



College of Nursing

Program Handbook

Master of Science (MS) in Nursing Entry to the Profession of Nursing (MEPN)

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Overview

Introduction

This document is for informational purposes and is neither a contract nor an offer to contract. The College of Nursing (CON) reserves the right to change any provision or requirement at any time without notice. This material supplements the policies found on the following websites:

[The University of Arizona](#)

[The University of Arizona Catalog](#)

[The Graduate College](#)

[The College of Nursing](#)

The MS-MEPN Program Handbook is designed as a resource for students and faculty. Links to relevant policies and processes are included in this handbook. Much of the information is online. Where information is not online, a brief description is provided. Additional information can be obtained from the Office of Student & Academic Affairs (OSAA). **Students are responsible to know and adhere to all policies and procedures.**

Relationship to Other Documents

The Program Handbook is available on the CON [website](#) and is intended to be used in conjunction with other University documents. When questions arise, students should first consult their Program Handbook and then consult the appropriate Graduate College or University policies. Many policies in the Program Handbook are specific to students in the MS-MEPN program and the CON. All students, faculty and staff are expected to read the handbook and be familiar with College and University policies. In addition to this handbook, students must review the CON [Policies & Procedures](#).

University Policies

The CON upholds all [University Policies](#) related to but not limited to the following:

- Absence and Class Participation
- Threatening Behavior
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Code of Academic Integrity
- Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment
- Subject to Change Statement

Systems & Resources

Systems

There are several university systems CON students will utilize, including, but not limited to those listed below. All students are expected to review the [Student Technology Needs](#).

[UAccess Student](#)

[Desire2Learn \(D2L\)](#)

[Assessment Systems](#) (Examity, Examssoft, Kaplan, ATI, etc.)

[GradPath](#) (all graduate students)

UA Student Email

Upon admission, all students are given an official University of Arizona [NETID](#) and [Email Address](#) (@arizona.edu). Email sent to this address can be checked remotely and/or forwarded to the student's phone. **This email address must be checked daily**, as it is the official source of communication between faculty, staff, and students. Students are responsible for all program updates and requests sent to this address. Students should review the College [Student Communication Policy](#) for additional guidance.

Offices & Departments

Office of Student & Academic Affairs (OSAA)

[OSAA](#) supports and promotes student success. OSAA is responsible for academic advising, admissions, student support services, enrollment, progression, graduation, student-centered events, and CON scholarships. Students may contact OSAA via email (con-osaa@arizona.edu) or by calling 520-626-3808. Students wanting to meet with an academic advisor, success coach or writing coach must make an appointment using [Trellis](#).

Office of Learning and Healthcare Technology Innovations (LHTI)

[LHTI](#) provides information technology support, technology recommendations/requirements, and instructional design services to students, faculty, and staff. A wide range of supportive services are available for students via the [LHTI Help Page](#). Students may contact LHTI by email (con-servicedesk@arizona.edu) or phone 520-626-4357.

Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid (OSFA)

Students may seek to use scholarships, loans and/or grants to pay for their educational expenses. MEPN students are eligible for financial aid and scholarships. Students with questions related to scholarships and financial aid should use the contact information on the [OSFA](#) website to reach out to the appropriate individual.

[Scholarship Universe](#) (SU) is a comprehensive database of scholarships available to students in all programs and majors. Students may log in with their NetID to search for opportunities and complete applications. The CON offers several scholarships, the majority of which are available on SU. All interested students are required to formally apply. All nursing students, current and incoming, will receive an email with relevant information in a timely manner. All students are encouraged to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Many College and University scholarships rely on information provided by the FAFSA to be awarded. Information regarding CON scholarships not listed in SU will be provided to students as appropriate.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The University of Arizona strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please contact the [Disability Resource Center](#), 520-621-3268, to establish reasonable accommodations.

If the DRC determines that accommodations are reasonable, students must follow the DRC process for requesting access to their accommodations. Students are strongly encouraged to contact their course chairs each semester to confirm arrangements for implementing the accommodations. Please be aware that early notification ensures the most effective accommodation and support.

Academic Program & Policies

Program Overview

The MS-MEPN program is a hybrid program using varied teaching/learning methods. Content is provided through online and face-to-face learning activities that include, but are not limited to lecture, skill labs, simulations, self-paced modules, discussion, and clinical experiences. Some courses offer a combination of online and face-to-face learning; other courses provide only online learning activities. Due to the accelerated pace of this program, students are not eligible to be concurrently enrolled in other degree programs.

Students need to become comfortable with accessing information and taking tests online. Each course provides the student with the knowledge and skills needed to pass the National Council Licensure Exam for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) and become a master's prepared registered nurse in 15 months. Please note during times of public health concerns, classes and clinical experiences may be held remotely. Students should follow all course policies related to remote learning directly from the course D2L sites.

Faculty Mentors

Upon admission to the MS-MEPN program, each student is assigned a faculty mentor who will serve in this capacity throughout the student's time in the program. The faculty mentor, who is an expert in the nursing profession, will provide coaching and guidance on an as-needed/as-requested basis regarding academic career, professional development, resume, clinical issues, and career pathway.

Program Curriculum



Plan of Study (POS)

MEPN students must submit a Plan of Study through [GradPath](#) before the end of their second semester. Instructions are emailed to students at the beginning of their second semester.

Attendance

Students are expected to maintain a perfect, on-time attendance record. Absence from class, laboratory, or clinical will result in an evaluation to determine if the student is able to meet the course learning outcomes. Tardiness and/or absences can result in a reduced final course grade and/or a recommendation for the student to withdraw from the course. In the event of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to notify the faculty member or course chair as soon as possible. Students should refer to their specific course syllabus or D2L course for additional information/requirements. Due to capacity, replacing clinical hours may not be possible.

Employment

Students are not permitted to work (paid or unpaid) for the eight (8) hours immediately preceding their clinical rotations. Students found in violation of this policy will be prohibited from attending or removed from the clinical experience and will be given an unexcused absence.

Examinations

Students are required to take exams when scheduled. If an emergency arises, students must contact the course chair no later than the exam start time on the day of the examination. If unable to contact the course chair by phone prior to the exam, the student is required to send an email to the course chair. The course chair determines whether a make-up examination will be available, as well as the date, time & format. Students should always refer to specific course policies and the CON [Exam Policy: GNHE Students](#).

Clinical Experiences

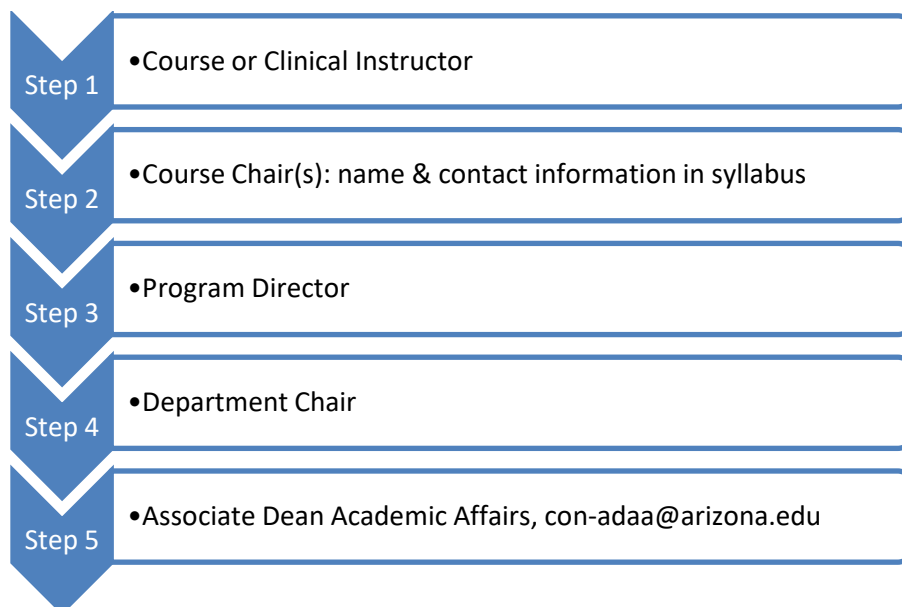
Many clinical experiences are outside of normal business hours, including evenings, nights, weekends, early mornings, and holidays. Students are required to attend the clinical experiences to which they are assigned. In addition, students in clinical rotations are required to abide by the policies & procedures, including clinical compliance requirements and associated deadlines, established by the College and clinical site partners. All students must review the CON [Policies & Procedures](#). Students who fail to comply with these requirements may be unable to fulfill their academic requirements and may be dismissed from the program.

Technical and Essential Qualifications

All MEPN students are required to meet the [Technical and Essential Qualifications for Nursing Students](#) for successful admission, progression and success. Students who are not able to meet these requirements at any time during their MS-MEPN program may request an accommodation by contacting the [DRC](#).

Line of Communication

The CON has outlined a line of communication to resolve concerns that may arise in the classroom and/or at a clinical site. Any student who has a concern regarding a grade, treatment in class, or other topic, should bring the concern to the appropriate instructor, course chair, or administrator following the line of communication outlined below. Students should expect their concerns to be addressed promptly per the Student Communication Policy. Communication with the next person in the line of communication is needed only after the prior contact does not lead to a resolution.



A student should initiate the line of communication by sending an email requesting an appointment to the initial person in the line of communication (Step 1). To help resolve the issue as quickly as possible, the student should come to the appointment with the problem clearly identified and all supporting documentation/evidence. Should the issue not be resolved, the student should make an appointment with the next person in line. **Failure to follow the proper line of communication may result in a delay in resolution of or a dismissal of the concern.**

OSAA is available to answer questions about processes and policies. OSAA cannot make decisions to resolve concerns/issues. Students may contact their academic advisor in OSAA by scheduling an appointment directly in [Trellis](#) or by emailing con-osaa@arizona.edu.

National Council Licensure Examination for Nursing (NCLEX-RN)

Successfully completing the NCLEX-RN is essential for the MEPN graduate to begin a professional nursing career. Students graduating from the MS-MEPN program are required to complete and pass diagnostic tests each level in preparation for taking the NCLEX upon graduation.

Please note: Before applying for RN licensure in the state of California, applicants must have successfully completed a microbiology lab. This is not a requirement of the UA MS-MEPN program nor the AZ BON. Students who anticipate applying for an RN license in California are encouraged to take a microbiology lab.

During their final semester, students apply for licensure to practice as a registered nurse. Students are given information regarding the NCLEX-RN and guidance in preparing the application. The examination may be taken at any designated testing site and will be administered via computerized adaptive testing (CAT).

Program Progression, Grades, GPA & Dismissal

Satisfactory Program Progression

MEPN students successfully progress in the plan of study by exhibiting professionalism consistent with the ethics and academic policies outlined in this handbook, the [CON policies](#) and the [ANA Code of Ethics](#). Successful students achieve learning outcomes sequentially within each course as outlined in the program curriculum. Syllabi, course policies, and course D2L sites will specify minimum standards of performance necessary to meet student learning outcomes.

Syllabi or D2L sites may identify six (6) categories of competency required to pass non-clinical courses with a “C” or higher and clinical courses with a “B” or higher. The competencies, identified as Learning Outcomes, include achieving the following objectives:

- an average of 70% on theory examinations for the course
- established benchmarks in the diagnostic examinations administered in the course
- learning outcomes in skills laboratory
- learning outcomes in clinical performance
- defined behavioral and professionalism competencies
- learning outcomes in additional written or academic assignments.

Students must achieve minimum standards of competency *in each* of the applicable six (6) categories of student learning outcomes, independent of achievements in the other categories to pass the course and progress in the program. Students may be provided opportunities for remediation to demonstrate competencies within the course. Applicable policies for each course will be listed in the syllabus and/or D2L course site.

Progression Benchmarks

A high level of academic performance is expected of graduate students in the University of Arizona CON.

Courses are sequenced in the program and courses in the previous levels (semesters) must be successfully passed to proceed to the next level. In Levels 1-3, courses with an 'A' after the number are the knowledge and skill acquisition courses. Courses with a 'B' or 'C' are clinical management courses. Students are responsible for checking their grades regularly and knowing if they are at-risk of not progressing in the program. See [Student Progression Process](#).

Grading Scale

The CON uses the standard grading rubric unless otherwise noted in the course syllabus. Per College policy, grades cannot be rounded up (e.g., 69.99 = D).

A = 90% – 100% B = 80% – 89% C = 70% – 79% D = 60% – 69% E = <60%

A student must be making satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree to remain enrolled in the program. The CON enforces the [Graduate Academic Standing, Progress and Probation](#) and the Graduate College requirements for graduation.

Grade Policy

Graduate students in the CON are expected to earn grades of A (4.0) or B (3.0). Grades below a B are viewed as unsatisfactory academic performance.

- **Clinical Courses:** Students are required to earn a grade of B or higher in each clinical course. Students who earn a grade lower than a B in a clinical course are not eligible to proceed to the next level without repeating the course.
- **Non-clinical Courses:** Students are required to earn a grade of C or higher in each non-clinical course. Students who earn a grade lower than a C in a non-clinical course are not eligible to proceed to the next level without repeating the course.
- **Repeat Courses:** Per [university policy](#), Students may repeat courses providing there is space available. Students must first contact the Program Director, in writing, to request enrollment. A course may not be attempted more than twice. A student shall be recommended for dismissal from the program if a student does not earn a passing grade (per the above grade policies) by the second attempt.
- **All Courses:** A student who earns more than two grades of C or lower shall be recommended for dismissal from the program. All instances of C, D or E grades are considered, including all attempts of repeated courses. **Note: this is an exception to the Graduate College policy.**
- Students have 48 hours from time of published clinical performance evaluation and two weeks from time of published assignment grade to contact an instructor or course chair regarding the grade. After that time, the evaluation/grade will not be reviewed. See Grade Appeal section below.

GPA Policy

Graduate students in the CON must earn an overall grade point average of 3.0 or higher to be awarded the Master of Science (MS) in Nursing degree. Students achieving less than a 3.0 GPA at any time during the program will be placed on Academic Probation. If a student is placed on probation:

- 1) The student will receive written notification from the Graduate College.
- 2) Within 2 weeks of receiving the notification, the student must meet with their faculty mentor to devise a written action plan.
- 3) Within 48 hours of meeting with the faculty mentor, the student must forward the final written action plan to con-osaa@arizona.edu. The OSAA will save a copy of the plan to the student file and forward it to the Graduate College.

Graduate students have one semester to raise their GPA above 3.0. Students who are unable to return to good academic standing after one semester of remediation are subject to dismissal from the program.

Mid-Term Notification

OSAA will send an email at mid-term (fall, spring & summer) to all **faculty** as a reminder to ensure that all completed assignments and grades are posted to the D2L gradebook. Faculty are encouraged to complete a Trellis Progress Note for any student achieving less than an 80% at mid-term so they may have the opportunity to improve and pass the course. OSAA will send an email at mid-term (fall, spring & summer) to all **students** as a reminder to check their course progression.

End-of-Term Notification

At the end of term, the course chair will report to the Program Director each student who earned a grade of C or less in a course. The Program Director will provide the report to the OSAA. Students will be notified of unsatisfactory grades and/or GPA, according to the policies above, after the end of each semester.

Withdrawal Grades

[Withdrawal processes](#) are controlled by the University. The College of Nursing does not support the practice of withdrawing from a course to avoid a poor/failing grade. The APS Committee will review each course withdrawal and make a recommendation to college leadership regarding the student's standing with the college.

Students found to be in good standing who withdraw from a course may choose to repeat the course in a future term, as space is available. Students found to be in poor standing who withdraw from a course to avoid a poor/failing grade may face sanctions, up to and including program dismissal.

Incomplete Grades

Per the University [Incomplete Grade Policy](#), the grade of 'I' for 'Incomplete' may be awarded at the end of the semester when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. Incompletes will not be given for missed clinical experiences unless course outcomes were not able to be met. The student and course chair will create a formal agreement outlining the conditions that must be met to complete the course. The course chair may use the University's [Report of Incomplete Grade](#) form to document the agreement. The course chair will then send an email to D2L@arizona.edu requesting to change the student's role in the course to 'Student See Inactive'. The email must include the course number, term, and student name. Once the student has resolved the Incomplete grade, the course chair must send an email to D2L@arizona.edu requesting to change the student's role back to 'Student'.

Given the accelerated nature of the program, the CON has made **significant modifications** to the University policy as follows: Incompletes must be resolved prior to the start of the next course in the program's sequence to meet progression requirements.

Unsatisfactory Student Performance & Progression

The [Student Progression Process](#) is a collaborative effort between faculty and student to address any area(s) of academic or clinical concern that may impede a student's progress in the nursing program. Students will be evaluated regularly for satisfactory progress. Examples of assessment strategies to determine whether a student has achieved the required learning outcomes include, but are not limited to, statistical analysis of knowledge demonstrated in examinations and the evaluation of successful demonstration of clinical skills.

Dismissal from Program

The CON will recommend a student for dismissal from the MS-MEPN program for the following reasons:

- Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progression
- Inability to return to good academic standing after one semester of remediation
- Earning more than two (2) grades of C or lower
- Earning less than a passing course grade (per the above grade policies) by the second attempt

The CON may recommend a student for dismissal from the MS-MEPN program for the following reasons:

- Failure to meet the College and/or assigned clinical site partner compliance requirements
- Engaging in unsafe practice (patient safety concerns or violations)
- Engaging in illegal or unethical conduct as outlined by the University's Code of Conduct, the ANA's Code of Ethics and all relevant clinical site-specific policies (including HIPAA)
- Not enrolling in classes by the end of the second week of the required course

The Program Director will meet with the student to review the concern(s) and documentation prior to requesting dismissal. If dismissal is not recommended, the Program Director will issue the student a written warning via email that will be included in the student file. If applicable, a Code of Conduct violation will be reported to the Dean of Students Office. The student may also be required to complete mandatory remediation prior to returning to the classroom or clinical setting.

Enrollment Status

Continuous Enrollment

Students must maintain continuous enrollment following the MS-MEPN Program Guide to retain their position in the program. Given the accelerated nature of the MS-MEPN program, students who have not enrolled by the second week of class will be recommended for dismissal from the program. **Note: this is an exception to the Graduate College policy.**

Leave of Absence

Students may request a Leave of Absence (LOAs) from the CON and the Graduate College per the Graduate College [Leave of Absence Policy](#). Failure to obtain a Leave of Absence will result in penalties, as described in the Graduate College [Continuous Enrollment](#) policy requirements. LOAs may affect the status of a student's financial aid. Students are responsible for determining the requirements of their funding agency and/or academic unit prior to applying for a LOA.

Following is the recommended process for requesting an LOA:

- The student should first discuss their intent with both their faculty mentor and academic advisor.
- If the student decides to proceed, the student should submit a [Leave of Absence Petition](#).
- The Graduate College will send its denial or approval of the request to the student's UA email.
- The student should notify both their Faculty Mentor and Academic Advisor of the denial/approval.

Students who have an approved LOA:

- Are not required to reapply for admission if they return within the approved time.
- Will be readmitted to the MS-MEPN program to the appropriate level as clinical space allows.
- Are not guaranteed a spot on their original campus. The CON will make every attempt to secure clinical experiences near the student's original campus. If there is not space, the student may be offered a spot on another campus.
- Must contact their academic advisor no later than the first day of the semester prior to their scheduled return to ensure the College is able to secure clinical placements and to provide the student time to meet the clinical site partner compliance requirements. i.e., a student who is scheduled to return in Spring semester should contact their academic advisor before the first day of Fall semester.
- Must meet with the Program Director prior to the first day of the semester in which they are returning.
- May be required to enroll in a 1-unit independent study course to refresh their clinical skills.
- May request view/reader access to the D2L course sites for the preceding level for review.
- Must be clinically compliant 30-days prior to the first day of the semester in which they are returning.
- Are strongly encouraged to check their official UA email weekly.

A student who does not return from an LOA within the approved time will be required to re-apply to both the University and the MS-MEPN program. See Readmission guidelines below.

Returning to the MS-MEPN Program

Students returning to the MS-MEPN program to repeat a course or from a program suspension:

- Are not required to reapply for admission if they return within the approved time.
- Will rejoin the MS-MEPN program in the appropriate level as clinical space allows.
- Must submit a personal statement to the Associate Dean Academic Affairs, con-adaa@arizona.edu, before 8:00am local Tucson time on the day after the semester ends. The personal statement must include:
 1. Student Name
 2. Student ID
 3. Student Email Address
 4. Student Phone Number
 5. Course Number(s) in which the student is requesting to enroll.
 6. Semester and year the student was last enrolled in NURS courses.
 7. A description of the reason(s) the student failed to successfully complete their coursework during the first enrollment. If the reason involves the student's mental and/or physical illness, injury, or disability, provide a statement without describing the condition itself.
 8. A description of the steps the student has taken to ensure they will be academically successful moving forward. Be sure to include how the extenuating circumstances have been resolved or changed so that the student can progress toward their degree. If this is not addressed in the personal statement, re-entry to the course(s) will be denied.
 9. If the student withdrew for medical reasons, the personal statement must be accompanied by a current letter from the student's health care provider attesting to the student's ability to a) resume a professional, accelerated nursing course load, and b) meet the required CON Technical & Essential Qualifications.
 10. If the student is returning after a non-compliant drug/alcohol test, the personal statement must be accompanied by a CON clinical compliance team verification that the student has test results consistent with CON policies recorded and posted in the designated compliance system.

The APS committee will review the submitted documentation and recommend to college leadership whether the student has taken the necessary steps to ensure they will be academically successful moving forward. College leadership will approve or deny the student's return to the program. Students will be notified of the decision before 5:00pm local Tucson time the day following the last day of the semester.

Once approved to return to the program, students:

- May meet with the Course Chair(s) prior to the first day of the semester in which they are returning.
- May be required to enroll in an independent study course to refresh their clinical skills.
- May request 'Student See Inactive' access to the D2L course sites for the preceding level for review.
- Must be clinically compliant 30-days prior to the first day of the semester in which they are returning.
- Are strongly encouraged to check their official UA email weekly.

A student who does not return within the approved time will be required to reapply to both the University and the MS-MEPN program. See Readmission guidelines below.

Readmission to the MS-MEPN Program

Only students who have not been disqualified from the program and are in good standing are eligible for readmission. All students seeking readmission must reapply to the program. Readmission is not guaranteed.

Students who reapply and are accepted back into the MS-MEPN program will be required to retake all coursework, including courses successfully passed during their prior enrollment(s).

Appeals and Grievances

All students have the ability to grieve or petition decisions made by the College that impact their progression. This includes appealing a final course grade and/or a recommendation for dismissal.

Grade Appeal

The CON follows the University [Grade Appeal Process](#):

1. The student first discusses the concerns with the course chair. After this discussion, the student will determine whether to file a formal grade appeal.
2. If the student determines they would like to move forward with a formal grade appeal, the student may schedule an appointment in Trellis to meet with an Academic Advisor for guidance on the policy, process and chain of command.
3. The student will then fill out the Grade Appeal Packet and submit the entire packet to their course chair. The student, course chair, and relevant parties shall then follow the steps and timeline provided in the Grade Appeal Packet.

Because of the accelerated nature of the MS-MEPN program, students who choose to appeal a grade that is preventing them from progressing to the next level must have their grade successfully overturned before the end of the first week of the subsequent semester. Students whose grade is overturned after the first week of the subsequent semester will be required to wait until there is space available to progress in the program.

Dismissal Grievance

Should a student feel they have been treated unfairly, the student should first attempt to resolve the concern by following the chain of communication outlined earlier in this document. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the student may file a formal grievance by following the Graduate College [Grievance Policy](#).