Program Handbook 2022 – 2023

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; therefore, the web sites are listed for the official information. Where information is not available 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 a number of 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, Examsoft, 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, enrollment, progression, student support services, graduation, student-centered events, and CON scholarships. Students may contact OSAA via email (con-osaa@email.arizona.edu) or by calling 520-626-3808.

Office of Learning and Healthcare Technology Innovations (LHTI)

LHTI provides information technology support and instructional design services to students, faculty and staff. LHTI also provides technology recommendations and requirements for students. A wide range of supportive services are available for students via the LHTI Help Page. Students may contact LHTI via email (con-servicedesk@email.arizona.edu) or by calling 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 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. All CON scholarship applications must be submitted through Scholarship Universe.

The CON offers scholarships on a yearly basis and requires all interested students to formally apply. All nursing students, current and incoming, will receive an email with relevant information in the Spring. 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.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

Students who anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of the program should meet with the Program Director as soon as possible to determine if accommodations are necessary. If accommodations are needed, students are required to work directly with the UA Disability Resource Center to request accommodations. Once reasonable accommodations are approved by the DRC, students are required to immediately notify each course chair regarding their eligibility for accommodations. Early notification ensures the most effective accommodation and support. Students may also wish to take advantage of the Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques (SALT) Center for additional support services. Students may contact OSAA for assistance in navigating these resources, or for connection with the College Academic Success Coach.

Academic Program & Policies

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 to the Graduate College before September 30. The POS form is available through [GradPath](#). Instructions are emailed to students at the beginning of the fall term.

### Attendance
Students are expected to maintain a perfect, on-time attendance record. Absence from class, laboratory, or clinical experience will result in an evaluation to determine if the student is able to meet the course learning outcomes. Tardiness and/or failure to report to class, laboratory, or a clinical experience 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 or requirements. Due to community clinical partner site 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 or not 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.

**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 will 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.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Course or Clinical Instructor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Course Chair(s): name &amp; contact information in syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Program Director: Dr. Kelley Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Division Chair: Dr. Connie Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Dean: Dr. Kathie Insel (interim)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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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@email.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.

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 designed 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. 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 in order 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 in order 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 must meet with their faculty mentor to devise a written action plan.
2) The student must forward the written action plan to con-osaa@email.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 shall report to the MEPN Program Director and Division Chair each student who earned a grade of C or less in a course. The MEPN 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. Students in good standing who withdraw from a course may choose to repeat the course in a future term, if a seat is available. They will be unable to continue in the program until the required courses are successfully completed.

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. 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. Incompletes will not be given for missed clinical experiences unless course outcomes were not able to be met.

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 or not 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 three (3) or more 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 in order 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 in 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 in order 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.

Readmission to the MS-MEPN Program
Only students in good academic standing are eligible for readmission. Readmission is not guaranteed.

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 the following year 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](#).