

**University of South Carolina Upstate  
Mary Black School of Nursing  
Master of Science in Nursing Program**



**2021-2022**

**GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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The University of South Carolina Upstate provides equal opportunity and affirmative action in education and employment for qualified persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or veteran status.

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA UPSTATE  
MARY BLACK SCHOOL OF NURSING  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING  
PROGRAM**

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The University of South Carolina Upstate reserves the right to make changes in curricula, degree requirements, course offerings, and all regulations when in the judgment of the faculty, the Chancellor, the President or the Board of Trustees such changes are in the best interest of the students and the University. The Graduate Nursing Faculty reserve the right to review and make recommendations to revise this handbook annually. Should there be significant changes in policies and guidelines, students will be given copies of the changes.

Please note: Registration at the university assumes the student's acceptance of all published regulations, including those which appear in this and all other publications.

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## WELCOME

Welcome to the Master of Science in Nursing program at the University of South Carolina Upstate. We are excited that you have made the Mary Black School of Nursing your program of choice for the pursuit of your next nursing degree. We have three concentrations in the MSN program; Master of Science in Nursing for the Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL), Nursing Education, and Nursing Leadership. We take pride in offering high-quality nursing programs focused on student success. We are confident that you will find your chosen concentration of study to be both challenging and rewarding.

Our faculty are committed to your success and are accessible and willing to assist you in every way possible. Our goal is for you to have the best educational experience possible as you grow both personally and professionally. So, prepare yourself for an experience that will change the way you think and position you to take on new roles and new opportunities. This handbook was developed as a resource for you and includes various policies and guidelines for the graduate program. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to seek clarification from faculty.

Once again, welcome and thank you for choosing the University of South Carolina Upstate, Mary Black School of Nursing! If there is anything, I can do to assist you, feel free to reach out to me at any time.

Sincerely,



Shirleatha Lee, PhD, RN, CNE  
Dean and Professor  
Mary Black Endowed Chair for Nursing

## **HISTORY OF USC UPSTATE**

The history of the University of South Carolina Upstate is a chronicle of remarkable development. In 1967, the university was founded in response to efforts undertaken by G.B. Hodge, M.D., together with fellow members of the Spartanburg County Commission for Higher Education, and a remarkably strong founding faculty primarily to avert serious health care labor shortage crisis when Spartanburg General Hospital announced plans to eliminate its diploma program for registered nurses. A citizen's committee investigated the situation and ultimately requested that Spartanburg be included in the University of South Carolina system. The Spartanburg Regional Campus, as it was first known, opened its doors in the fall of 1967 to 177 students on the first floor of the Spartanburg General Hospital nursing residence. Enrollment continued to increase, which resulted in the school becoming a four-year university in 1975 and being renamed the University of South Carolina Spartanburg. Since its founding, USC Upstate has grown from a small, two-year campus into one of the leading metropolitan universities in the Southeast. This growth has been a direct response to the needs of the Upstate — a tradition that began with the University's creation. The University has expanded well beyond nursing to include 40 bachelor's programs in the liberal arts, sciences, business, information management and systems, teacher education and nursing. In 1994, the University moved to the graduate level, with master's degree programs in elementary education and early childhood education. The University's numerous partnerships with public and private corporations and other educational institutions, coupled with the mission to offer baccalaureate education to the citizens of the Upstate of South Carolina, led to a name change. On June 30, 2004, with USC Board of Trustees approval, USCS changed its name to the University of South Carolina Upstate.

## **MARY BLACK SCHOOL OF NURSING HISTORY**

The Mary Black School of Nursing is named in honor of Mrs. Mary Black Phillips and the late Miss Rosa Black in appreciation for the generosity of the Black Family for their role in securing funds for the building that houses the School of Nursing. The School began offering the Associate Degree in Technical Nursing in 1967 with the beginning of the University. This program closed in 2005. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing program began in 1977 as an upper division program for registered nurses. In 1986, the first generic four-year track began. In 2003 the University of South Carolina Upstate opened an additional campus for the University in Greenville, South Carolina at the University Center (UCG). Classrooms, computer laboratories, a learning resource center and faculty offices support the undergraduate program at the Greenville site. In 2008, the Mary Black School of Nursing, Spartanburg campus, moved its offices and classrooms to the new Health Education Complex on North Campus Boulevard. In Spring 2013, the Mary Black School of Nursing received approval from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education for a Master in Science degree with an emphasis on the Clinical Nurse Leader with classes beginning in fall 2014. The Master of Science in Nursing Education and Master of Science in Nursing Leadership were approved in fall 2019.

## **MARY BLACK SCHOOL OF NURSING VISION**

The Mary Black School of Nursing will be recognized as a leader in nursing education, service, and scholarship that prepares practice-ready nurses from diverse backgrounds who promote health and wellness.

## **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA UPSTATE MISSION**

University of South Carolina Upstate aims to become one of the Southeast's leading "metropolitan" universities ... a university that acknowledges as its fundamental reason for being its relationship to expanding populations along the I-85 corridor. It aims to be recognized nationally among its peer metropolitan institutions for its excellence in education and commitment to its students, for its involvement in the Upstate, and for the clarity and integrity of its metropolitan mission. As a senior public institution of the University of South Carolina with a comprehensive residential campus in Spartanburg and commuting and degree completion operations at the University Center of Greenville, the University's primary responsibilities are to offer baccalaureate education to the citizens of the Upstate of South Carolina and to offer selected master's degrees in response to regional demand.

USC Upstate strives to prepare its students to participate as responsible citizens in a diverse, global and knowledge based society, to pursue excellence in their chosen careers and to continue learning throughout life. Curricula and services are designed for the University's students, four to seven thousand in headcount, who are diverse in background, age, race, ethnicity, educational experience and academic goals. Students are drawn in large proportion from the Upstate where many choose to remain for their careers. A broad range of major curricula are provided in arts and sciences and in professional fields of study required by the regional economy, including business, education, and nursing. Through on-site instruction, distance learning, continuing education and inter-institutional articulation agreements, both traditional students and working professionals are served across the region.

Consistent with the international character of the Upstate, the University promotes global perspectives across its programs. Supporting the regional employment objectives of most of its students, it provides extensive experiential learning opportunities.

The University's metropolitan mission rests upon a foundation of partnerships with the education, corporate and service organizations of the Upstate. The faculty provides leadership in promoting the Upstate's economic, social and cultural development. This is achieved through its teaching, professional and public service, basic and applied scholarship and research, and creative endeavors.

**Core Values:** The University's core values not only serve as the philosophical underpinnings of the institution's mission, but they serve to govern attitudes, behaviors, and decisions in daily activities among stakeholders. As such, the University of South Carolina Upstate affirms that...

People come first. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment wherein we respect our differences as we pursue our common academic purposes. Our employees, students, parents and partners are the University's most valuable assets. We aim to work hard, work smart and always do the right thing.

We cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and constituents, aiming to be responsive, flexible, accessible and friendly in our service. We strive to be good will ambassadors for the University, and to advance its reputation and its metropolitan mission.

Stewardship of resources is critical to accomplishing the University's mission. We understand the importance of evaluating and reflecting on our daily activities in order to gain the highest value in return for the University's and our own professional investments. As employees, we aim to apply principles of honesty and fiscal responsibility in order to conserve student, partner, and University resources as though they were our own. Integrity as an academic institution drives our daily activities. That integrity includes a passion for teaching and learning, and a belief that every employee and student has a right to learn and progress as far as he or she is able. We seek, therefore, to provide a distinctive learning environment that supports and encourages employee growth and personal and professional development.

## **MARY BLACK SCHOOL OF NURSING MISSION**

The Mary Black School of Nursing provides innovative and high-quality nursing education to Upstate South Carolina and beyond. We strive for excellence in teaching, service, and scholarship, embrace diversity and inclusion, and establish meaningful partnerships needed to graduate nursing students of choice who are prepared to serve as leaders and change agents in promoting health within the community.

Revised 7/2009; 5/2011; 8/2012; 8/2014; 8/2019

## MARY BLACK SCHOOL OF NURSING PHILOSOPHY

Nursing is an art and science with a commitment to humanity, utilizing nursing knowledge and caring practices. The theoretical work of Boykin, Benner, and Pender guide the philosophy of Mary Black School of Nursing. The themes of authentic caring, competency, and health promotion embody our efforts to educate the next generation of nurses and nurse leaders. The Mary Black School of Nursing philosophy reflects the vision, mission, and goals of the University of South Carolina Upstate. Under the guidance of the Baccalaureate program goals, the Mary Black School of Nursing transforms students to apply critical reasoning, demonstrate effective communication, practice competently, and to operate as a professional role model. Graduate program goals guide the student to integrate critical reasoning supported by theory and evidence-based knowledge; employ skilled communication to advocate for the patient; demonstrate transformative leadership to focus on the unique patient populations, and act as a change agent to improve the well-being of the community. The conceptual framework for the Mary Black School of Nursing encompasses the four metaparadigms of person, nurse, environment, and health.

**Person:** A person is an individual who interacts holistically with their environment, interprets personal experiences, and seeks a higher level of self-awareness. This person interacts and communicates by respecting and caring for self and others by appreciating the values, beliefs, and behaviors encountered and by seeking knowledge within their learning community.

**Nurse:** A person who intentionally builds relationships with others to enable the condition of giving and receiving help. This person serves as a role model, teacher, and mentor and demonstrates nurturing and caring to others. Nursing is the art and science of attending to the discovery, creation, refinement of knowledge, and ethical development of an authentic presence to facilitate wholeness.

**Environment:** The environment is the context in which teaching, learning, and nursing occur. In the learning environment, individuals seeking knowledge learn to create, modify, and promote optimal health by influencing the person to adjust as needed to the environment and by advocating for the environmental support of the person.

**Health:** Deliberate actions that express caring and communicate physiological, psychological, social, spiritual wholeness, and well-being. The illustration of health is a lived-experience of persons within their environment and is influenced by the reciprocal interactions as defined by that person's perspective of wellness.

**Education:** Nursing education responds to the needs and concerns of the public by developing curricula that are ethical, relevant, based on research, evidence, and considers future trends in health care and nursing. Students learn the art and science of nursing by the acquisition and application of knowledge through thoughtful study, and by practicing skills in a variety of settings to develop into competent nurse generalist or nurse leaders that are prepared to meet the dynamic challenges of the Healthcare systems of today and tomorrow. Nursing education provides an environment that instills a quest for life-long learning through a sense of belonging and captures the essence of nursing, which is caring.

**Faculty:** The faculty at the Mary Black School of Nursing creates an environment that embodies caring, built on evidence, and support student learning. The learning environment is created by faculty that generates systematic inquiry, creativity, caring, and respect for self and others. Faculty facilitates opportunities for students to integrate the experience, service learning, information, and new knowledge to influence change in nursing, community, and healthcare. The commitment of the faculty is to design and implement curricula that prepare the student to become competent nurses entering the nursing profession and to develop nurse leaders to transform the practice of nursing. Creating innovative and evidence-based teaching strategies, the faculty engages students to apply and integrate critical reasoning, demonstrate and employ effective communications strategies, to become competent nurses or a transformational leader and clinical expertise to advocate for improving the well-being of individuals and community.

**Student:** A student is a person who is accountable and takes personal ownership of their learning. The student seizes learning opportunities, embraces various experiences, and gathers new knowledge that prepares them to become a professional nurse and a nurse leader. In a caring environment, students develop empathy, altruism, and respect for self and others. Upon completion, the student becomes a leader and responsible citizen, who influences nursing, the community, and healthcare.

Adopted by faculty 2/15/02

Revised 10/2002; 4/2003; 7/2009; 5/2011; 8/2012; 8/2014; 8/2019

## **MSN PROGRAM GOALS**

The MSN program prepares the nursing graduate to assume advanced nursing roles in a variety of health care settings. The program is designed for RNs who hold the BSN degree.

Program goals/outcomes:

- 1) Integrate critical reasoning, theoretical and evidence-based knowledge, and nursing skills in information and healthcare technology to improve patient outcomes.
- 2) Employ skilled communication to develop and lead patient centered, inter-professional teams and advocate for patient centered and culturally responsive care among diverse patient populations.
- 3) Demonstrate transformative leadership by blending strong evidence and clinical expertise in the provision of safe high-quality advanced nursing practice.
- 4) Analyze the effect of policy across healthcare organizations and systems and act as a change agent to advocate for health policies focused on improving the wellbeing of the community.



**MSN CURRICULUM  
SCHOOL OF NURSING  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM  
CLINICAL NURSE LEADER - DEGREE PLAN**

Full Time Four Semester Plan (38 Hours)					
Course Number	Course Name	Hours	Course Number	Course Name	Hours
<b>Fall Semester I (11 Hours)</b>			<b>Spring Semester II (9 Hours)</b>		
NURS700	Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations for Nursing	3	NURS710	Advanced Evidence-based Practice	3
NURS701	Health Promotion and Advanced Health Assessment	3	NURS711	Healthcare Delivery Systems	2
NURS702	Advanced Pathophysiology	3	NURS712	Role of the Nurse as Leader	3
NURS703	Cultural Perspectives in Healthcare*	2	NURS713	CNL Practicum I	1
NURS 715	<b>Summer Semester (2 Hours)</b> Global Experience (optional substitute for NURS 703)	2			
NURS720	Advanced Applied Pharmacology	3			
<b>Fall Semester III (6 Hours)</b>			<b>Spring Semester IV (9 Hours)</b>		
NURS721	Quality and Risk Management in Health Systems Leadership	2	NURS730	Outcomes Evaluation in Healthcare Systems Leadership	3
NURS722	Data Analysis in the Healthcare System	2	NURS731	Evidence Based Practice Project II	2
NURS723	Evidence Based Practice Project I	1	NURS732	CNL Practicum III	4
NURS724	CNL Practicum II	1			

\*NURS715 optional instead of NURS 703

A description of each of the above courses can be found in the USC Upstate Graduate Catalog.  
This is a sample curricular plan. Course offerings may vary based on program planning.

**MSN CURRICULUM  
SCHOOL OF NURSING  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM  
NURSING LEADERSHIP - DEGREE PLAN**

Full Time Four Semester Plan (38 Hours)					
Course Number	Course Name	Hours	Course Number	Course Name	Hours
<b>Fall Semester I (11 Hours)</b>			<b>Spring Semester II (11 Hours)</b>		
NURS700	Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations for Nursing	3	NURS710	Advanced Evidence-based Practice	3
NURS703	Cultural Perspectives in Healthcare*	2	NURS711	Healthcare Delivery Systems	2
NURS714	Organizational Theory	3	NURS712	Role of the Nurse Leader	3
Elective	Elective	3	NURS734	Nursing Leadership Immersion I	3
NURS 715	<b>Summer Semester (5 Hours)</b> <i>Global Experience (optional substitute for NURS 703)</i>	2			
NURS716	Economic and Healthcare Outcomes	3			
NURS721	Quality and Risk Management	2			
<b>Fall Semester III (5 Hours)</b>			<b>Spring Semester IV (6 Hours)</b>		
NURS722	Data Analysis in the Healthcare System	2	NURS 717	Healthcare Policies and Financing	3
NURS734	Nursing Leadership Immersion II	3	NURS735	Nursing Leadership Practicum	3

\*NURS715 optional instead of NURS 703

A description of each of the above courses can be found in the USC Upstate Graduate Catalog.  
***This is a sample curricular plan. Course offerings may vary based on program planning.***

**MSN CURRICULUM  
SCHOOL OF NURSING  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM  
NURSING EDUCATION - DEGREE PLAN**

Full Time Four Semester Plan (38 Hours)					
Course Number	Course Name	Hours	Course Number	Course Name	Hours
<b>Fall Semester I (11 Hours)</b>			<b>Spring Semester II (8 Hours)</b>		
NURS700	Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations for Nursing	3	NURS710	Advanced Evidence-based Practice	3
NURS701	Health Promotion and Advanced Health Assessment	3	NURS711	Healthcare Delivery Systems	2
NURS702	Advanced Pathophysiology	3	NURS720	Advanced Applied Pharmacology	3
NURS703	Cultural Perspectives in Healthcare*	2			
NURS 715	<b>Summer Semester (6 Hours)</b> <i>Global Experience (optional substitute for NURS 703)</i>	2			
NURS704	Education in Nursing	3			
NURS725	Role of the Nursing Educator	3			
<b>Fall Semester III (6 Hours)</b>			<b>Spring Semester IV (7 Hours)</b>		
NURS706	Curriculum and Program Development	3	NURS707	Instruction and Evaluation	3
NURS739	Advanced Management of Health	1	NURS726	Nursing Educator Practicum	4
NURS740	Advanced Management of Health Practicum	2			

\*NURS715 *optional instead of NURS 703*

A description of each of the above courses can be found in the USC Upstate Graduate Catalog.  
***This is a sample curricular plan. Course offerings may vary based on program planning.***

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**NURS U700. Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations for Nursing (3)** Exploration of various nursing theories and the utilization of nursing theory to health care delivery and to the role of the advanced practice nurse. Nursing theory and its relationship to providing comprehensive and holistic nursing care is investigated. Prerequisites: Admission to graduate program.

**NURS U701. Health Promotion and Advanced Health Assessment (3)** Comprehensive advanced holistic health assessment skills based on the integration of advanced theoretical and empirical knowledge necessary to identify health needs and risks. Emphasis will be placed on the differentiation between normal and abnormal findings, integration of laboratory findings and diagnostic reasoning analyses for clinical decision making, incorporating the principles of health promotion. Prerequisite: Admission to the graduate program.

**NURS U702. Advanced Pathophysiology (3)** Examination of the pathophysiological basis of disease processes. Core pathophysiological concepts for all body systems as a foundation for clinical decision making and nursing management is included. Prerequisite: Admission to the graduate program.

**NURS U703. Cultural Perspectives in Healthcare (2)** Emphasis on understanding the ways cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, religious and lifestyle variations are expressed. Attention is directed at increasing the capacity of health care professionals to develop culturally sensitive health care systems. Prerequisite: Admission to the graduate program

**NURS U704. Education in Nursing (3)** Educational theories and principles for students, patients, and groups. Teaching and learning themes apply evidence-based strategies and prepare nurses to teach patients, peers, and students in various settings.

**NURS U706. Curriculum and Program Development** – Analyzes curriculum development, revision, and the role of the nurse educator to support cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning. Topics include characteristics of a good curriculum, appropriate teaching/learning and educator resources.

**NURS U707. Instruction and Evaluation (3)** – Examination of the outcomes from and use of instructional strategies. Topics are designed for graduate-level nursing students targeting areas of staff development, patient education, and academia. The students will explore goal setting and ongoing improvement of instructional approaches that lead to positive results.

**NURS U710. Advanced Evidence-based Practice (3).** Prepares advanced practice nurses with skills and knowledge needed to use nursing research to provide high quality nursing care, initiate change and promote evidence based practice. Evidence based practice models will be used for the evaluation and application of scientific knowledge surrounding practice issues. Prerequisite: NURS U700.

**NURS U711. Health Care Delivery Systems (2).** Examination of health care policy organization and finance. Explores the role of the advanced practice nurse in providing high quality, cost effective care and addresses issues related to the delivery of healthcare. Prerequisite: NURS U700.

**NURS U712 Role of the Nurse as Leader (3)** Leadership in the healthcare delivery system across all settings. The definition and role of the transformational nurse leader will be explored as well as implementation across various settings. Fundamental aspects of nurse leadership will be expanded upon to prepare the graduate for this multifaceted responsibility. Prerequisite: NURS U700

**NURS U713 CNL Practicum I (1)** Introduces the CNL role as clinician, outcomes manager, client advocate, educator, information manager, systems analysis, team member and lifelong learner. CNL portfolio is initiated. Involves 75 clinical hours. Prerequisite U700; Pre or co-requisite U712.

**NURS U714 Organizational Theory (3)** The relationships inside within healthcare systems and structures within organizational theory. The course offers the ability to efficiently plan and organize within an ever changing and highly complex healthcare system.

**NURS U715. Global Healthcare (2)** Immersion experience in an international or national setting. Exploration of the interplay of culture, public health, ethics, social justice, policy, and models of health care delivery in a global perspective. Course will require travel and related expenses. Prerequisite: Admission to the graduate program

**NURS U716. Economic and Healthcare Outcomes (3)** Preceptor-guided experience with advanced educational principles and theories. The design of this practicum is to apply the nurse-educator core competencies from the National League for Nurses for a minimum of 250 hours.

**NURS U717 Healthcare Policies and Financing (3)** Insight into healthcare policy and financing. Topics explored target current issues influencing healthcare policies to include financing. The course places specific attention on the role of the nursing leader as an advocate

**NURS U720. Advanced Applied Pharmacology (3)** Comprehensive review of pharmacological concepts and principles. Focuses on use of pharmacotherapeutics in the treatment of disease and health promotion. Prerequisite: Admission to the graduate program

**NURS U721. Quality and Risk Management in Health Systems Leadership (2).** Apply the principles of quality of improvement and risk management within a healthcare organization. Synthesize the methods, tools, performance measures, and standards to quality and patient safety to implement quality improvement risk management within a healthcare organization. Prerequisites: NURS U711, U712. Co-requisite: NURS U722.

**NURS U722 Data Analysis in the Healthcare System (2)** Examination of appropriate data analysis techniques to various research designs. An overview of health information systems that are utilized to develop patient data sets and safeguard privacy is provided. Prerequisite: Admission to the graduate program. Pre requisite: NURS U710; Co requisite NURS U721

**NURS U723 Evidence Based Practice Project I (1)** Provides an opportunity for students to address problems in health systems leadership education using evidence based approaches. Pre or co requisite NURS U722

**NURS U724 CNL Practicum II (1)** Transition of students into the CNL role as clinician, outcomes manager, client advocate, educator, information manager, systems analysis, team member and lifelong learner. The student functions under the guidance of a faculty member and clinical preceptor with emphasis on microsystem assessment. Continuing documentation for the CNL portfolio. Involves 75 clinical hours. Prerequisite U711, U713

**NURS U725. Role of the Nursing Educator (3)** – Explore the role of nurse educators in academic community, and clinical settings. Information highlights teaching and learning strategies used by nurse educators in various settings including academia, community, and in-patient. Prerequisite NURS U704

**NURS U726. Nursing Educator Practicum (4)** –Preceptor-guided experience with advanced educational principles and theories. The design of this practicum is to apply the nurse-educator core competencies from the National League for Nurses for a minimum of 250 hours.

**NURS U730 Outcomes Evaluation in Healthcare Systems Leadership (3)** Accountability for health care outcomes for specific groups of clients within a unit or setting. Application of research is utilized to implement and evaluate plans of care. Relevant factors are synthesized to evaluate and achieve optimal patient and outcomes. Prerequisite: NURS U711, U712, U721, U722

**NURS U731 Evidence Based Practice Project II (2)** Culmination of evidence based practice project initiated in previous semester. A final portfolio document that verifies the development and competency of the student in the CNL role. The portfolio records the student's achievements. Prerequisites: NURS U723; Co Requisite U732.

**NURS U732 CNL Practicum III (4)** Immersion experiences in the role of the CNL. Involves 300 clinical hours. Prerequisite: NURS U724. Co-requisite NURS U731.

**NURS U733 Nursing Leadership Immersion I (3)** – Evaluation of performance and organizational dynamics of healthcare. The student will discuss healthcare organizations in American history with a focus on the time-period prior to the 21st century health care system.

**NURS U734 Nursing Leadership Immersion II (3)** – Evaluation of performance and organizational dynamics of healthcare. The student will discuss healthcare organizations throughout American history with a focus on the 21st century health care system.

**NURS U735 Nursing Leadership Practicum (3)** –Facilitates the transition in to nursing leadership role. Content in this course aligns with the core competencies of the nursing leader, which are communication, knowledge, leadership, professionalism, and business skills.

**NURS U739 Advanced Management of Health (1)** – Provides students with an overview of health care trends, best practice guidelines, and resources related to the care of patients experiencing chronic and acute illness. Major health problems with consideration given to advanced nursing management and care.

**NURS U740 Advanced Management of Health Practicum (2)** – Provides students with a practicum experience in various health care settings managing chronic and acute illnesses in a population of interest.

**NURS U799: Independent Study: Graduate Level (1-3 hours)** - An individual learning experience connected to the graduate-level nursing concentration. The learning experience is collaboratively planned by the nursing faculty member and the student. For all MSN concentrations Prerequisites: NURS U700 or consent of instructor.

## **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

Through regular participation each student has an opportunity to acquire and share knowledge, communicate with faculty and other students, and take the intellectual initiative. Students are expected to display respect for self and others in their online environment and manage their time to meet specific course deadlines and requirements.

## **PRACTICUM PRECEPTOR GUIDELINES**

Requirements for Students Enrolled in Practicum Courses:

- Preceptors may be selected by students with approval of course faculty.
- Develop a learning contract with the preceptor(s)
  - The learning contract should include objectives, planned activities, and expected outcomes mutually agreed upon by the preceptor, the student, and the faculty.
- Practicum activities
  - With prior approval of course faculty, MSN students who are currently employed in a professional role that is the same as their practicum focus may apply selected employment activities to fulfill practicum requirements. Faculty approval may be granted for those activities that meet course goals and promote development in the specific role. Students must collaborate with faculty in advance to determine which activities are appropriate.
- Complete clinical hours as stated on the course syllabus with planned practicum activities of which no more than 24 hours are allotted for continuing education.
- Complete a portfolio as defined by the faculty that contains a critical analysis and synthesis of practicum activities, completion of project, and a written self-evaluation of the practicum experience.
- Achieve a satisfactory evaluation from the course instructor and the preceptor.

## **ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS**

Hours for practicum in Nursing Leader and Nursing Educator Concentrations are based on 1 credit = 62.5 hours. In the Clinical Nurse Leader Concentration 1 credit hour = 75 hours. While performing in the graduate student role, the USC Upstate name badge must be displayed.

Although medical insurance and other health information are not required by the graduate program, you must comply with all student-health requirements of the facility selected. The University and the Mary Black School of Nursing is not responsible for any injuries or accident that may occur during practicum experiences.

## **EVIDENCED -BASED PROJECT GUIDELINES**

1. The evidence-based project results in an evidence-based paper. Types of projects include but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Development of an innovative clinical/teaching program
  - b. Evaluation of a clinical/teaching program
  - c. Participation with a faculty member on a research project resulting in a scholarly paper suitable for publication.
  - d. Development of evidence-based systematic review of literature in specific area
  - e. Development of an evidence-based clinical protocol
  - f. Development of a detailed teaching project
2. The final report will be located in the SON with appropriate binding.

3. The organization of the project should be assembled as follows:
  - a. Introduction (including overview of goals and significance of the project).
  - b. Theoretical/conceptual Framework
  - c. Review of the literature
  - d. Plan for the Implementation of the project
  - e. Implementation and evaluation of the project
  - f. Appendices
  - g. References
  - h. Biographical sketch

### **ADVISORS**

A faculty advisor will be assigned to each MSN students upon admission to the program. The student and advisor will discuss the academic program of study. If students decide to change their plan of study, they discuss with the advisor to make revisions as needed.

### **GRADING SCALE**

The following grading scale will be used for all nursing graduate level courses:

- A 90-100
- B 80-89
- C 70-79

Below 70 is failing



## GENERAL INFORMATION

In addition to this Handbook, there are other resources that will assist in a successful journey through this program and the University of South Carolina Upstate.

### UNIVERSITY CATALOG

The University of South Carolina Upstate Catalog contains a section for all Graduate Programs such as academic policies and procedures, courses required for the MSN program, retention and graduation requirements, and essential items of information. The catalog is available online or at the Registrar's Office.

### AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION

Graduate students are encouraged to join and participate in the professional nursing organizations such as the American Nurses Association and South Carolina Nurses Association. Through these organizations nursing professionals deal with issues of concern such as improving standards of health care and political activism. They also foster high standards for nursing and promote professional development and economic welfare for nurses. For more information, contact a faculty member.

### MU RHO CHAPTER OF SIGMA THETA TAU

The Mu Rho Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau was chartered at the University of South Carolina Upstate in 1992 to recognize superior academic achievement, development of leadership qualities, foster high professional standards, encourage creative work, and strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession. BSN and MSN students are eligible for membership.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial aid information is found in the University catalog in the Financial Aid section or on the university website at <https://www.uscupstate.edu/admissions-and-financial-aid/financial-aid> Financial assistance is available through the University of South Carolina Upstate Financial Aid Office. Please note deadlines for completed applications to insure full eligibility. The university is notified regarding the students who meet the requirements for federal and state monies in the spring of the year. The Financial Aid Office notifies students eligible for federal/state money. If financial assistance is needed during the current academic year in which the student is enrolled, the student should complete a FAFSA form and submit it to the Financial Aid Office. Financial assistance can be obtained in this manner during a current academic year if the requirements of the state are met for the allocation of funds. There are also service cancelable loans available from the state of South Carolina that require a period of employment in the state in lieu of repayment.

### LIBRARY RESOURCES

<http://www.uscupstate.edu/library/>

The USC Upstate Library contains over 220,000 volumes (with approximately 6,000 new volumes added every year), 730 journal subscriptions, and 13,141 electronic journals that include all full text titles. The library provides on-line searches in over 120 databases. Books and journals not available at UCS Upstate are easily obtained by means of interlibrary loan. The USC Upstate library is a member of five different consortia for interlibrary loans. In addition, the library has begun a digitization project and the following items are available digitally: all university yearbooks, all university catalogs, former SACS self-study and reaffirmation documents, and numerous student literary publications. As part of the University of South Carolina System, the library also provides students and faculty with access to the system's 3.1 million books, 3.9 million microform items, and 24,000 current serials in print.

In addition, the library offers library instruction and information literacy sessions (live and online) that include information on using this library and its resources, use of information responsibly, finding and evaluating electronic resources available through the internet. The skills learned in these sessions help develop strategies that foster lifelong learning.

The Library is open with full services 82.5 hours per week. Library hours (with no services) are extended by an additional two hours each night (Sunday through Thursday) through the use of University security officers. Although no services are offered, this does provide the students with a quiet and safe study environment an additional 10 hours per week. Finally, the library's 24/7 computer lab is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week with the only closure being the holiday break between Christmas and New Year's when the entire campus is closed. The library also offers 24/7 online access to help information through a national call service.

The University is a member of the statewide academic library consortia PASCAL (Partnerships Among South Carolina Academic Libraries). With its effective communication system and an efficient delivery system (PASCAL Delivers), over 6 million items in academic collections throughout the state are available to students within a few days. Both the main campus library and the library at UCG are pick-up and drop-off points for PASCAL materials. Whenever possible, electronic resources are added, as this equalizes the access for the distance learner as well as the onsite learner. Via subscription to more than 240 databases, the USC Upstate Library provides direct access to the full-texts of more than 36,000 journals. All of these databases are available remotely using the campus proxy server. Faculty, staff and students may access these information resources from their homes, offices, etc.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Students are admitted to the University of South Carolina Upstate and the MSN Program with the expectation that they will have developed acceptable personal standards of conduct and ethics. Academic dishonesty is defined as follows:

1. No student shall give or receive, or otherwise furnish or procure, assistance not authorized in the preparation of an essay, report, examination, or other assignment in an academic course or in the fulfillment of program or degree requirements such as standardized examinations.
2. No student shall take, attempt to take, steal, or otherwise obtain, gain access to, or alter in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the conduct of a class or to the completion of any program or degree requirement, including but not limited to tests/examinations, laboratory equipment, roll books, academic records, or electronically stored data.
3. Plagiarism is prohibited. Themes, essays, term papers, tests and other similar requirements must be the work of the student submitting them. Direct quotations must be indicated and ideas of another must be appropriately acknowledged.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in the School of Nursing. Faculty will take appropriate corrective measures to deal with those situations in which these standards have been breached. Students guilty of academic dishonesty may receive failing grades for assignments and/or courses and may be dismissed from the program. See course syllabi for specific policies. Procedures for appeals in cases of academic dishonesty can be found in the USC Upstate Student Handbook.

### **DISMISSAL AND READMISSION**

In accordance with the policies of the University of South Carolina Upstate, the faculty of the School of Nursing reserve the right to dismiss at any time a student whose health, conduct (e.g. cheating, plagiarism), general attitude, clinical performance, or scholastic standing make it inadvisable to retain the student in the program. Additionally, students are expected to display professional behaviors at all times.

## **PROGRESSION**

A minimum grade of "B" is required in all nursing courses. Students who earn a grade of C, WF or U in any two courses, or who earn an F in any nursing course, will be dismissed from the program." Students who receive a "C", "WF" or "U" in any nursing course may repeat that course one time only.

Students may apply for reinstatement after a period of no less than one semester. To appeal for reinstatement, the student must present to the School of Nursing a letter indicating the nature of the appeal and justification for reinstatement.

A student's continued enrollment in the nursing program is based on physical as well as emotional health. If the student demonstrates evidence of a physical or emotional illness, he/she may be referred to the University Student Development Center and Health Services for additional care as needed. If, in the opinion of the faculty, the student's illness impairs his/her ability to implement nursing responsibilities safely, the student will be asked to withdraw from the program.

## **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

Graduate students must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 or higher. Students with a cumulative GPA below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation must raise their cumulative GPA to 3.0 or above in the next semester or they will be dismissed from the Graduate School.

## **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS**

As part of the clinical document requirements, students must complete and pass a mandatory criminal background check and drug screen through an approved vendor as designated by the School of Nursing. A clean criminal background and drug screen is required for clinical placement for continuance in the program.

## **LICENSURE**

Students must maintain current licensure as a Registered Nurse in South Carolina or any compact state with state authorization.

## ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All the academic policies that are key to your success are contained in the current USC Upstate catalog. If you are unclear as to how these policies may apply to you, please contact the Records Office in Enrollment Services offices in the HEC or call 864-503-5220. The Registrar and staff welcome the opportunity to talk with students about their concerns.

**Change of address...** may be completed through My SSC. Students are required to keep their addresses current with the University. Students should also contact the School of Nursing to confirm that new addresses have been received.

**Change of name, major or minor...** requires completing the update form in the Records Office. All change of names due to marriage, divorce, etc. should be reported to the SON as soon as the name change is legal.

**Academic Standing...** refer to the catalog for the minimum GPA required to continue as a graduate student as well as the rules for probation and suspension

**Academic Grievances...** students can obtain the form and procedure from their Dean's Office or the Records Office.

**Dropping a Course...** Students must withdraw from courses through SSC by the "last day to withdraw without academic penalty" in order to receive a "W."

## RESOURCES

[BOOKSTORE](#)

[LIBRARY](#)

[STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER](#)

[COUNSELING SERVICES](#)

[DISABILITY SERVICES](#)

[DISABILITY SERVICES](#)

The Mary Black School of Nursing Faculty are committed to making reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with accommodations must be able to meet the core performance standards and minimal functional abilities required to meet the objectives of the nursing programs.

<https://www.uscupstate.edu/the-dome/enrolled-students/disability-services/>

## CORE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND FUNCTIONAL ABILITIES FOR ADMISSION AND PROGRESSION

The following core performance standards and minimal functional abilities based upon the Southern Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing core performance will be made available to all potential student applicants to the nursing programs; all nursing faculty, staff, and students; the South Carolina State Board for Nursing and all agencies where clinical practicums occur. All applicants and continuing students must meet the core performance standards and functional abilities.

**Standard 1. CRITICAL THINKING AND RELATED MENTAL ABILITIES:**

Must have critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not an all-inclusive list): Has the ability to interpret, investigate, communicate, and comprehend complex situations; identify cause and effect relative to clinical situations ability to make decisions and assess situations under varying degrees of stress; must be able to read and comprehend detailed charts, reports, journal articles, books, etc.; capable of performing all arithmetic functions (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, ratios, and simple algebraic equations).

**Standard 2. COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL ABILITIES:**

Must be able to read, write, speak and comprehend English with sufficient skill to communicate effectively verbally and nonverbally. Must have interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with the standard include (not all inclusive): Has the ability to establish rapport with clients and their families, peers, agency personnel, and faculty; explain treatment procedures; initiate health teaching; and document and interpret nursing actions and client responses.

**Standard 3. PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES:**

Must have physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces and gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with the standard include (not all inclusive): able to move around in client's room, work spaces, treatment areas and administer CPR; calibrate and use equipment; position and transfer clients; capable of lifting up to 50 pounds independently; capable of pushing up to 200 pounds independently; capable of reaching 18 inches above head without the use of mechanical devices to elevate themselves; capable of sitting, standing, walking for extended periods of time; experience no limitations when bending, stooping, sitting, standing, walking (i.e., uses no mechanical devices to assist themselves which would impede the safety of a client); ability to move to and respond to an emergency situation in a timely manner; and able to document in a clear legible manner.

**Standard 4. HEARING:** Auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Able to hear auscultatory sounds, monitor alarms, and emergency signals; able to hear soft whispers of clients and families; able to tolerate loud noise for extended periods of time. Assistive devices must correct hearing to this degree and must be worn at all times during practicums.

**Standard 5. VISUAL:** Must have the visual ability sufficient for observation, assessment, and intervention necessary for nursing care. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Observe client responses, accurately read equipment, gauges, and monitors; vision correctable to 20/40, normal depth perception, and ability to distinguish colors; and ability to tolerate offensive visual situations.

**Standard 6. SMELL:** Smelling ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Have ability to differentiate between various types of smells and odors, and ability to tolerate offensive odors.

**USC UPSTATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

## STUDENT APPEALS PROCEDURES

The University of South Carolina Upstate is committed to the judicious, fair, and impartial resolution of a conflict between faculty members and students. The University is also committed to a judicious, fair, and impartial review of petitions from students who seek relief from university regulations related to academic decisions or policies. These procedures do not extend to matters of grading student work where the substance of a complaint is simply the student's disagreement with the grade placed on work. A student shall discuss such matters with the faculty; final authority shall remain with the faculty in matters of evaluating student work.

All decisions regarding grade changes at any step in the process are in the form of recommendations only. Only the faculty member who initiated the grade in question can change grades.

The following process is designed to provide an objective review of student complaints regarding academic grievances.

### **A. General Guidelines for Students:**

1. For a student who believes he or she has been treated unfairly or improperly during a fall semester, the student grievance process must be initiated prior to the following March 1. For a student who believes he or she has been treated unfairly or improperly during a spring semester, Maymester, or summer semesters, the grievance process must be initiated prior to the following October 1.
2. Those concerned will make every reasonable effort to honor all deadlines and timelines. However, individuals involved in the grievance process should take into account that conditions may exist which preclude strict adherence to the suggested timelines.
3. All submissions to all levels of appeal and all responses must be submitted in writing on the Academic Grievance Form. An Academic Grievance Form for submitting an appeal is available in the Office of the Registrar, in the Office of Academic Affairs, and in each Dean's office.
4. The grievance must follow, in sequence, the procedures-outlined. If a resolution of a grievance is not forthcoming, or the time for a written response has expired, the student may wish to continue the process by forwarding the grievance to the next level. Grievance forms that have not been submitted through the proper sequence of decision-makers will not be reviewed. Students may withdraw their grievance at any time.
5. The student may be asked for additional information or may request the opportunity to appear and discuss the appeal as the grievance is reviewed at that level.
6. Final authority shall remain with the faculty member in matters of evaluating student work.

### **B. When the grievance involves admissions, academic suspension, or financial aid**

1. If the initial grievance concerns admissions to the university, the student contacts the Admissions Office. The Admissions Office advises the student of the appeal process involving the Admissions and Petitions Committee.
2. If the initial grievance concerns admission to an academic program, the student contacts the dean of the school or college in which admission is being sought. The dean advises the student of the appeal process involving admission to a specific academic program.
3. If the initial grievance concerns an academic suspension policy, the student contacts the Records Office. The Records Office advises the student of the appeal process involving the Admissions and Petitions Committee.
4. If the initial grievance concerns a financial aid policy, the student contacts the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Office advises the student of the appeal process involving the Student Financial Aid Committee.

### **C. When the initial decision-maker is a faculty member or a faculty committee.**

1. Grievances should not be filed when the substance of a complaint is simply the student's disagreement with the evaluation of the student's work. Final authority shall remain with the faculty in matters of evaluating student work.
2. The student must first discuss the complaint with the initial decision maker or faculty committee involved for resolution. The purpose of this meeting is to attempt to reach a mutual understanding of the student's situation and the faculty member's actions and to resolve differences in an informal, cooperative manner.
3. If there is no resolution, the student should complete the Academic Grievance Form and submit it to the faculty member or to the faculty committee. The faculty member or faculty committee must create an Academic Grievance Folder containing the Academic Grievance Form. All related documentation must be added to this folder through all levels of the grievance process.
4. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 calendar days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form, the student may proceed to the next step.
5. The student may appeal to the Associate Dean on the Spartanburg campus or the Associate Dean on the Greenville campus of the academic area where the grieved decision originated. The appeal to this individual must be submitted by the student within 5 calendar days after the response from the initial decision-maker. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 calendar days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form, the student may proceed to the next step.
6. The student may submit to the Dean a written intent to appeal to an Academic Grievance Panel. Within five calendar days of receipt of the written appeal, the dean shall appoint three faculty to an Academic Grievance Panel. Within 15 calendar days of appointment, the Academic Grievance Panel shall gather all relevant material, convene the panel and make its recommendation to the dean. The Chair of the Academic Grievance Panel will notify the student, faculty member, Director of the Graduate Program and the Dean of the decision of the panel. If resolution is not forthcoming within 15 calendar days after appointment of Academic Grievance Panel, the student may appeal to the next step.
7. The student may appeal to the dean of the appropriate school or college in which the grieved decisions originated. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 calendar days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form, the student may proceed to the next step.
8. The student may appeal to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The appeal must take place within 5 calendar days of the decision by the Academic Grievance Panel. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs has ten calendar days to respond to the student and forward copies of that response to all individuals' involved at all prior levels of appeal.
9. Further appeal may be made to the Chancellor, the President of the University of South Carolina, and the Board of Trustees in accordance with university policies, procedures, and bylaws.

### **D. The grievance process when the initial decision-maker is the Dean**

1. The student may submit an Academic Grievance Form to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the appropriate school of college where the academic decision or policy dispute resides. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 calendar days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form, the student may proceed to the next step.
2. The student may appeal to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The appeal must take place within 5 calendar days of the decision by the dean. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs has 10 calendar days to respond to the student and forward copies of that response to all individuals at each level.
3. If resolution is not forthcoming, within 10 calendar days, further appeal may be made to the Chancellor, the President of the University of South Carolina, and the Board of Trustees in accordance with university policies, procedures, and by-laws. Appeal forms are available in the administrative offices.

### **FORM**

<https://www.uscupstate.edu/globalassets/current-students/registration-and-records/academic-grievance-form.pdf>