehensive description of Academic Infractions refer to Article 4 Section 1 of the *Student Handbook*.

Academic Infractions

- 1.1 Cheating or deception in any form: Misrepresenting one's mastery of course content or experiential learning as a requirement for a course (i.e., internship, field work, practicum, service-learning, student teaching, clinical experience, etc.).
- 1.2 Plagiarism (including duplicity): Misrepresenting another's words, ideas, phrases, sentences, or data as one's own; the failure to properly acknowledge source material with citations and references; or the submission for credit substantially unchanged work in more than one course.
- 1.3 Misuse of resources: Acquiring or distributing, without permission, any academic material, which includes stealing, selling, posting, buying, blackmailing, or otherwise accessing or sharing any content used to fulfill academic requirements.
- 1.4 Falsification: Submitting false information to deceive, including substituting for another person or permitting another person to substitute for oneself, using another's identification, or forging proctor information.
- 1.5 Facilitating another student's academic dishonesty: Collaborating, conspiring, or cooperating to fulfill academic requirements so as to misrepresent individual effort and knowledge.

Classroom Civility

Northwestern State University students, staff, and faculty are expected to create an environment that promotes academic excellence, personal dignity, mutual respect, and individual responsibility in both face-to-face and electronic educational settings regardless of the content of the ideas and opinions being shared. Ideas and opinions that are controversial or in opposition to others are welcomed in the NSU environment, and this policy shall not be used to prohibit the sharing of controversial or unpopular ideas or opinions but merely to call for civility when idea and opinion sharing. All members of the NSU community have the right to a safe environment free of disturbances and civil in all aspects of human relations. Whether in a face-to-face or online classroom, students who engage in disruptive or abusive discourse or actions may be removed from the class and subject to disciplinary sanctions. In on-campus classrooms, students who speak at inappropriate times, take frequent breaks, interrupt the class by coming to class late or leaving early, engage in loud or distracting behaviors, use cell phones or other noise-making devices, wear headphones, are distracted with computers or other electronic devices, are verbally abusive, display defiance or disrespect to others, or behave aggressively toward others during the class period may be removed from the class and may be subject to disciplinary action under the Northwestern State University Student CODE OF CONDUCT nsula.edu - 107 - 2021-2022 Student Handbook Code of Conduct (Articles IV Infractions and VIII Sanctions). The instructor of a course may deem additional behaviors or actions inappropriate; these actions or behaviors will be outlined in the course syllabus. Copies of infractions begin on page 113 and sanctions begin on page 125 of this handbook and are available on the NSU website at nsula.edu/student handbook.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Northwestern State University defines diversity as including, but not limited to differences in age, gender identity and expression, religion, language, sexuality, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, mental and physical abilities, and geographic background. In our mission to understand our differences, we also hope to realize our commonalities and recognize how all these parts of our identities shape each of our experiences of the world. We are dedicated to fostering a community based on empathy, thoughtful dialogue, personal growth, and action.

Title IX Statement

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. NSU is committed to equal opportunity for student success by providing access to educational programs, tuition assistance, and social and recreational activities for all students without regard to race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, age, pregnancy or parenting status, veteran status, or retirement status. Student complaints or inquiries related to Title IX should be directed to the Director of Student Advocacy/Title IX Coordinator, Julie Powell, obannanj@nsula.edu 318-357-5570, located in room #308 of the Student Services Center.

Social Media

Every Northwestern State University student is encouraged to help create an environment that promotes learning, dignity, and mutual respect for everyone in classrooms and on social media. Students should be aware of their association with and responsibilities to NSU while using social media, whether on official NSU sites or in personal communication. Students must also keep in mind that once digital content is created, they have very little control over how that content is shared or how permanent it becomes, and so the impact of statements and the online persona must be considered, especially regarding potential classmates and employers. Students should exercise their freedom of speech to communicate online with respect, which includes adhering to the Student Code of Conduct and reading and responding carefully to others in order to understand their point-of-view. Students must take responsibility for their words and criticism should be constructive, respect diversity, and show tolerance of differences. Students should make it clear that they are stating an opinion and not acting as an official representative of NSU when using social media for personal communication. When that may seem unclear, it may be useful to use a disclaimer such as, "views and opinion expressed are my own and do not reflect those of NSU."

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Office of Accessibility and Disability Support

In accordance with Section 35.106 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all participants, applicants, organizations, and interested individuals are advised and notified that the ADA Coordinator for Northwestern State University for facilities is the Director of University Affairs, Jennifer Kelly (318-357-4300), located in New Fine Arts, 104 Central Avenue, Ste. 102 or email andersonje@nsula.edu. For student academic services, contact the Director of Accessibility and Disability Support, Taylor Camidge (318-357-5460) located in Room 108-C Watson Memorial Library or email camidget@nsula.edu. For faculty/staff accommodations and services, contact Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources, Veronica M. Biscoe (318-357-6359), Room 111 Caspari Hall or email ramirezv@nsula.edu.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

Please refer to the following website for complete information: <https://www.nsula.edu/notalone/>

Attendance

Class attendance is an obligation and a privilege. All students are expected to attend their enrolled classes. Failure to do so may jeopardize students' scholastic standing in their courses and may lead to suspension from the University. Course instructors are required to state expectations regarding class attendance during the first week of classes in writing to the students and must maintain a permanent attendance record for each class. Instructors may establish grading policies that incorporate attendance requirements, including policies and penalties for class absence, tardy attendance, make-up work, and late coursework. Instructors may excuse an absence for documented illness and doctor appointments, personal and family issues, and other similar situations at their discretion pursuant to the class attendance policy and shall excuse absences for official University-excused activities¹ reported by University personnel, religious observances supported by students' religious beliefs, official military orders and first responder orders during emergencies, scheduled court appearances, and jury duty. In professional degree programs (e.g., Nursing, Allied Health, Education), students are required to meet the minimum number of attendance or clinical hours each semester in each course. In the case of planned absence, students are responsible for anticipating such conflicts and discussing them with their instructors in advance, preferably at the beginning of the semester. In the case of unplanned absence, students shall submit documentation to their instructors upon their return to the respective class. Students tardy for a class meeting should resolve the matter with their instructors at the end of the class period during which the tardiness occurred. Otherwise, the instructor may treat the tardiness as an absence pursuant to the class attendance policy. Students are responsible for all class activities missed during their absences, whether excused or unexcused. Acceptance of make-up work and penalties for late work are determined by instructors' discretion pursuant to the written attendance policy for the course. For students with excessive unexcused absences (ten percent or more of the total class meetings), instructors may complete the Non-Attendance Report of Grade Form and submit it to the academic dean of the course recommending that the student be dropped from the roster of that class. A grade of "F" shall be given if a student has unsatisfactory academic performance in the course and may be given if the student has five or more unexcused absences for MWF classes, four or more unexcused absences for MW or TR classes, two or more unexcused absences from classes that meet for three hours one time a week (Monday-Saturday), and two or more weeks of unexcused absences from Internet classes.

Student Complaints

Northwestern State University recognizes a student's need to express grievances during the college experience. The Dean of Students' Office functions to assist students in lodging and resolving such complaints. Students may contact the Dean of Students Office to file a written complaint and/or for assistance in filing complaints.

Northwestern State University students who wish to lodge a written complaint about an employee of the institution (faculty or staff), another student, policies and procedures, harassment, bullying, sexual harassment, equal access or other complaints, should contact the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@nsula.edu. Ordinarily, complaints against students or student organizations follow Article V of the Student Code of Conduct and complaints against employees of the university or its agents follow the Student Grievance Procedure found in Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct. Students should seek clarification from the Dean of Students Office when filing a complaint

Student Complaints may be categorized as follows:

1. Complaints about an employee (faculty or staff) of the institution (See the Student Grievance Procedure, Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct).
2. Complaints about another student or organization (See Article V of the Student Code of Conduct).
3. Complaints against a department (its policies or procedures) (See the Student Grievance Procedure, Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct).
4. Complaints of sexual harassment against an employee or another student and all student related Title IX complaints (See the Northwestern State University Sexual Misconduct Policy).
5. Complaints of harassment or bullying by a student or student organization (See the Student Grievance Procedure, Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct); complaints of bullying or harassment by faculty or staff (See the Student Grievance Procedure, Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct).
6. Complaints about equal opportunity access (See the Student Grievance Procedure, Appendix I in the Student Code of Conduct).
7. Other complaints not included above (Contact the Student Accountability and Advocacy office or Dean of Students).

The Dean of Students realizes that in certain situations, it is inappropriate for students to meet with the person against whom they wish to lodge a complaint. In such cases, the Dean's Office may act as a liaison or assist the student in meeting with the person or that person's supervisor. Complaints may be formal (written grievances) or informal. Whatever the circumstances, the Dean of Students will assist students in the process of filing complaints. NSU strives to maintain the confidentiality of the parties involved in the grievance process. However, in cases of sexual misconduct, the institution will comply with the Department of Education guidelines and investigate reported incidences.

Student Appeals

Student Appeals are not considered complaints. However, Northwestern seeks to allow students to appeal University policy and decisions when the student believes she/he has experienced unusual circumstances which may be out of their control or when the student believes the University failed to follow policy. Students may seek assistance at any time from the Dean of Students. It is important to verify the appeal process through the University catalog, in case the process has been updated <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>

Student Appeals are categorized as follows:

1. Admission Appeal (to determine if there is an exception, see <https://www.nsula.edu/admissions/>)
2. Academic Suspension Appeal (to allow an appeal of academic suspension, see <https://graduateschool.nsula.edu>)
3. Admission Access Appeal (to allow registration with balance, see <https://www.nsula.edu/onecard/>)
4. Grade Appeal/Registration, Credits and Graduation (to change grades, issue credit)
Graduate students who receive grades they believe do not reflect the quality of their work may appeal these grades within 120 days following the academic period in which the grades were earned. Please visit the graduate school website for additional information at <https://graduateschool.nsula.edu>. The procedure for appeal is as follows:
 - a. The student should consult the instructor to see if an understanding can be reached. The student is entitled to an explanation as to how the grade was determined and to examine any tests, papers, or other information pertinent to the appeal.
 - b. If the conference with the instructor is not satisfactory, the student should secure a Grade Appeal Form from the Dean of the Graduate School. The student may discuss the grade appeal informally with the Dean of the Graduate School if the student so desires.
 - c. In filing a formal appeal, the student should complete the appeal form, (a) stating the nature of the appeal, (b) providing a detailed description of the justification, and (c) requesting a specific action. Since the written appeal will be the basis for the ultimate decision, the student should ensure that it is clear, complete, and inclusive of all documentation the student wishes to have considered in the appeal process. It is the student's responsibility to present written evidence that the instructor made an error or acted arbitrarily or capriciously in assigning the grade.
 - d. The student should submit the completed appeal form to the instructor for review. If a solution is not found, the instructor should provide a written response to the student's appeal, providing documentation as to how the grade was determined. The instructor's response should include a copy of the course outline or syllabus provided to the student's class at the beginning of the semester or term.
 - e. After having met with the instructor and obtaining his or her written response to the appeal, the student may submit the form to the head of the academic department that owns the course. Following a review of the student's appeal and the instructor's response, the department head or dean of the college should provide his or her written opinion of the appeal along with any additional, pertinent information.

f. If the student is unsatisfied with the opinion of the Department Head of Dean of the college, he or she may submit the appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School would decide which would be final or refer the appeal to the University Graduate Council for review and recommendation. The Council's report would be a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School, whose decision would be final. The Dean of the Graduate School will notify the student of the final decision.

5. Financial Aid and Scholarship Appeal (to maintain financial aid awards, see (<https://www.nsula.edu/financialaid/>))
6. Residency Appeal (to waive out of state tuition, see <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>)
7. Auxiliary Services Appeal (to waive on campus living and food service requirements, see (<https://www.nsula.edu/onecard/>))
8. Parking and Traffic Appeal (to waive tickets or fees, see (<https://www.nsula.edu/campus-parking-and-driving-regulations/>))
9. Disciplinary Appeal (to overturn sanction in conduct hearing, see (<https://www.nsula.edu/studenthandbook>))
10. Retroactive Withdrawal/Resignation or Cancellation Appeal (to allow various post semester withdrawals with documented extenuating circumstances, see (<https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>))

**You may need to copy and past the URL to your browser.*

Graduate students who receive grades they believe do not reflect the quality of their work may appeal these grades within 120 days following the academic period in which the grades were earned. For the procedure for grade appeal go to <https://graduateschool.nsula.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/Graduate-School-Form-Appeal-of-Reported-Grade.pdf>.

No Smoking Policy

Tobacco use is prohibited on all Northwestern State University campuses. The smoke-free policy covers all interior spaces on Northwestern State University campuses, properties, leased or operated by the university, all campus housing, indoor and outdoor athletic facilities, vehicles owned or leased by the university and personal vehicles on the Northwestern State campus whether they are moving or parked. The policy will apply to Northwestern State faculty, staff, students and visitors to campus including contracted personnel, contractors and vendors. The policy applies to all university events and events held in university facilities. Those who violate the policy are subject to a fine.

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Northwestern State University of Louisiana recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing the resources and services available from the University's counseling services. The Counseling and Career Services provides confidential mental health counseling, career counseling and career development services, outreach services, and part-time employment services to all NSU undergraduate and graduate students. Appointments can be made in person in Room 305 in the Friedman Student Union Building or by phone at (318) 357-5621. The Counseling and Career Services is open from 8AM-5PM, Monday through Thursday and 8AM-12PM on Fridays. The 24 hour National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can be reached by calling 988.

The Counseling Center provides services in several formats, including personal counseling, couples' counseling, group counseling, and crisis counseling. Telehealth counseling services are offered via WebEx, Zoom, and FaceTime to students in quarantine.

A 24-hour crisis service is available for students in crisis. Call or drop by the Counseling and Career Services during office hours (Monday-Thursday, 8AM-5PM; Friday, 8AM-12PM). To speak to a counselor after office hours and on weekends, contact the University Police at (318) 357-5431, and a counselor will be contacted for you.

For more information about counseling and career services and resources go to [Counseling Services](#), [NSU Cares](#), and the [NSU Career Center](#).

Policy on Research of Human Subjects

Research is promoted by the University as is the involvement of the University community including students in research programs and activities. During a student's experiences at NSU, he or she will have various opportunities to participate in assessment, measurement, and testing programs like focus groups, surveys, tests, and interviews. Some of these will be optional and voluntary while others will be mandatory. The University encourages cooperation and participation in such programs and activities. Many times such programs allow for opinions to be expressed, services to be improved, funds reallocated, and other institutional change.

When human beings are used as subjects in research projects, safeguards must be established to protect their health, well-being, and rights. Under the policies established by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), this protection is extended to all human subjects regardless of the nature of the research being performed. In response to this policy Northwestern State University established the Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects in Research to review all research proposals involving human subjects. University policy requires that all research proposals for which data is to be collected from human subjects shall be submitted to this committee to determine whether an exemption applies or whether a review is required.

It is the responsibility of the faculty member to assure compliance with this policy in research conducted by either a student advisee or the faculty member. In 1981 the HHS revised guidelines and exempted certain forms of research involving subjects from review. These forms of research are as follows: *Common Education Practices* Research involving regular or special instructional strategies, or research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom methods. *Educational Testing* Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, and/or achievement) if information taken from these sources is recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Survey & Observation

Any research involving survey and observation is exempt except where any one of the following exists: (a) subjects can be identified either directly or indirectly; (b) subject responses if they become known outside the research could place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability; or (c) the research deals with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol.

*All research involving survey or interview procedures is exempt, without exception, when the respondents are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

Further information on the Protection of Human Subjects can be found at the Institutional Review Board (IRB) page at <http://graduateschool.nsula.edu/human-subjects-institutional-review-board-irb/>

APPENDIX A
Additional Links and Resources

Office	Website	Address	Contact Information
NSU Graduate School	https://graduateschool.nsula.edu/	123 Caspari Hall Natchitoches, LA, 71497	Phone: 318-357-5851 Toll Free: 800-232-9892 Email: grad_school@nsula.edu
College of Nursing	http://nursing.nsula.edu/	1800 Line Avenue Shreveport, LA, 71101	Phone: 318-677-3100 Toll Free: 800-454-9567 email: nursing@nsula.edu
Facilitator of Graduate Studies in Nursing	http://nursing.nsula.edu/	1800 Line Avenue Shreveport, LA, 71101	Phone: 318-677-3131 Fax: 318-677-3127 email: bumgardnerc@nsula.edu
Financial Aid Office	http://financialaid.nsula.edu/	1800 Line Avenue Shreveport, LA, 71101	Phone: 318-677-3045 Email: nsufinaid@nsula.edu
Registrar's Office	https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/	Office of the Registrar Natchitoches, LA, 71497	Phone: 318-357-6171 Toll Free: 800-807-8849 Fax: 318-357-5823 email: registrar@nsula.edu
NSU Nursing Library	https://library.nsula.edu/	1800 Line Avenue Shreveport, LA, 71101	Phone: 318-677-3007 Text: 318-210-7036
College Book Store		Shreveport and Natchitoches campuses	Shreveport Phone: 318-677-3047
Student Help Desk Student Online Support (SOS)	https://helpdesk.nsula.edu/Contact/	113 Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library Natchitoches, LA, 71497	Phone: 318-357-6696 Fax: 318-357-6480 email: E-mail Form

APPENDIX B



Vision, Mission Statement & Values Northwestern State University College of Nursing

Vision

Northwestern State University is an innovator and a pacesetter in the educational preparation of individuals in nursing.

Mission

Northwestern State University College of Nursing and School of Allied Health serves an increasing diverse student population while advancing the mission of the University by offering excellent and innovative undergraduate, graduate, certificate and continuing education programs that are designed to assist individuals in achieving their goal to become responsible and contributing members of an interprofessional global community that improves the health of our region, state, and nation.

Values

EXCELLENCE	RESPECT	CARING	TEAMWORK	PROFESSIONALISM	INNOVATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue Highest Standards • Uphold Quality • Exceed Challenging Goals • Act as good Stewards of Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen • Treat People Fairly • Value Diversity • Promote Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathize • Exhibit Openness • Express Sensitivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve Others • Challenge with Respect • Communicate Effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate Integrity • Persevere • Display Accountability • Maintain Expertise • Act Ethically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek/focus on Future Transformations that advance our mission • Display Passion • Commit to Continuous Quality Improvement • Provide State-of-the-Art Learning Environments

APPENDIX C Drug Policy

Northwestern State University and CONSAH believe that substance abuse is a danger to the well-being of clients, students, faculty/staff, and health agency employees. Therefore, to insure public and professional trust, safety, and to ensure fitness for duty, the unlawful and/or unauthorized use, abuse, possession, distribution, transportation, manufacture, concealment, consumption, promotion or sale of alcohol, illegal drugs, legal drugs obtained illegally, controlled substances, or designer drugs by students will not be tolerated. Individuals found to have committed such infractions shall be subject to sanctions including suspension or dismissal from the CONSAH.

This policy supersedes the policies published in the current Student Handbook from NSU. This policy reflects additional requirements of curricula for professional nursing.

I. Definitions

Controlled Substances - controlled substances include all chemical substances or drugs listed in any controlled substance acts or regulations applicable under any federal, state, or local laws.

Campus/clinical - A student is on campus or in clinical whenever he/she is:

- a. On any university/health agency property including parking lots.
- b. Present at any University-sanctioned activity.
- c. Wearing an official NSU CONSAH uniform/lab coat.

II. Scope

The NSU CONSAH prohibits the following when a student is on campus or in clinical and will result in disciplinary action by the College:

- a. Unauthorized possession or use of a controlled substance and/or alcohol.
- b. Being under the influence of a controlled substance and/or alcohol, including but not limited to DWI arrests, convictions, and driving suspensions.
- c. Illegal manufacture, distribution, sale, or purchase of a controlled substance including but not limited to arrests and convictions.
- d. Use, or being under the influence of other drugs, including prescription drugs and over the counter drugs while there is any possibility that such use may impair the student's ability to safely perform or may adversely affect his/her safety or patient safety and care, or safety of faculty or fellow students.

III. Testing

- a. All nursing students will submit to regular and random drug testing. Failure to submit to required drug testing within specified time-period will be considered an admission of guilt and student will be required to submit to a drug screen hair analysis at the student's expense.
- b. Drug or alcohol testing of students is authorized under this policy allowing the Dean of the College of Nursing and College of Allied Health, or her designee, to direct a student to undergo testing under the following circumstances:
 - i. When there is reasonable suspicion or cause to believe that a student is or has recently been under the influence of any drug or alcohol. It is acknowledged that it may be difficult to determine when a student may be under the "influence", in keeping

with the purpose of this drug policy NSU views that discretion must be given to the faculty and staff in recognizing the usual signs and symptoms of alcohol or drug use. In that respect, the following is a listing of what NSU deems possible signs and symptoms of drug or alcohol use:

- Frequent absences from class, clinical or lab and/or disappearance from such.
 - Isolation and withdrawal.
 - Patient care errors, particularly medication errors.
 - Detectable odor of alcohol.
 - Increasingly poor decision and judgment about patient care.
 - Illogical or sloppy charting.
 - Unusual accidents/incidents.
 - Deteriorating personal appearance.
 - Changes in motor function/behavioral patterns including personality changes, mood swings, illogical thought patterns, gait disturbances, impaired dexterity, slurred speech, drowsiness/ sleepiness, and pupillary changes.
 - When a student is found in possession of alcohol or drugs in violation of this policy.
 - Following an instance or incident the nature of which indicates possible impairment of ability or judgement or following an incident in which patient care standards were violated, or careless acts were performed.
- ii. When such signs and/or symptoms are observed in a student, the faculty member will notify the Dean or designee. The Dean or designee will go to the campus/clinical area and direct the student to submit to drug/alcohol testing and sign a consent form witnessed by two University representatives. Failure to agree to such testing shall be considered as admission of violation of the student responsibilities as it relates to this policy and shall be sufficient cause to allow Dean's action as allowed under this policy. If the student refuses the test, he/she shall sign a refusal form witnessed by two University representatives. If the student refuses to sign this refusal form, this information shall be noted on the form and witnessed by two University representatives. Refusal to sign any of these forms may result in immediate dismissal from the CONSAH.
- iii. Within one hour of completion of required consent form, the student shall report to an identified lab, which utilizes the chain of custody procedure for blood and/or urine testing at the student's expense. A University representative will verify the student's identity prior to specimen collection. The student may not drive a motor vehicle to this lab and will be responsible for all transportation costs.
- iv. The student may not attend class or clinical activities until the Dean or designee reviews the lab results.
- c. Results of the tests will be kept confidential and will be reported to the Dean or her designee who will then meet with the student to discuss the results and ramifications. A positive blood alcohol, urine drug screen, or hair analysis test may subject the student to sanctions, which may include suspension or dismissal from the CONSAH, and the instance will be reported to the Louisiana State Board of Nursing.
- d. All drug screens are at the student's expense, failure to complete the initial screen will result in student obtaining hair screen test at an additional expense. At the time of request for

screening, faculty will provide you with an approved list of sites to obtain testing. Prescription for medications must precede date of drug screen request.



