

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT
ARLINGTON**

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
NURSING and POST
MASTERS'S CERTIFICATE**

STUDENT HANDBOOK

**THE COLLEGE OF NURSING AND
HEALTH INNOVATION**

Academic Year 2023-2024

Revised: May 2024

In all cases, the Graduate Catalog supersedes.

DISCLAIMER: The student handbook is updated annually and as needed for programmatic and policy changes. The electronic version of this handbook supersedes all print copies.

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MSN Programs – Overview

College of Nursing and Health Innovation Vision and Mission

Mission

Our mission is to advance global health and the human condition through transdisciplinary collaboration by engaging in high-quality teaching, research, scholarship, practice and service to prepare a diverse population of health professionals and to reduce health disparities.

Vision

To provide innovative, exceptional education, through research and practice to advance health and the human condition globally.

Accreditation

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

The University of Texas at Arlington is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

College of Nursing and Health Innovation History

The UT Arlington College of Nursing was established in 1971 as the U.T. System College of Nursing in Fort Worth and was housed in John Peter Smith Hospital. In 1976, the school became an academic unit of UT Arlington, moving to the campus in 1977. The history of the UT Arlington College of Nursing and Health Innovation is available at: [CONHI History](#)

Master of Science in Nursing Program Outcomes

Graduate nursing education builds on a foundation of undergraduate nursing education and provides an opportunity for professional nurses to develop a specialty practice that is congruent with an expanding theoretical and empirical knowledge base. The graduate program in nursing is designed to assist professional nurses to prepare for advanced clinical and functional roles that demand increased accountability, expertise, and leadership. The master's program facilitates the use of the research process through the course of study and prepares the graduate to be a critical thinker and a self-directed professional who collaborates with consumers and other health care providers.

MSN Programs include Nurse Practitioner, Nursing Administration, and Nursing Education. Additional information regarding each program is available at: [MSN Program Information](#).

Outcomes:

The MSN Program graduate is provided a background to:

1. Demonstrate competence in an advanced nursing role;
2. Participate in scholarly endeavors to advance nursing knowledge;
3. Provide leadership in professional nursing and interdisciplinary health care

Post-Master's Certificates

The Department of Graduate Nursing offers Post-Master's Certificate programs for Nurse Practitioners. Students seeking a Post-Master's Certificate must have completed an MSN from an NLNAC or CCNE accredited program. Depending on course work completed for the MSN and current advanced practice status (as applicable), an individualized certificate degree plan will be developed based on a gap analysis of the applicant's MSN transcript and experience. Post-Master's Certificates are offered in all Nurse Practitioner Programs and in Nursing Administration. Additional information is available at: [Post Masters Certificate Program Information](#).

Outcomes:

The Post MSN Certificate Program graduate is provided a background to:

1. Demonstrate competence in an advanced nursing role
2. Provide leadership in professional nursing and interdisciplinary health care

Program Administrators

Elizabeth Merwin, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean, College of Nursing and Health Innovation.

Ann Eckhardt, PhD, RN, Chair, Department of Graduate Nursing.

Jackie Michael, PhD, APRN, WHNP, PMHNP-BC, Associate Chair for Advanced Practice Nursing.

Margarita Treviño, PhD, RN, CHN, Associate Chair for Nursing Education, Nursing Administration, Health Informatics, Doctor of Nursing Practice, and PhD in Nursing Programs.

Ann Eckhardt, PhD, RN, Associate Chair of Clinical Education

Candice Calhoun-Butts, PhD, Assistant Dean, Office of Enrollment and Student Services

MSN Program Directors:

Keri Draganic, DNP, APRN, ACNP-BC, CNE, Director of Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Program

Tammy Eades, DNP, RN. Director of MSN Nursing Administration

Emily Fox DNP, APRN, NNP. Director of Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Programs (Primary and Acute Care) and Neonatal Nurse Practitioner Program

Kellie Kahveci, PhD, APRN, AGPCNP-BC, GNP-BC, CNE, Director of Adult Gerontology Primary Nurse Practitioner Program

Aaron Langford, DNP, APRN, PMHNP-BC, Director of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program

Patricia Thomas, PhD, APRN, NNP-C, CNE, Director of MSN Nursing Education Program

Phyllis Wood, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, Family Nurse Practitioner Leadership

Master of Science and Post Master's Certificate in Nursing Programs - Policies and Procedures

This section of the Student Handbook contains general policies and procedures that apply to graduate students in the Master of Science in Nursing and Post Master's Certificate Programs of the College of Nursing and Health Innovation. Students are expected to follow the University catalog and the Student Handbook.

The *Rules and Regulations* of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System, the *Handbook of Operating Procedures* of the University of Texas at Arlington and the University Catalog of the University of Texas at Arlington supersede departmental, program, or college publications.

Advising & Registration

The Graduate Nursing Programs provide advising online and/or in person with Academic Advisors. In the MSN and Post MSN Certificate Programs, students can reach an academic advisor via email at msnadvising@uta.edu or by calling 817-272-2776 and selecting option 4.

Following admission, as part of new student orientation, a degree plan is developed that indicates the course and semester in which the student will complete each course. Students may access their degree plan at any time in their MyMav Student Center. Each semester, the student is expected to register according to their degree plan. Students requesting changes to the degree plan must discuss it with an Academic Advisor prior to enrollment. Failure to follow the degree plan may result in delays in completing the degree in a timely manner. Students desiring to change their program of study from one specialty area to another (MSN Programs) and/or between the campus based and accelerated online program must contact an Academic Advisor (please also see Change of Program information in the handbook). The Academic Advisor will work with the student regarding the specific process for the change of program.

Course Scheduling

Depending on the major area of study, the MSN and Post MSN Certificate Programs are offered in a campus-based traditional semester length format and/or in an off campus/accelerated online format. Most courses in the campus-based programs are offered online with minimal campus presence required.

Courses scheduled in the campus-based format are completed within the traditional semester time frame of 15 weeks (Fall and Spring semesters) or 11 or 14 weeks (Summer semester). Courses are offered using blended on-campus and online teaching strategies. The following MSN and Post MSN-Certificate Programs are offered in the campus-based format: Adult Gerontology (Acute and Primary Care) Nurse Practitioner, Family Nurse Practitioner, Neonatal Nurse Practitioner, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (Acute and Primary Care), and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

Courses offered in the off-campus/accelerated online format are scheduled to be completed in 3 to 13 week time frames (depending on the course). The following MSN and Post MSN-Certificate Nurse Practitioner Programs are offered in the off-campus accelerated online format: Adult Gerontology (Acute and Primary Care) Nurse Practitioner, Family Nurse Practitioner and Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (Acute and Primary Care). The Nursing Administration and Nursing Education programs are ONLY offered in the accelerated online format.

Students have the option to complete their MSN or PMC with full-time (minimum 6 semester credit hours per semester) or part-time (less than 6 semester credit hours per semester) study. The degree must be completed within a 6-year time frame. Courses are offered during Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters (individual course offerings will vary by semester).

Transfer Course Credit

A maximum of 25% of a program's required semester hours may be accepted for transfer credit with the approval of the graduate nursing faculty. Only courses completed with grades of A or B are accepted for transfer credit. Courses submitted for transfer credit must have been completed no more than 6 years before completion of the MSN graduate program at UT Arlington. Students should also be aware that course grades in transfer courses are not included in calculating a student's UT Arlington GPA.

Transfer of courses from another university requires the submission of a course syllabus. The syllabus is reviewed by the faculty at UTA who determine whether the course taken at another university has comparable course outcomes, content, and assignments. Students requesting transfer credit must complete and submit the Course Transfer Credit Form ([Transfer Credit Form](#)) to their Academic Advisor and an official transcript with the course grade posted must be sent to UTA's Admissions Office to receive transfer credit.

Course Adds, Drops and Withdrawals

Graduate students who wish to change their course schedule by adding or dropping/withdrawing from a course must first consult with an academic advisor.

Students in campus-based programs are encouraged to consult the academic calendar for the final withdrawal date for each academic semester. Students in accelerated option programs are encouraged to consult the final withdrawal date that is applicable to the specific start date and week format of enrollment. Click on the accelerated online [academic calendar](#) to locate all related important dates.

Adds and drops may be made through late registration either at MyMav or in person through the student's academic advising department. Drops/withdrawals can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the enrollment period. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. Students with questions regarding financial aid should contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships for more information.

Please note:

- A student may not add a course after the end of late registration.
- A student dropping a graduate course after the Census Date but on or before the last day to drop will receive a grade of W. Students must submit a drop request form via MyMav no later than 4pm CST on the respective drop deadline. Drop requests received after 4pm CST will not be processed.

Dropping or Withdrawing after the Last Day to Drop

Dropping a course after the Last Drop/Withdrawal Date requires the permission of the Chair of the Graduate Nursing Programs. Students seeking this permission must first contact an academic advisor. The

academic advisor will work with the student to submit a "Graduate Withdrawal and Drop Policy Exception Form".

Repeated Course Withdrawal

A student may withdraw from the same course a maximum of 2 times. "Withdrawal" is defined as dropping a course after census date and is indicated by a "W" on the student's academic transcript. The third time the student enrolls in the course they will not be permitted to withdraw from the course after census date. Students with extenuating circumstances may petition the program director for permission to withdraw.

Leave of Absence

For a graduate student to continue as an active/enrolled student, the student must be enrolled in a minimum of one semester credit hour each long semester (Fall and Spring). A student may request a Leave of Absence to respond to unusual circumstances that prevent them from meeting the continuous enrollment requirement. A leave of absence may be granted for "good cause" (e.g., pregnancy, health related issues, significant family concerns) that would interfere with the student's ability to participate in graduate study. Leaves are granted for a maximum of two long semesters during the student's graduate study. Only students in good academic standing (minimum GPA 3.0) may be granted Leave. [The Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence Policies are available in the University Catalog.](#)

Prior to requesting a Leave of Absence, the student should discuss the request with an Academic Advisor and develop a revised degree plan. A student requesting a Leave of Absence must complete the Leave of Absence Request form. The request for the Leave of Absence is submitted to the Academic Advisor who will forward the request to the student's Associate Chair for action.

Change of Program/ Student Movement between Campus-based Programs, Off-campus Accelerated Online Programs, and/or Major Areas of Study or Specialty (NP Programs)

1. Movement between programs and/or major areas or specialty area of study is not allowed until students have completed 9 hours in the program or major to which they were admitted.
2. To qualify to switch from one program/major to another, a student must have a current and admission GPA equal to or higher than the lowest GPA admitted to the 'new' program in that semester. For example, a MSN administration student with a current GPA of 3.2 and an admission GPA of 3.1 will not be allowed to switch to the FNP program if the lowest admission GPA in the FNP program that semester was 3.5. However, if a PNP student with an admission and current GPA of 3.5 may be allowed to switch to the Nursing Education program if the lowest admission GPA in the education program that semester was 3.2.
3. Students who are qualified may only make one move during their MSN program. This includes moving between:
 - a. A campus-based program and an accelerated option (off-campus) program
 - b. An accelerated option program to a campus-based program.
 - c. One off-campus major and another off-campus major.
 - d. One specialty area of study and another specialty area of study or specialty whether on campus or onlineFor example, this applies to a student in the on-campus MSN in FNP program to the AGACNP on-campus program. It also applies to a student changing from the off-campus FNP program to the on-campus FNP program.
4. The deadline for submitting a request to change programs or majors is 4:00 pm CST on the graduate course drop date for the traditional semester. This deadline applies to students whether in the on-campus or off-campus accelerated online program.
5. Changes become effective at the beginning of the next semester.
6. Exceptions to this policy may be made for extenuating circumstances.

GAP Analysis

As part of the application process into the Post-Master's certificate program, each applicant's transcripts are reviewed by the respective Program Director. This review determines which courses will be required to complete the certificate. Applicants are required to complete the GAP Analysis Request Form to identify which courses they want evaluated as equivalent to the required certificate program's courses. Upon completing this form, the applicant is required to return it along with the respective course syllabus to the Admission Advisor. Syllabi must be from the semester and year the student took the course. Any requests submitted without the correct syllabus and/or inadequate documentation will be denied. Appeals will not be considered without submitting the correct documentation.

When the Program Director has completed their review, the GAP Analysis Request Form will be returned to the Admission Advisor who will return it to the applicant. The applicant must sign and return the document to the Admission Advisor. Applicants will not be assigned a degree plan unless they have signed and returned this form. Changing this form after the Program Director has signed it, submitting false records or falsifying any records is unprofessional conduct and academic dishonesty. Anyone guilty of this will be reported to the Office of Community Standards.

Applicants applying to a Post-Masters Certificate Nurse Practitioner program should be aware that the GAP Analysis process is essential to their successful certification and licensure. While applicants may believe courses are equivalent, the Program Directors have the responsibility and

final say on the course equivalency. Giving credit for courses which are not equivalent will prevent applicants from being able to obtain national certification and state licensure; therefore, credit is not granted for any course which is not determined to be equivalent to the nurse practitioner courses taught in the program.

State Authorizations

The University of Texas, College of Nursing and Health Innovation offers several programs in the online format. To do so, the College of Nursing and Health Innovation must follow federal and state laws for the operation of programs in states outside of Texas. CONHI's ability to offer programs outside of the State of Texas is variable and highly dependent upon the program, federal laws, and state laws including each states' board of nursing regulations. It is important that every student understand and acknowledge that the completion of a graduate nursing program may only occur in a state in which CONHI can operate.

Students are required to review the list of approved states per program at the following link: [CONHI State Authorization Disclosure](#)

Graduate nursing students must understand the following:

1. States in which UTA CONHI graduate programs are approved to operate may change without prior notice. This may adversely affect progression in the program as described below.
2. Approved states may change their laws and regulations at any point without prior notice to UTA CONHI. This may adversely affect progression in the program as described below.
3. Living in, moving to, or working (temporary or permanent assignments) in a state in which UTA CONHI graduate nursing programs are not approved to operate may result in one or more of the following:
 - a. a delay in graduation
 - b. not graduating
 - c. withdrawal from a course
 - d. withdrawal from the program
 - e. may require students to come to Texas to complete clinical and/or any portion of the graduate program
 - f. a denied clinical placement
 - g. a delay in clinical placement

Due to the constraints of international law the nurse practitioner programs do not operate outside of the United States. Requests received from a student to attend or continue in a non-nurse practitioner program from an international location are reviewed on an individual basis.

Travel assignments are subject to the details of this policy and may not occur without prior approval. Any student who lives near the border with another state are also subject to this policy if they want to complete clinical outside their state of residence.

Prior to accepting a travel assignment, seeking a preceptor in another state, or moving, students are required to email NursingSOA@uta.edu to discuss the implications on their progression to graduation and clinical placements.

Students who are admitted to the program and live or work, a temporary or permanent assignment, in a state which is not approved for the MSN/PMC programs to operate must contact their advisor immediately by sending an email to msnadvising@uta.edu.

All students are required to review the CONHI State Authorization Disclosure to determine if the program in which they are enrolled leads to licensure and if the curriculum leads to licensure in their respective state.

Academic Standing and Progression

Academic Standing

Policies and procedures for academic standing and progression in the MSN and Post MSN Certificate Programs are consistent with UTA Graduate policies. Click on the [Academic Standing link](#) for more information on the university policies.

Graduate students are considered to be in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress in a degree program if they 1) meet all admission conditions within the time required 2) have a B (3.0) or better grade-point average on all coursework undertaken while in Graduate School **and** 3) have a B (3.0) or better grade-point average in courses needed to satisfy degree requirements by the end of the semester in which they intend to graduate. Students must be in good academic standing by the end of their final semester in order to receive an advanced degree from UT Arlington.

Academic Probation

Per the Graduate Policy, “A graduate student whose cumulative grade point average falls below a 3.00 in all graduate courses, be they graduate or undergraduate level taken while enrolled as a UT Arlington graduate student, will be placed on academic probation. The student must attain a grade point average of at least 3.00 in the next semester he or she is enrolled or be subject to dismissal. Undergraduate courses or graduate courses graded P, R, I, Z, or W or courses that do not provide graduate credit cannot be used to remove the condition of academic probation.” Courses that are not part of the student’s degree plan do not contribute to GPA.

Graduate nursing students placed on academic probation are required to meet with an academic advisor to discuss plans for improvement and potential revision of their degree plan. Students may meet with an academic advisor electronically, via telephone, or in person. Students on academic probation will not be able to register for a following semester until cleared by the academic advisor (an advising hold will be placed in MyMav).

Students who do not gain good academic standing in the semester following completion of the probation semester will be academically dismissed. A student who has been dismissed for failure to maintain a GPA 3.0 may petition the program director to continue in the program.

Master of Science in Nursing and Post Masters Certificate Programs Remediation Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide an opportunity for remediation to MSN and PMC students to facilitate academic success and degree completion.

Master of Science in Nursing and Post Masters Certificate students who require remediation prior to or during clinical practice have the option to or may be required to retake a course(s) as remediation.

Courses taken as remediation are subject to the following stipulations:

1. Remediation course grades cannot be used to improve the University GPA or program GPA. Students are required to achieve a 3.0 GPA independent of the remediation course grade(s) for program completion. Remediation course grades are subject to university policies and procedures.
2. A remediation course may only be taken in which a letter grade of C was earned. The remediation policy does not apply to courses in which a student earned a letter grade of D or F.
3. A remediation course may only be taken for courses required as part of the student's MSN or PMC degree plan.
4. Each course in which the student has earned a letter grade of C may be repeated for remediation only once.
5. Students may withdraw from a remediation course only once. Subsequent enrollment in the remediation course must be completed.
6. Required remediation courses must be completed with a grade of B or better to satisfy a remediation requirement.
7. Optional remediation courses are subject to approval of the advisor and/or the program director.
8. Completion of remediation courses will be included in the academic summary information when reviewing petitions for continuation in the MSN and PMC programs.
9. Students may be required to remediate in one or more courses to continue in the program.
10. Remediation courses are not eligible for financial aid.
11. Students not in good academic standing will be required to complete clinicals in sites which do not require good academic standing as a pre-requisite for clinical practice.
12. Letters of good academic standing will not be issued to students or other parties on the student's behalf based on a remediation course grade.
13. Students who have demonstrated unsafe clinical behaviors may be subject to a clinical practice performance remediation plan in addition to course remediation.

Clinical Practice Performance Remediation

Students who have demonstrated unsafe clinical behaviors, as evaluated by the faculty, may be required to complete a formal, individualized remediation plan. The plan will be developed by the program director in consultation with the clinical course lead faculty and clinical faculty.

Remediation plan shall be:

- in writing,
- signed by the program director and the student,
- kept in the student's permanent record.

The remediation plan may include but is not limited to remediating one or more courses in which the student earned a grade of C; enrolling in one or more independent studies to remediate identified deficiencies in didactic content and clinical performance and completing simulation activities. Students must successfully pass all aspects of the remediation plan to pass the clinical course.

Students who have failed a clinical course and are unable to achieve a GPA of 3.0 prior to graduation are not eligible to be placed on a clinical remediation plan.

Petitions to Continue in the Graduate Nursing Program

Students who wish to submit a petition to continue in the Graduate Nursing Program must meet with an Academic Advisor. During that meeting, students should be prepared to discuss how/why plans to regain good academic standing during the probation semester were not successful and develop a specific plan for improvement. The student is responsible for submitting a written letter of petition electronically to the academic advisor for action by the graduate faculty. Students are also strongly encouraged to meet with the student success faculty (see information in following section) to develop plans to support academic success.

The student's petition to continue in the Graduate Nursing Program will be reviewed by the program director. If the program director approves the student's petition to continue, the academic advisor will work with the student to review/revise the student's degree plan and assist with clearing the student for enrollment. If the program director does not approve the petition, the student can submit a petition to the Chair of Graduate Nursing. Students should also be aware they may need to submit a "readmission form" if they experience an enrollment gap that includes a Fall or Spring semester. To apply for readmission, click on the readmission form link.

In some cases, a student may need/wish to submit a second petition to continue. If the conditions of the first petition were met, the program director will review the petition. As above, if the program director approves the student's petition to continue, the academic advisor will work with the student to review/revise the student's degree plan and assist with clearing the student for enrollment.

Students whose petitions to continue are approved by the program director may enroll as stipulated in the requirements of the approved petition. If a student's petition is not approved, dismissal from the University will stand. The student is not eligible for readmission to the Graduate Nursing Program.

A student who wishes to appeal the decision of the program director must submit the appeal in writing to their academic advisor who will then forward it to the Graduate Nursing Department Chair for review.

Graduate Nursing Student Course Failure Policy

The Department of Graduate Nursing is committed to maintaining a high-quality academic experience, high academic standards, and preparing graduates to practice the art and science of advanced nursing practice safely and to the full extent of their education. Advanced nursing practice requires the registered nurse to apply graduate level education to serve as leaders in health policy, leaders of health care systems and to improve the health and outcomes for individuals, families, and populations.

Student academic performance represents the level of mastery of the content taught in their respective program. Course grades of D and F represent a severe knowledge deficit and are the antithesis of safe advance nursing practice.

Progression Policy

Beginning Fall 2022 progression in the MSN, PMC, DNP, or PhD programs will not be permitted nor will a student be able to enroll in additional nursing courses if they:

1. receive a grade of D or F in more than one graduate level course or
2. receive any combination of grades D or F on two attempts of the same course

Special Considerations

1. Students who meet the above criteria will be dismissed from their respective program.
2. Students who desire to transfer programs and meet the above criteria but remain in good academic standing must petition the program director they wish to transfer to for approval.
3. Grades of D or F earned in remediation courses will not be considered in the two failure policy; however, earned failing grades in remediation courses will impact the overall GPA.
4. Students who are inactive and reapply for admission will be subject to the terms of this policy upon application for readmission. An inactive student who reapplies for admission and has two failing grades, as defined by this policy, and has a GPA of 3.0 or higher, must petition the program director for readmission.
5. For continuing students who currently have one or more failures, any subsequent failures will result in dismissal from the program.

Grade Replacement Policy

UT Arlington allows grade replacement in the graduate college. A student may retake up to 2 courses during their graduate study and replace their grade. The same course cannot be taken more than once for grade replacement. Please refer to the university catalog for the full grade replacement policy.

Graduation

Degree Requirements

Graduate students must complete degree requirements in accordance with the Graduate Catalog in force at the time they entered the graduate program in which the degree will be awarded or, at the student's option, the catalog of any subsequent year in which the student was in residence. If students choose to complete degree requirements in accordance with the catalog of a year subsequent to that in which they entered the graduate program, their graduate advisor must submit an online request form to Graduate Studies. The graduate advisor may contact the Office of Graduate Studies graduation desk for access to the required form. For additional information click on [Master's and Doctoral Degrees Academic Deadlines and Eligibility for Graduation](#)

Degree Completion

Coursework initiated in fulfillment of an MSN or a Post MSN Certificate program must be completed within six (6) years. All courses six (6) or more years old will expire and will need to be repeated to

fulfill the requirements towards the degree or certificate program. Re-enrollment in completed courses are subject to financial penalties.

Students who exceed the published time limits for completing the graduate degree or certificate, but wish to graduate, must **repeat** courses six (6) or more years old **and** petition the program director for an exception to the time limit policy. A student who wishes to appeal the decision of the program director must submit the appeal in writing to their academic advisor who will then forward it to the program director.

Application for Graduation

Students who have completed all degree requirements or who will complete degree requirements must submit an application for graduation by the deadline for graduation for the next available graduation date. They must also pay the appropriate graduation fees. Enrolled students who do not complete all requirements by the beginning of the next long semester must enroll to complete remaining requirements. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for complete graduation information.

Certification and Licensure as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse

UT Arlington prepares registered nurses to become Nurse Practitioners through an MSN degree program or a formal post-master's certificate program. Graduates from the MSN/PMC Nurse Practitioner programs are prepared to complete national certification and obtain state licensure. Students may review the Nursing State Authorization website to determine if the MSN/PMC Nurse Practitioner program meets licensure requirements in their state. MSN/PMC students who graduate from a nurse practitioner specialty track are eligible to take the national certification that aligns with their educational preparation.

Nurse Practitioner Specialty Track	Certifying Body	Certification Exam
Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Track	American Association of Critical Care Nurses American Nurses Credentialing Center	Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Track	American Academy of Nurse Practitioners American Nurses Credentialing Center	Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
Family Nurse Practitioner Track	American Academy of Nurse Practitioners American Nurses Credentialing Center	Family Nurse Practitioner
Neonatal Nurse Practitioner Track	National Certification Corporation	Neonatal Nurse Practitioner

Pediatric Nurse Practitioner- Acute Care Track	Pediatric Nurses Certification Board	Pediatric Nursing Practitioner- Acute Care
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner- Primary Care Track	Pediatric Nurses Certification Board	Pediatric Nurse Practitioner- Primary Care
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Track	American Nurses Credentialing Center	Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

All individuals prepared as Nurse Practitioners must be certified in their area of specialization. All individuals completing preparation as a Nurse Practitioner must also be licensed by their respective Board of Nursing (BON) as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) prior to practicing as a Nurse Practitioner. Students are responsible for completion and submission of the National Certification and BON applications and for obtaining their APRN status.

MSN NP Verification of Education for Certification and Licensure

1. The Department of Graduate Nursing is committed to the appropriate and timely completion of verification of education (VOE) forms for nurse practitioner students’ licensure or certification. These forms require the school to attest to the completion of each student’s education. The school will only attest to the completion of education after the semester has ended and after the degree conferral date. Each semester VOEs will be sent to the respective licensing board and/or certification board on the first business day after the degree conferral date.
2. Students should communicate with their respective program director regarding any questions about the licensure and certification process.
3. The Department of Graduate Nursing will automatically send the verification of education forms to the Texas Board of Nursing and ANCC. Requests for other verifications should be sent to BONpaperwork@uta.edu.
4. Students applying for licensure in Texas will need to complete the release of information form on the APRN application and email it to BONpaperwork@uta.edu. This form is located on page 2 of Part II of the Texas BON APRN application.
5. Out of state students applying for licensure in a state other than Texas are required to review their state licensure application, determine which forms need to be completed by the school and email those forms to BONpaperwork@uta.edu.

Academic Integrity

The University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing and Health Innovation supports the University of Texas at Arlington Honor Code and academic regulations regarding academic integrity. Students are responsible for knowing and complying with the Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or that I contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

Click on the [University Honor Code](#) link to view the code.

Students in the Graduate Nursing Programs are expected to follow the rules of academic integrity and submit only academic work and assignments that are entirely their own work. Academic dishonesty (violations of academic integrity) may include cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Information regarding dishonesty may be found in the University Catalog. For additional information regarding student conduct and discipline click on the UT Arlington Policy link.

In addition to the general rules of academic integrity, students are expected to comply with the following:

- Students may not collaborate with anyone else on assignments, quizzes, examinations, or any other academic work except as directed by the assignment/instructor's directions.
- Students may not resubmit any assignment or part of a previous assignment – written, audio, or video recorded - for which they previously received a grade. This applies to courses from which a student withdrew and/or in which a failing course grade was achieved.
- Students may not submit the same assignment (written or recorded) or portion of an assignment to more than one course unless specifically allowed or directed by the instructor's directions. This applies to both graded and non-graded assignments.
- Students may not resubmit any work which has previously been submitted for course credit at any educational institution unless prior written approval is received. Written approval for resubmitted work must be received from both the current course instructor and the instructor of the course in which the work was previously submitted.
- Students may not copy or share any course materials or documents, past or present assignments, nor quiz/examination questions on any social platform or publicly available website.
- Students may not seek, acquire, receive, or provide unauthorized information or assistance regarding an exam, quiz, or assignment (such as purchasing, using, or distributing any unauthorized course materials in order to gain academic advantage).

- Students are expected to accurately and completely document and record clinical practice hours completed and patient/client care activities. Falsifying any documents related to clinical hours or patient/client care activities (including documenting as fact, information not obtained through one's own direct assessment and examination of a patient or falsely recording clinical practice hours) constitutes dishonesty.
- Students are expected to accurately collect and submit data collected for completion of course and program requirements. Falsification of data or data collection methods constitutes academic dishonesty.
- Students are expected to comply with all HIPAA guidelines. No PHI should be removed from the clinical setting either in writing or electronically. If a student is an employee of a facility, the employee log on should not be used to gain access to medical records unless explicitly allowed by the facility. Failure to comply may result in an OCS referral and/or a report to the State Board of Nursing.

Students suspected of committing academic dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Community Standards. Students found responsible for academic dishonesty are subject to a grade penalty for the assignment in question, which may include a point deduction up to and including a zero and/or course failure. As noted in the University catalog, sanctions may include probation, suspension, and expulsion from the university. Procedures and additional information related to academic dishonesty and violations of the University Honor Code may be found on the [Office of Community Standards'](#) website.

Student Complaint and Grievance Procedures

The policies and procedures for Student Complaints, including grade and non-grade grievances are located on the University of Texas Arlington website and may be accessed by clicking on the links below:

- [Grade Grievance](#)
- [Student Complaints](#)

A confidential log of student complaints is maintained in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation Dean's Office.

Student Complaints

Student complaints related to issues or concerns in the graduate nursing program should be submitted in writing and may include grade and non-grade complaints. If a student has a complaint regarding the conduct of a course, a concern about a faculty member's feedback, or a

grade on an individual assignment in a course, it is the student's responsibility to first make a serious effort to resolve their concern with the faculty member involved. When the complaint is not resolved following discussion with the individual faculty member, the student should contact their Academic Program Director. Other complaints (for example, issues regarding clinical placements and/or policies and procedures of the graduate nursing program) should first be addressed by contacting the student's Academic Program Director. If a complaint remains unresolved, the student should contact the Associate Chair for their academic program for further assistance.

Students are encouraged to maintain a record of their efforts to resolve the complaint which may include emails, names of individuals contacted, and any meetings that occurred to resolve the complaint. At each step of the complaint process, if the student's complaint is not resolved, the student will be informed of the next step in pursuing their complaint. If the complaint or concern is still not resolved AND the student has evidence that they were treated differently than their peers and/or the institution processes or policies were not followed, the student may submit a formal appeal to the Dean of Students.

Course Grade Grievance Procedures

In an attempt to resolve a complaint, the student must first make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the individual with whom the grievance originated. Faculty of the course has the primary responsibility for assigning grades. Appeals of the official grade assigned to a student for a course will not, therefore, be considered at levels above the faculty unless a student offers evidence of:

- **Differential treatment** – examples might be providing benefits such as extra time for assignments to some but not all students in the class; excluding some students from attendance or other course requirements, OR
- **Procedural irregularities** – examples might be adding a new requirement that was not listed in the class syllabus; using criteria for grades not made available to the student ahead of time.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACULTY

At the outset of a course, the faculty will provide students with an overview of the expectations related to the course (e.g., assignments, grading, absences and academic dishonesty). The faculty will ensure that the grading policies are uniformly applied to all students in the class.

If an appeal process begins and if additional documentation is requested from the faculty, then the faculty must provide the documentation requested within 10 business days. Failure to supply the requested material may be considered as a cause for a finding in the student's favor.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

Step 1. The student must first discuss the issue or grade with the faculty involved. (If a clinical grade, this would be the Clinical Faculty. If the issue cannot be successfully resolved, then the student will discuss the matter with the Lead Teacher/Faculty of Record).

Step 2. In the event the student and the faculty are unable to reach agreement, or the faculty is unavailable, the student may request a meeting with the Lead Teacher/Faculty of Record's supervisor. (Associate Chair of the Department/Program Director as an example.) At this meeting, the student must present evidence of either **Differential treatment** or **Procedural irregularities**. Disagreement with the faculty's assignment of a grade is not grievable.

Step 3. In the event the student and the Associate Chair/Program Director are unable to reach agreement, the student must complete the **Student Academic Grievance Form**. **The form is available from the Dean's Office.**

PROCEDURES

1. Before a student appeals to the Department Chair, the student must attempt to resolve the complaint with the program director.
2. An appointment with the Department Chair of the involved Undergraduate or Graduate program may be scheduled to review the grievance procedures. This is not an interview to review the details of the grievance.
3. Students will complete the Student Academic Grievance Form using additional sheets of paper as necessary. The form can be obtained from the Dean's Office.
4. Once complete, the student should return the completed form to the Dean's Office in person or via email.
5. The Department Chair will appoint a committee of neutral faculty from within the Department to review the grade grievance. The Committee shall be composed of at least 3 faculty who are unrelated to the issues or people involved. The Committee's Chair will be designated by the Department Chair at the time of appointment. The Chair of the Committee will contact all members, provide information, and establish a meeting within 5 business days.
6. The Committee will review the appeal and all supporting documentation that has been submitted. The Committee may request an interview with the faculty and/or the student. The student may request the opportunity to meet with the Committee.
7. After gathering and reviewing all information, the Committee will make a recommendation to the Department Chair within 10 business days of completion of deliberation.
8. The Department Chair will review all information and make a final decision. The Chair will communicate the final decision to the student.
9. The Chair will notify the Dean of the decision.
10. If a student is dissatisfied with the decision, they may appeal to the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Innovation. The Dean's decision is final.
11. Students have one year from the day grades are posted to initiate a grievance.

Note: These procedures follow the UTA Academic Grievance-Grade and Non-grade Process.

<https://www.uta.edu/student-affairs/dos/file-a-complaint/academic-grievance-grade-non-grade>

Reference for UTA student complaints is found at <https://www.uta.edu/deanofstudents/complaints>

Clinical Placement Policies and Procedures

Students are responsible for reading and following the clinical policies and procedures in the clinical management system. The clinical management system guides students through clinical placement and clearance processes. The following policies are posted in the clinical management system:

- UTA MSN Clinical Practicum Acknowledgement
- Graduate Student Clinical Placement Policy and Procedure
- Graduate Student Clinical Performance Policy
- Graduate Student Clinical Site and Preceptor Policy
- Students Experiencing Difficulties with Clinical Placements
- [Graduate Nursing Clinical Clearance Requirements Policy](#)

Nurse Practitioner Program Clinical Experiences

Clinical hours required in the nurse practitioner tracks are experiential learning encounters designed to provide patient care practice that prepares students in the diagnosis, evaluation and management of their population focus. National nursing organizations, national certifying bodies and program accreditation agencies require nurse practitioner programs to provide a minimum of 500 clinical hours. Some programs, such as the Neonatal Nurse Practitioner program, are required to have a minimum of 600 clinical hours. The minimum number of hours must be direct patient care experiences. Nonpatient care clinical activities (including simulation and observational activities) may not be used to satisfy the established minimum clinical hour requirements and may only be used for clinical hours which exceed the minimal requirements. Simulation hours may not be used to replace population specific clinical hours required by any NP track even if the student has met the minimum 500 direct patient care hours. Students must have direct patient care hours in all categories of population specific requirements, required by their NP track, in addition to meeting the minimal direct patient care hour requirement.

While the requirements establish the minimum number of hours an NP program must provide, they do not preclude universities from requiring more hours as part of their curriculum. UTA's NP programs have incorporated more than the minimal number of clinical hours to facilitate student learning, ensure that students are able to transition to the work force as seamlessly as possible, and ensure that students receive the foundational knowledge required to practice safely. The completion of a degree implies that students have met all the requirements of the curriculum, and thus can practice safely upon graduation. Students are unable to graduate without completing all program required clinical hours. This includes hours above the minimum threshold as defined by the appropriate national certifying body for the degree. Completion of a graduate level education is required to sit for national certification and state licensure; therefore, failure to complete all program required clinical hours will result in a failure to graduate, become certified and become licensed.

The graduate nursing faculty have designed the curriculum to align with certification, licensure, and accreditation requirements and are committed to high academic standards. As such, waiving any amount of clinical hours required in any NP track is not appropriate nor does it align with professional, ethical, and legal standards that require the department to validate students' competency and ability to practice safely upon graduation.

Status of RN Licensure

All graduate nursing students must have an unencumbered license as designated by their licensing Board of Nursing (BON) to participate in graduate clinical nursing courses. It is imperative that any student whose license is under investigation by a Board of Nursing or becomes encumbered at any time while a student is enrolled in a Graduate Nursing Program immediately notify the Chair. Students who fail to report the above may be subject to dismissal.

Substance Abuse Policy

The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) College of Nursing & Health Innovation (CONHI) is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and productive learning environment for students, faculty, staff, clients, and visitors. To provide a safe learning environment, students must be able to perform with reasonable skill in a safe, secure, productive, and effective manner, and remain able to do so through the entire time they are students at UTA.

Students must adhere to the Academic Nursing Program Substance Abuse Policy (full policy in the Appendix) at all times. Violations of this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Program.

Professional Liability Insurance

The Liability Insurance Policy is provided through UTA and is covered by a student fee each year that is assessed in the Fall registration.

Verification of Medical Insurance Coverage

All newly admitted UTA Graduate Nursing Students are required to provide Verification of Medical Insurance Coverage that includes Emergency Department coverage and follow-up treatment for needle sticks and blood borne diseases. This mandatory requirement has been approved by the UT System Board of Regents.

Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

In the event of injury, needle stick, and/or exposure of the nursing student to blood or body fluids, the nursing student should immediately notify the nursing clinical faculty. The faculty is responsible for notifying the appropriate person at the agency where the incident occurred and completing the agency's documentation if appropriate. The faculty will also notify CONHI's Clinical Compliance Coordinator.

Life threatening emergency treatment, if needed, should be implemented at the clinical facility. If emergency treatment is not available on site, 911 should be activated. If the clinical facility does not provide care indicated for the injury/incident or it is a non-emergent situation, the student may select a health care provider of their choice.

The faculty will be responsible for completing the Injury/Illness Report form for Students and Visitors located in Canvas and the Faculty Student Incident Check List. The Injury/Illness Report form should be forwarded to The University of Texas at Arlington Environmental Health and Safety Department.

Clinical Performance Requirements and Evidence of Clinical Competence

Nursing is a practice profession in which patient and family safety must be protected. MSN and PMC students enrolled in a nurse practitioner track are responsible for demonstrating clinical competence. The faculty will investigate all allegations and concerns of all unsafe clinical behavior. If faculty deem a student's clinical performance as unsafe, students may not drop or withdraw from the clinical course regardless of the drop or withdrawal date. The student will be immediately removed from the clinical setting, will be prohibited from completing any additional clinical hours for the course in question, and receive a grade of F.

Any of the following behaviors constitute a clinical failure:

1. Fails to follow standards of professional practice as detailed by the Texas Nursing Practice Act¹ (available at <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/>) or the student's respective Board of Nursing or state licensing agency.
2. Inability to accept and/or act on constructive feedback.
3. Need continuous, specific, and detailed supervision for the expected course performance.
4. Inability to implement advanced clinical behaviors required by the course.
5. Failure to complete required clinical assignments.
6. Falsification of clinical hours.
7. Violation of the student confidentiality agreement.
8. Falsification of clinical logs, clinical assignments, patient documentation.
9. Knowledge deficits which increases the risk of or causes injury to a patient.
10. Dismissal from the clinical setting by the preceptor, or their designee, for unsafe clinical behavior, knowledge deficits, or incivility with the patient, family, preceptor or other employees of the clinical agency.

¹Students should also be aware that violation of the Nursing Practice Act is a "reportable offense" to the Texas Board of Nursing or their State's Board of Nursing or state licensing agency.

The following program requirements are also associated with patient safety and will result in clinical failure without regard to the drop or withdrawal time frames. Clinical failures related to the items below will be reviewed by the Department Chair and/or the Associate Chair.

1. Non-compliance with clinical clearance requirements.
2. Non-compliance with Drug and Alcohol policy

3. Unlawful behavior prohibiting sufficient background check required for clinical participation

Student Resources and Information

Student Success Faculty

Faculty members who work specifically with graduate students are available to assist graduate nursing students who are at academic risk or who need academic support. The goal of the student success faculty is to support student achievement in masters and doctoral level coursework so students can reach their educational goals. Students may contact a student success faculty member directly, or a course instructor may encourage the student to contact a student success faculty member. Contact information for the graduate student success faculty can be found in each course syllabus or by clicking on [Student Success Faculty](#). University level student support may be found by clicking on the Student Services link.

Disability Accommodations

UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the Student Access and Resource Center (SARC). Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

[Student Access and Resource Center](#), (SARC), or calling 817-272-3364
Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS), or calling 817-272-3671

Only those students who have officially documented a need for accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found by clicking on the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#) link or by calling their office at (817) 272-3364.

APA Format

Correct and accurate citation of information used to prepare papers and presentations is an expectation of graduate students in nursing. Students are required to follow American Psychological Association (APA) format for scholarly papers and assignments.

Current Mailing and E Mail Address

Students are required to maintain a current mailing address and telephone number contact with the University. A change of address may be completed online via MyMav. This is essential so that schedules, official correspondence, scholarship notification, and emergency messages will not be delayed or lost.

UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account. For information on activating and using the student email click on the MavMail link.

Per UTA Policy, MavMail is the official email for CONHI and the University to communicate pertinent information. Students will be held responsible for information distributed in this manner. All official communication will be done using UT Arlington's MavMail. Personal and/or work emails will not be used. Students are required to check MavMail every day.

Technical Support

MyMav, the online system for registration and payment, gives students access to their course grades and a record of all courses completed. Students' net IDs and passwords provide them with secure access to the MyMav and other electronic support programs including the UTA MavMail system, the library, and Canvas courses. If students have trouble with electronic access, they should contact the university [Help Desk](#).

Library Support

The College of Nursing and Health Innovation has a subject librarian who works closely with students and faculty. Information about how to contact the subject librarian is available in each course syllabus.

Dress Code

The University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing and Health Innovation expects students to reflect professionalism and maintain high standards of appearance and grooming in the clinical setting. Professional attire (which may include a lab coat) is expected. Students where scrubs are provided should follow the above standards prior to changing into scrubs.

In addition, MSN and Post-MSN Certificate students must be clearly identified as UTA Graduate students and wear a UTA MyMav ID in the clinical environment.

Commitments outside of the classroom

Graduate nursing education requires students to have dedicated time to devote to studying, completing assignments, preparing for, and completing clinicals and other course work. Students are encouraged to review their work schedules and commitments and adjust accordingly given the demands of the MSN/PMC program. Commitments which compete with graduate study may result in suboptimal academic performance and place the student in academic jeopardy.

Study Time Recommendations

In general, for every-one graduate nursing semester credit hour of enrollment a student should allocate 5 hours of study time outside of class. For example, a 3 semester credit hours course may reasonably require 15 hours of work outside of class plus anytime needed to complete

clinical. Please note that accelerated online courses will require more time outside of class to successfully complete the course due to the accelerated format.

Employment Recommendations

It is recommended that a student's employment not exceed 16-20 hours per week in either regular or summer semesters. Students are encouraged to evaluate their energy level, familial and personal obligations, and school commitments before starting their degree program.

Board of Nursing Reportable Student Incidents

Registered Nurses enrolled in a graduate nursing program at UTA are serving in a professional capacity. Graduate students are required to act in accordance with their respective State Board of Nursing's Nurse Practice Act and Rules and Regulations. Violations of standards of nursing practice, as defined by the student's respective State Board of Nursing will be reported to the appropriate Board of Nursing.

In the event a reportable event is suspected to have occurred, the faculty witness to the event will discuss the event with the Department Chair. The Department Chair will examine the respective Board of Nursing Nurse Practice Act and Rules and Regulations and make a determination on the reportability of the event. Upon determining that the event is reportable, the Department Chair will inform the Dean and student, complete the necessary paperwork and submit it to the student's respective Board of Nursing.

Reportable events include but are not limited to:

1. Academic Dishonesty
2. Falsification or omission of any admission documentation
3. Falsification of licensure
4. Falsification of information submitted for clinical clearance
5. Falsification of information submitted requesting assistance with clinical placement
6. Unsafe clinical behaviors include but are not limited to:
 - a. Fails to follow standards of professional practice as detailed by the Texas Board of Nursing Practice Act, and Rules and Regulations or the student's State's Board of Nursing.
 - b. Inability to accept and/or act on constructive feedback
 - c. Need for continuous, specific, and detailed supervision for the expected course performance
 - d. Inability to implement advanced clinical behaviors required by the course.
 - e. Failure to complete required clinical assignments
 - f. Falsification of clinical hours.
 - g. Violation of student confidentiality agreement.
 - h. Falsification of clinical logs, clinical assignments, patient documentation
 - i. Knowledge deficits which increases the risk of or causes injury to a patient.
7. Falsification of GAP Analysis.
8. Incivility which disrupts patient care.
9. Other activities which violate the respective Board of Nursing Practice Act or Rules and Regulations (e.g., HIPAA violations).

In addition to reporting unsafe clinical behaviors to the student's respective licensing agency, the student will receive a course grade of "F". If the unsafe clinical behaviors are related to academic dishonesty, the incident will also be reported to the Office of Community Standards.

Some states do not have a Board of Nursing. In this instance, students are equally responsible for the standards of practice, rules and regulations and laws established by the appropriate state licensing agency. The above language applies in these instances as well.

Civility and Professional Behavior

UTA CONHI believes in a culture of caring. At CONHI, civility is expected from faculty, staff and students. Incivility will not be tolerated. Incivility is defined as any one-time or repeated action or unprofessional behavior (whether physical, psychological, verbal and/or non-verbal) including but not limited to behavior that is: disrespectful, obnoxious, impolite, hostile, disregarding, rude, discourteous, offensive, vulgar, aggressive, taunting, violent, intimidating, belligerent, and/or bullying. Students are required to maintain civil and respectful communication with faculty, staff, and students at all times and to act in accordance with the ANA Code of Ethics. Uncivil communications with faculty and staff may result in one or more of the following:

1. Notification informing the student that a communication was inappropriate, and their concerns will be addressed when they pose their communication in a civil, professional manner.
2. When necessary, reporting behavior to the appropriate parties. Threats of harm to an individual or to the college or university will be reported to the Office of Community Standards, the UTA Police Department, and the student's respective State Board of Nursing.

Students should keep in mind that they are communicating with faculty and staff members that they will rely on for references and recommendations in the very near future. Completion of references and recommendations for a student are at the sole discretion of the faculty or staff member. Students are beginning a new phase of their professional career and professionalism is one of the areas that will be evaluated in any recommendation

Appendix

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH INNOVATION ACADEMIC NURSING, KINESIOLOGY AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) College of Nursing & Health Innovation (CONHI) is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and productive learning environment for students, faculty, staff, clients, and visitors. In order to provide a safe learning environment, students must be able to perform with reasonable skill in a safe, secure, productive, and effective manner, and remain able to do so through the entire time they are students at UTA.

All students are expected to be in good academic standing throughout their Academic Undergraduate Nursing, Graduate Nursing, Kinesiology or Public Health Program. Good academic standing for CONHI students includes maintaining professional behavior, personal accountability, academic integrity and for Undergraduate or Graduate Nursing Students, upholding the [Code of Ethics for Nursing Students](#). Failure to meet these expectations may result in course failure or dismissal from the Program. Good academic standing extends beyond the classroom and is an expectation CONHI holds of students during their clinical courses, while present in healthcare facilities, and while present within their communities.

Students will be required to sign an attestation with each clinical course for which they enroll verifying they will adhere to this Policy. Regardless of whether a student has signed the attestation, students must adhere to this Academic Nursing Program Substance Abuse Policy (Policy) at all times. Violations of this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Program.

Registered Nurses

If a student is a registered nurse and has a positive drug screen, the student will be referred to the state BON where the student is licensed. The student must comply with all BON requirements prior to returning to any clinical course(s). Failure to complete any BON requirement will result in dismissal from CONHI.

Impaired Behavior Students

Impaired students are not fit for participating in a Program and may pose significant health and safety risks to themselves and others. In the clinical setting, students must be fit for duty and are expected to perform in a safe manner without signs of impairment. Students exhibiting one or more signs of impaired behavior directly before or at any time during a clinical rotation shift will be immediately assessed. [See Impaired Observation Checklist (IOC)*].

When a faculty member or preceptor personally observes or receives reliable information that supports a reasonable suspicion that a student may be impaired, the faculty member or preceptor will assess the student using the IOC. If the IOC results confirm impairment, the student will be removed immediately from the clinical setting and will be required to submit to the appropriate screening test at an [approved screening center](#), including [UTA Health Services](#). The specific test will be based on the suspected substance and may include blood, urine, or saliva sample(s). Typically, a blood alcohol level test is administered when alcohol is the suspected cause of impairment and a 10-panel urine screen is administered when impairment is suspected due to other substances. Students are solely responsible for the cost and scheduling of impaired behavior drug screenings, evaluations, and treatments.

Students must arrive at the testing site for their impaired behavior screening within two hours of referral. Students suspected of impairment are not allowed to drive themselves to the testing site and must make appropriate transportation arrangements such as calling a friend or family member to transport them or using a transportation system, such as a taxi. Depending on the level of impairment, the student may be referred to the facility's emergency department (where the student is participating in a clinical course) for evaluation and care.

Once at the screening center, students will have up to three hours to provide an adequate specimen (the approved screening center will determine the adequacy of the specimen). Students must remain at the testing site the entire three hours or until an adequate specimen is provided, whichever occurs first.

Approved screening centers will adhere to the following:

- maintain the chain of custody;
- confirmation GCMS (gas chromatography and mass spectrometry);
- initial screen must include split sampling method;
- blood alcohol level drawn if alcohol involvement suspected; and
- if a student fails to provide an adequate sample within the required three-hour time period, stop the test and report to the referring faculty member or preceptor, or other CONHI designated representative, the student failed to provide an adequate sample.

Students screened for impaired behavior cannot return to their clinical course(s) until their results are received and approved by appropriate CONHI personnel. Students who refuse to submit to, fail to appear for, or fail to provide an adequate sample for their impaired behavior drug screen will not be allowed to return to any clinical course(s) and will earn a failing grade in their clinical course(s).

If an impaired behavior student's screening is positive due to alcohol or substance abuse, the student must be evaluated by a qualified healthcare professional (psychiatric mental healthcare provider or substance abuse provider), follow the qualified healthcare professional's recommendation for treatment if applicable, receive a recommendation from the qualified healthcare professional to return to the Program, and provide documentation the student is able to safely return to the Program. Upon an impaired behavior student's return to clinical courses, random urine drug screens will be conducted each semester throughout the student's Program and at the sole discretion of CONHI.