



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MAINE
College of Nursing and
Health Professions

Student Handbook

USM College of Nursing and Health Professions School of Nursing

[The University of Southern Maine](#)

PO Box 9300
Portland, ME 04104-9300
(207) 780-4505
1-(800) 800-4876 ext. 4505
TTY 780-5646

[Lewiston-Auburn College](#)

The University of Southern Maine
51 Westminster Street
Lewiston, Maine 04240
Tel (207)753-6500 / Fax (207)753-6555 / TTY (207)753-6511

USM Toll Free 1-800-800-4USM

Part I: Welcome to the College of Nursing and Health Professions

The faculty, staff, and administration welcome you to the University of Southern Maine College of Nursing and Health Professions School of Nursing (USM CONHP SON). This handbook is designed to provide you with specific information related to the baccalaureate and master's degree nursing programs and our special study options. It consists of the following:

- **The College's History, Mission Statement, and Philosophy**
- **Baccalaureate programs**
- **Master's Programs**
- **General information for students**
- **Undergraduate Policies**
- **Graduate Policies**

Several other key resources for students are:

The USM [Catalog](#): The catalog is the agreement between the student and the University. Everything students need to know about academic policies and procedures is in the front of the catalogs. There are different levels of policies and procedures. There are University policies and procedures and then each College/School may have stricter policies or additions to the University policies and procedures. The policies and procedures are different for undergraduate and graduate students so be sure to check the correct catalog.

Students are assigned a Catalog for the year that they matriculate at USM. The catalogs from 2005-6 to the present are on-line at: <http://usm.maine.edu/catalogs/archives.htm>. Prior to this time, catalogs were issued in print. Students received the catalog when they matriculated at USM. If you don't have a copy of your catalog, your advisor may have a copy that you can reference. If a student exceeds a 10-year enrollment at USM, they should request a new catalog:

<http://www.usm.maine.edu/reg/catalogchange.htm>

[The Navigator](#): This is a handbook to guide you toward University resources, and is available on line at <http://usm.maine.edu/navigator/>.

[College of Nursing and Health Professions Website](#) contains information for nursing students.

Using this Handbook

The information in this handbook is as up-to-date and accurate as possible. It is, however, subject to change during the academic year. It is important, therefore, that you have close contact with your advisor and other faculty members. Please note that the information in the Handbook does not replace information in the USM Catalog. Follow the blue underlined links for more information about a given topic. Some links connect with PDF files, which require [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).

The College of Nursing and Health Professions administrators, faculty, and staff wish you success in your studies and are available if you have questions.

The Historical Perspective of College

The College of Nursing and Health Professions Baccalaureate program was established at the University of Maine - Orono in 1958. The College was relocated to the University of Maine Portland-Gorham (which became the University of Southern Maine in 1978) in 1969 to take advantage of the proximity to larger clinical facilities. In September 1982, the first class was admitted into the Master of Science in nursing program. The Recreation and Leisure Studies program joined the College of Nursing and Health Professions in January 1983; the Health Sciences program joined in 1996; the Department of Sports Medicine in 1997 and the Radiation Therapy program in September 2000. The Undergraduate nursing program expanded to the Lewiston-Auburn campus in 2001.

Mission Statement

The mission of the College of Nursing and Health Professions encompasses aims that are consistent with the mission of the University of Southern Maine as an urban comprehensive university. With undergraduate and graduate programs serving a diverse and growing population, the College of Nursing and Health Professions has taken a leadership role in responding to expanding health and human service efforts in the state.

The goals of the college are to:

1. Provide nursing, sports medicine, health sciences, radiation therapy, and therapeutic recreation education to a diverse student population within a state institution of higher education.
2. Prepare health professionals to respond to the health needs of the people of Maine.
3. Conduct and disseminate research as a means of increasing knowledge and improving practice.
4. Promote a model of practice based on the highest standards of humane and ethical professional conduct.
5. Provide professional service and consultation to the community and university in the areas of nursing, health sciences, sports medicine, radiation therapy, and therapeutic recreation.

College of Nursing and Health Professions Philosophy

The philosophy of the College of Nursing and Health Professions (CONHP) is consistent with the mission of the University of Southern Maine. The philosophy and objectives serve as the basis for the development, conduct, and evaluation of the baccalaureate nursing program.

Civility

The College of Nursing and Health Professions encourages all students to review our "commitment to civility". The entire statement is available in the USM catalog as well as on the College's website (<http://www.usm.maine.edu/conhp/about/civility.html>). As outlined in the statement, "we will not tolerate disrespectful or abusive speech and or disruptive behavior from individuals or groups. Everyone has the responsibility to foster a safe and supportive learning and work environment."

School of Nursing Philosophy Statement

The School of Nursing's (SON) philosophy is built on the concept of community, which creates an environment for reflective learning, faculty student interactions, and partnering with peoples of diverse backgrounds. The Faculty is committed to facilitating progress toward the Healthy People 2010 goals of increasing quality years of life and decreasing health disparities. The Faculty believes in fostering the health of individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan. We believe that all quality care, including illness care, should occur within a wellness and health promotion framework. The faculty believes in providing value-oriented nursing education that emphasizes caring, ethics, social justice, personal and community empowerment, and a commitment to life-long learning. The Faculty is dedicated to the socialization of students into a professional role that provides reflective evidence-based nursing practice.

Part II: School of Nursing Programs

Baccalaureate Program

The baccalaureate program in nursing prepares a beginning professional nurse for practice in a variety of settings and provides a foundation for advanced study in nursing. The undergraduate curriculum has been created by the faculty with input from consultants, administrators and students. The faculty has developed clinical experiences for students in a variety of health care facilities and settings in southern and south central Maine.

Baccalaureate Nursing Program Objectives By completion of the program, graduates are prepared to:

1. Apply knowledge from nursing, the physical, social sciences and the humanities in professional nursing practice.
2. Demonstrate competency for entry level nursing practice.
3. Engage in ethical nursing practice.
4. Exercise leadership and manage resources in partnership with diverse communities.
5. Provide reflective evidence-based nursing practice.
6. Collaborate with consumers and other providers to enhance people's ability to achieve optimal quality of life and wellness.
7. Demonstrate professional and personal accountability as a contributing member of the nursing profession.
8. Participate as an entry level nurse in multi-disciplinary health care.

Baccalaureate Nursing Program Options:

BS IN NURSING (BS DEGREE):

The USM SON has been a leader and pacesetter for nursing education in Maine since 1969 when its baccalaureate program opened. The program provides a foundation for advanced study in nursing and practice in a variety of settings. The nursing curriculum is based on prerequisite courses in liberal arts, physical sciences, social sciences and electives. The program is accredited by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the Maine State Board of Nursing.

During the freshman and sophomore year, students take primarily general education courses to fulfill both University requirements and prerequisite courses to the nursing upper division major. Clinical courses start during the junior year. Students must meet health requirements, background checks, have health insurance and be CPR certified prior to starting clinical learning experiences. Information about admission to the program is on the [BS in Nursing website](#) and the [LAC nursing website](#) .

ACCELERATED BS IN NURSING (BS DEGREE):

This program is designed for students holding baccalaureate degrees in other disciplines. It requires full-time study for the 15 month duration of the program. One cohort of students is accepted per year. Students begin their studies in May and graduate with a BS degree in August of the following year. Students are eligible to sit for NCLEX-RN after completion of the program.

The program builds on the student's prior university/college education where the student will have gained knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences. The vast majority of the courses in this program are in nursing.

Information about admission to the program is on the [webpage for the Accelerated BS program](#)

RN TO BS IN NURSING/RN TO MS IN NURSING (BS DEGREE OR MS DEGREE):

Recognizing the need and desirability for registered nurses to attain baccalaureate and masters degrees within the state, the School of Nursing faculty has designed two options for RNs—the first leading to the BS degree and the second leading to the MS degree. Both options facilitate and support educational mobility and strengthen the leadership abilities of nurses who already have a foundation of professional experience.

The RN options have been created specifically for registered nurses whose career goals will be enhanced through advanced study in nursing. Realizing that RNs returning to school face many complexities, every effort is made to remain flexible in adjusting the plan of study and accommodating individual needs. Both RN-BS and RN-MS students take prerequisites to the nursing major that include courses in the physical and behavioral sciences, humanities, fine arts, and core courses required of all undergraduate students at USM.

Students may choose to participate in prior learning assessment in areas of previously attained professional knowledge and skill. Credits-by-examination may be earned in both undergraduate nursing and non-nursing courses. Refer to the Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs for further information. Advice about prerequisites, course planning and course sequencing for RNs may be obtained by contacting Brenda Webster at (207) 780-4802. Information about admission to the program is on the [webpage for the RN to BS or RN to MS programs](#)

Master's Nursing Program

The Master of Science in Nursing presents a vibrant, challenging, future-oriented program of study that prepares graduates for practice in diverse health care settings. The program is designed to prepare nurses as nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and clinical nurse leaders. Coursework builds on the baccalaureate degree in nursing and is based on theory and research in nursing and related disciplines. The program provides the foundation for continued professional development and for doctoral study. Students are prepared to provide leadership and initiate collaborative relationships with others for the purposes of improving nursing and health care and influencing health policy.

Master's Program Objectives

By completion of the program, graduates are prepared to:

1. Critically analyze and use knowledge from nursing, the physical sciences, the social sciences and the humanities in advanced nursing practice.
2. Demonstrate competency for advanced nursing practice.
3. Critically analyze and apply ethical principles in advanced nursing practice.
4. Provide leadership in the management and delivery of advanced practice care to diverse individuals, families and communities.
5. Identify researchable problems and participate in research studies to enhance reflective evidence-based nursing practice.
6. Collaborate with health care providers to improve the wellness, quality of life and delivery of health care to diverse populations.
7. Continue to develop, support and contribute to the nursing profession.
8. Participate as an advanced practice nurse in interdisciplinary health care.
9. Utilize appropriate communication (oral, written and technological) in working with individuals, families and communities in advanced practice nursing.

Master's Nursing Program Options:

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING:

Master's students in nursing gain skills and knowledge that build on their clinical experience and on their generalist undergraduate preparation. Graduate students extend their clinical expertise in working with individuals, families and high risk populations. Master's students gain skills in clinical decision making and differential diagnosis; in case management and consultation; in

client teaching; in assessments and interventions; and, in program design, implementation and evaluation.

Areas of specialty and preparation include:

- Nurse Practitioner
 - Adult
 - Family
 - Adult Psychiatric/Mental Health
 - Family Psychiatric/Mental Health
- Clinical Nurse Specialist
 - Adult Psychiatric/Mental Health
 - Adult Health (This concentration is not available to students applying to the MS-Option Program)
- Clinical Nurse Leader (This concentration is not available to students applying to the MS-Option Program)
- Master of Science in Nursing/Master in Business Administration

[Webpage for the Master's Programs](#)

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM FOR NON-NURSES (THE OPTIONS PROGRAM)

The Master of Science (MS) option for non-nurses has been created for baccalaureate graduates who wish to receive graduate level nursing education. This option, initiated in 1990, allows individuals who hold a bachelors degree in another field to earn a master's degree in nursing in three years. Students taking this option integrate and build from previous academic and life experiences as they develop knowledge and skill in nursing.

Students complete upper-division nursing courses with regularly enrolled baccalaureate nursing students. In summer of the second year, students begin graduate non-clinical nursing courses with regularly enrolled master's students. Students in the MS-Option program, however, bypass the baccalaureate degree in nursing and proceed directly into the master's program as soon as the required undergraduate courses have been completed. Upon completion of the graduate courses, the MS in Nursing is conferred.

Students are eligible to sit for NCLEX-RN after completion of the first 9 credits of graduate course work in this program and must become licensed as Registered Nurses prior to beginning clinical coursework in the spring of the second year. Refer to the graduate catalog for more specifics regarding this option.

[Webpage for the Master's Option Program](#)

The R.N. to Master of Science degree program has been created specifically for registered nurses whose career goals will be enhanced through graduate study. The program facilitates and supports educational mobility and strengthens the leadership abilities of nurses who already have a foundation of professional experience. When required undergraduate courses have been completed, students in this program proceed directly into the master's program, bypassing the baccalaureate degree.

This program is designed so that students may complete the required junior and senior undergraduate nursing courses in one full-time year, beginning in May and ending the following May. Part-time study is also possible. The R.N. completes courses in new areas of content. In addition, there is assessment of and credit for previously attained knowledge and skill.

The R.N. to master's program is built upon prerequisites to the nursing major that include courses in the natural and behavioral sciences, humanities, fine arts and core courses required of all undergraduate students at USM.

Refer to the [USM Graduate Catalog](#) for admission requirements and application forms to be completed.

Organization of the Graduate Curriculum

Faculty members anticipate rapid changes in the field of nursing and are committed to offering programs which will prepare graduates to practice in diverse settings in the health care systems of the future. Students in these concentrations gain skills in clinical decision making and differential diagnosis, in case management and consultation, in patient teaching, in community assessments and interventions, and in program design, implementation and evaluation.

The adult nurse practitioner, family nurse practitioner, adult health clinical nurse specialist, and adult psychiatric/mental health clinical nurse specialist concentrations have a total of 616 clinical hours: 168 hours in clinical semester one, 224 hours in clinical semester two, and 224 hours in clinical semester three. For the family psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner concentration, there is an additional 224 hours in clinical semester four, for a total of 840 clinical hours. The Clinical Nurse Leader concentration has a total of 468 clinical hours: 84 hours in clinical semester one, 84 hours in clinical semester two, and 300 hours in clinical semester three.

The [Adult \(ANP\) or Family \(FNP\) Nurse Practitioner](#) concentration prepares an advanced practice nurse who functions as a primary care practitioner to individuals, families, groups and communities. Graduates who complete this program are eligible to sit for national certification as an adult or family nurse practitioner.

The [Adult Health Clinical Nurse Specialist](#) (AHCNS) concentration prepares an advanced practice nurse with skills in medical-surgical and home-care intervention with individuals, families, and groups. Graduates who complete this program are eligible to sit for national certification as a clinical nurse specialist in adult health.

The [Adult Psychiatric/Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist](#) (APMH/CNS) concentration prepares an advanced practice nurse with skills in therapeutic interventions with individuals, families, and groups. Graduates who complete this program are eligible to sit for national certification as a clinical nurse specialist in adult psychiatric/mental health.

The [Adult Psychiatric/Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist & Nurse Practitioner](#) (APMH/CNS/NP) concentration, prepares an advanced practice nurse with skills in therapeutic interventions with individuals, families, and groups and medication management with adult clients. Graduates who complete this program are eligible to sit for national certification as a clinical nurse specialist in adult psychiatric/mental health and as a nurse practitioner in adult psychiatric/mental health.

The [Family Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner](#) (FPMH/NP) concentration prepares an advanced practice nurse with skills in therapeutic interventions and introduces medication management with individuals, families, and groups across the lifespan. Graduates who complete this program are eligible to sit for national certification as a nurse practitioner in family psychiatric/mental health.

The [Clinical Nurse Leader](#) (CNL) concentration prepares a generalist who will function as a clinical leader for setting-specific nursing practice. The CNL role is at the point of care with responsibilities in management of care, the care environment, and unit specific patient outcomes. Graduates who complete this program are eligible to sit for national certification as a clinical nurse leader.

The [Dual Degree Program- Masters of Science in Nursing and Master of Business Administration](#) concentration is designed for students in the health professions who wish to combine advanced nursing practice with the analytical tools of business.

POST-MASTERS PROGRAMS (CERTIFICATES OF ADVANCED STUDY – CAS)

The post-master's certificate is designed to meet the educational needs of the master's prepared registered nurse interested in obtaining preparation for advanced practice. Students enrolled in this program join the master's students enrolled in the respective concentrations. Programs of study are individualized based on prior master's program of study.

Post-Master's Certificates of Advanced Study (CAS) are available in the following specialties:

- Adult Nurse Practitioner (ANP)
- Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)

- Adult Health Clinical Nurse Specialist (AH/CNS)
- Adult Psychiatric/Mental Health/Clinical Nurse Specialist (APMH/CNS)
- Adult Psychiatric/Mental Health/CNS/Nurse Practitioner (APMH/CNS/NP)
- Family Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (FPMH/NP)

ACCELERATED MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM FOR CERTIFIED ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSES IN FAMILY, ADULT, OR WOMEN'S HEALTH.

The accelerated MS program for advanced practice nurses entering RN to MS or regular master's program is designed to meet the educational needs of advanced practice nurses who do not hold a master's degree in nursing or who do not either have a baccalaureate and/or master's degree in nursing. Program length varies according to the academic credentials of the individual entering the program. Those practitioners without a baccalaureate degree must complete additional undergraduate coursework required in the RN to MS option.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING & MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

This dual-degree program is designed for students in the health professions desiring advanced study in both business and nursing. The complete USM MBA program is taken except for electives. Twenty-one credits of nursing core courses are also in the curriculum.

CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATE STUDY (CGS) IN NURSING EDUCATION

This 9-credit certificate program prepares students to teach in entry- and master's-level nursing programs in both didactic and clinical courses and engage in other professional roles such as staff development. Three required courses (3 credits each) for this certificate provide a foundation in theories of nursing education, external factors that influence nursing education, curricular models, teaching methodologies and strategies, and critical analysis of theories of learning and teaching. All courses will be offered as on-line courses. The third course may have a low-residency requirement as it entails a clinical practicum with supervision by faculty and an identified preceptor for either a didactic and/or clinical experiential component. This CGS is available as a subspecialty for students in regular graduate concentrations.

Part III: General Information for Students

Locations:

The School of Nursing has offices on both the Portland and Lewiston-Auburn (LAC) Campuses.

Masterton Hall at 71 Bedford St., Portland, is home to the Administrative Office of the College of Nursing and Health Professions, as well as offices for the Faculty and Staff of the School of Nursing.

USM Nursing Office at the Lewiston Auburn campus is in Room 114, across from the Dean's Office. [Elaine Ogradnik](#) (207) 753-6624 is the Administrative Assistant and contact for LAC Nursing. [Brenda Webster](#) and [Karen Martel](#) also share office space in Room 114. Their LAC phone number is (207) 753-6647. Nursing faculty offices are located in the faculty suite, area 162, adjacent to the Atrium Art Gallery.

[LAC Student Services](#) are located across from the Library at LAC.

Communication:

[CONHP Faculty & Staff Contact Information](#)

[USM Faculty & Staff Contact Information](#)

[USM Academic Calendar](#)

E-MAIL is the standard of communication at USM. Many items of communication will only take place via email, so please activate and frequently check your email! Please **do not forward** your USM e-mail to another e-mail account such as Gmail, or yahoo, as you may not receive messages sent through our list serves (*see below*).

E-Mail List serves: Nursing students are registered in an appropriate CONHP undergraduate or graduate list serve. CONHP uses these list serves to send out information to students such as clinical and curriculum changes, pin ordering information and meeting notices. Students can also use these list serves to share information with each other. [Brenda Webster](#) ((207) 280-4802) administers the list serves. If you aren't receiving messages from the School of Nursing, please contact Brenda to make sure that you're on the appropriate mailing list for your program.

Student mailboxes: Mailboxes on the Portland campus are located in Masterton Hall on the first floor near the Learning Resource and Simulation Center. During the first week of classes, stop by the Nursing

Lab Manager's office for a mailbox assignment. There is no fee for a mailbox. There are no student mailboxes at LAC.

Faculty mailboxes: In Portland, faculty mailboxes are located on the second floor of Masterton Hall in the mailroom near the elevator. Mail should have the faculty member's name on it and may be inserted in the mail slot outside the mailroom. Mail for LAC faculty may be given to Elaine Ogrodnik at LAC.

Bulletin boards: Boards are for the posting of notices and information for all programs and are located near the mailboxes (Portland only).

Blackboard is a course development tool which allows your instructor to teach all or part of your course on the Web. You can do some or all of the following in your course, depending on how your instructor plans the course:

- See announcements about the course
- See your instructor's biographical and contact information
- Check the syllabus, including assignments and due dates, readings, etc.
- Participate in on-line "chats" (synchronous) with other students and your instructor
- Participate in a Discussion Board (asynchronous), posting and reading messages from your instructor and other students
- Access course materials and resources on the Web
- Participate in small group discussions and projects
- Send assignments to instructors in a "drop box" and receive their feedback
- Take on-line quizzes and check your grade
- Create your own Web page to introduce yourself to the class

If you're unfamiliar with Blackboard, check out [USM Computing](#) for more info.

MaineStreet is the UMS information system gateway for course search, registration, etc. If you move, or change your phone number, you can change this information on-line in your MaineStreet Student Center. Please make sure that your contact information is up-to-date.

Storm Cancellations: The decision to close the University is made by 5 a.m. and communicated to radio stations by 6:30 a.m. The following stations are contacted with information about the closing of USM classes, offices, the School of Law and the off-campus centers:

- WMGX/WGAN Portland; WBLM Portland-Lewiston; WWGT Portland; WSME/WCDQ Sanford; WHYR Saco; WPKM Portland; WYNZ Portland; WMPG Gorham; WPOR Portland; WCLZ Brunswick; WJTO/WIGY Bath; WOYO Norway; WTVL Waterville; WTSN Dover, NH; WKZS/WLAM/WJBQ Lewiston; WRKD/WMCM Rockland; WIDE Biddeford; WMME Augusta; WXGL Lewiston; WHEB Portsmouth, NH; WABK Augusta; and WCME Wiscasset. Any changes in this list occur in late fall. Please watch the Free Press (the USM student newspaper) for an updated list.

- University closings are also announced via the **USM Storm Line ((207) 780-4800)** - Portland campus. [The LAC campus storm line](#) number is (207) 753-6595
- Students, faculty and the general public calling from local areas may use this number. Those people calling long distance between 6:00 AM and 8:00 PM may call **1-800-800-4876**. You will need to choose "1" for the Storm Line
- [USM Alert](#) is the emergency warning system of the University. You can receive text and/or e-mail messages about cancellations by signing up for this service.
- The decision to cancel evening classes (after 4 p.m.) is made by 2 p.m. of that day.
- Individual clinical faculty members have the prerogative to cancel their own group's clinical day.
- Should students find the weather conditions severe in their area and be unsure about traveling to their clinical site, they should call their clinical instructor prior to leaving home.

Academics:

Advisement

[Advising Bulletin](#)

Prior to the enrollment period for fall and spring semesters, the [Nursing Student Advising Bulletin](#) is posted. This bulletin offers important information about requirements and registration each semester.

Advisors

All students enrolled in a nursing major are assigned an advisor. Students may not register for courses without their advisor's prior approval and signature. After meeting with the advisor, students receive a PIN which allows enrollment in classes via [MaineStreet](#). Enrollment dates vary, depending on the number of credits a student has completed.

[Karen Martel](#) (207) 228-8182, the First and Second Year Nursing Advisor, advises undergraduate students on both the Portland and Lewiston-Auburn campuses until they are ready to enter junior level clinical courses. At that time they are assigned a faculty advisor.

While working on undergraduate course work, all RN students may seek advice from [Brenda Webster](#) (207) 780-4802, Coordinator of Nursing Student Services, regarding program requirements. RN-BS students are also assigned a faculty advisor.

RN- MS students are assigned a graduate faculty advisor when they begin their graduate level work.

MS-Option students are advised by [Elizabeth Elliott](#) (207) 780-4508, Coordinator of the

Undergraduate Nursing Programs, on all matters pertaining to the undergraduate program. Option students are assigned a graduate faculty advisor who is available for all other advising purposes relating to the graduate program when they begin graduate level courses.

Students who do not know who their advisor is may contact [Brenda Webster](#) at (207) 780-4802.

There are five purposes for academic advising with the underlying purpose of enhancing student success at USM:

1. Conveying the Purposes of the University: includes advice regarding the meaning of higher education, the essence of disciplinary and interdisciplinary study, the reasons for academic requirements, the expected standards of achievement and the spirit and satisfaction of scholarly work.
2. Information Sharing: includes advice about registration, course offerings, areas of faculty interest and expertise, educational opportunities, degree programs and requirements, educational policies and regulations, as well as administrative procedures.
3. Short Range Program Planning: includes advice and consultation regarding program planning, selection of specific courses, adjustments in course loads and pre-registration.
4. Long Range Planning: includes advice and consultation about educational and professional objectives suited to the student's demonstrated abilities and interests, as well as identification of the relationship between course programs and occupations.
5. Student Referral: recognizes that the academic advisor cannot meet all student needs, but that specialized campus services are available for advice and consultation complimentary to the knowledge and skill of the advisor.

Responsibilities of the Student (Advisee)

1. Establish time to meet with your advisor at least once a semester. Specific office hours are often posted on your faculty advisor's office door.
2. Obtain a grid outlining the requirements for your nursing program and use it to monitor progress toward fulfilling degree requirements.
3. Plan a suitable schedule of classes before seeing your advisor.
4. Inform your advisor of changes which directly affect your academic performance and educational goals (e.g. finances, job, health, academic performance, changes in academic and career goals).
5. Discuss academic performance and its implications with your advisor.
6. Follow-up on referrals agreed upon with your advisor.
7. Be familiar with the published rules and regulations of the College of Nursing and Health Professions and the University, including criteria for graduation.

Responsibilities of the Advisor

1. Establish, post and maintain adequate office hours throughout the term, with particular emphasis given to pre-registration and the add/drop period. Give student phone numbers where you may be reached to arrange appointments.
2. Be knowledgeable about the nursing program, University requirements, and degree requirements.
3. Assist student in planning a suitable schedule of classes.
4. Discuss academic performance and its implications with students.
5. Refer student to appropriate resources as necessary.
6. Maintain appropriate records of advising and academic progress.
7. Be a student advocate - based on trust and confidentiality.

[The Advising Network](#) is a valuable resource for students in planning sessions with their advisor. This website also includes a GPA calculator, graduation planner and other helpful links to USM services.

Registration: Each semester students are assigned a registration date and an enrollment PIN for registration. Students obtain their PIN from their advisor (see below). See the [Registrar's home page](#) for information about add/drop periods, and registration policies. (Please note that course numbers and registration dates may vary at the LAC campus.)

Withdrawing from Courses: Students should discuss adding and dropping courses with their advisor. There may be both academic and financial ramifications from withdrawing from classes, as outlined here: <http://usm.maine.edu/ess/ESS%20Programs%20&%20Services/Dropping%20a%20class.pdf> Students who must withdraw from all classes for a semester should fill out the [Semester Leave Form](#).

Disability Accommodations: If you need course accommodations because of a disability or injury, please make an appointment with the [Office of Academic Support for Students with Disabilities](#) ((207) 780-4706) as soon as possible.

Library: The libraries on the Portland and Gorham campuses and at Lewiston-Auburn College have extensive holdings. Many nursing materials are held in Portland. Hours are posted at the library. Library personnel are available for assistance, questions and an orientation to resources and their use. The following people are most consistently involved with nursing students:

- Portland: the reference staff can help in researching and defining topics and areas of interest.
- Cassie Fitzherbert, or her assistant (207) 780-4279 - can help you gain access to journals and books not held at USM through Interlibrary Loan.

- Pat Prieto (207) 780-4672 - can run computer searches to assist you in identifying resources on a given topic.
- Evelyn Greenlaw (207) 753-6541 – is available on the Lewiston-Auburn campus

Textbooks: Required textbooks for each course are listed at the [USM Bookstores website](#).

Tutoring: Contact your advisor or course instructor if you need extra help in a specific subject. Fellow students may be interested in tutoring. Funds may be available for students who have Federal Work Study who are interested in tutoring. [The Learning Center](#) can assist with study and test taking skills, tutoring and other services

Grading: See the Policies Section starting on 23 of this handbook for information about general academic policies of the School of Nursing. Refer to the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) for detailed information about Academic Requirements and Retention/Progression policies of the School of Nursing. Undergraduate nursing students should pay particular attention to the following: to be in good standing in the Undergraduate Nursing program a student must have a minimum USM grade point average of 2.75 or 2.5 as outlined here:

Credit hours	For Good Standing	For Probationary Standing
46-120	2.75	2.5 – 2.74
25-45	2.75	2.5 – 2.74
0-24	2.5	2.0 – 2.49

Classroom Grading:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>GPA</i>
A	93 and above	4.0
A-	90-92	3.67
B+	87-89	3.33
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.67
C+	77-79	2.33
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.67
D+	67-69	1.33
D	60-66	1.00
F	below 60	0.00

Clinical/Lab Grading (see page 26-27 of this Handbook for more information):

H	Pass with distinction
P	Pass
L	Low pass
F	Fail

Progression: See the Policies Section starting on page 23 of this handbook for information about general academic policies of the School of Nursing. Refer to the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) for detailed information about Academic Requirements and Retention/Progression policies of the School of Nursing. Undergraduate nursing students should pay particular attention to the following:

- Students must have a USM cumulative GPA of 2.75 in order to enroll in NUR 209/210 and 212/213. Transfer Credits: Please note that only courses taken at USM are included in the USM GPA
- In addition to maintaining a minimum 2.75 GPA, students must have a minimum 2.67 science GPA in order to start junior level clinical courses (NUR 323/325). The prerequisite nursing sciences are: Anatomy & Physiology I & II with labs, Chemistry for the Health Sciences, Microbiology and lab, Nutrition and Pathophysiology.
- Please note that the required sciences may be repeated only once. Please see the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) for additional information about repeating courses.
- Students must successfully complete the following courses before enrolling in junior level clinical courses: ENG 100, Area 'E' Core requirement, Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Psychology, Human Growth and Development, prerequisite nursing sciences (listed above), NUR 100, NUR 212/213 and NUR 209/210. Students must pass all required prerequisite courses, required CON Courses, and required NUR courses with a C or better.
- USM Nursing students must take all required NUR and CON at USM.
- No more than one year can elapse between completions of NUR 212/213, 209/210, and/or CON 302 and the first junior level clinical course (NUR 323/325).
- Nursing lecture and clinical courses must be taken concurrently the first time a student is enrolled in each course. Lecture and clinical or lab courses must be taken on the same campus.

Course and Instructor Evaluations: At the end of each nursing course every student is given a form for evaluating both the instructor and the course. Students can choose to sign it or not. Instructors see both signed and unsigned copies, but signed copies are kept in the instructor's file. LAC evaluation packets may be dropped off at the LAC Library drop box or may be given to Elaine Ogradnik at the LAC Nursing office. Portland evaluation packets can be dropped off with Sarah Haglund in the nursing administrative offices on the first floor of Masterton Hall.

Nursing Clinical Courses: Nursing clinical courses take place at one of our clinical locations such as Maine Medical Center, Mercy Hospital, Midcoast Hospital, Central Maine Medical Center. NUR 323/325, Adult/Older Adult Health Nursing is always the first clinical course. Nursing laboratory courses take place in the Learning Resource and Simulation Center (LRSC) on the Portland campus or the Nursing Lab Room 228 on the Lewiston campus.

At the beginning of each clinical course, students receive a **Clinical Letter** from the clinical faculty with information about where to meet for the first meeting of the clinical and other important information about the clinical. These letters are posted in [Blackboard](#). Clinical Letters are not posted for campus based laboratories.

Maine Medical Center (MMC) and Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC) have mandatory computer training for nursing students. Students must sign up and attend training before their second clinical at MMC. St. Mary's Hospital has computer training on the first day of clinical. Students will be notified by e-mail of dates for MMC computer training.

Health & Immunization Policy: In order to meet the health requirements of the various clinical facilities and to protect you, as well as the clients you will be caring for, tests and immunizations are required prior to the start of the first clinical/laboratory experience. This first experience occurs during NUR 213. Failure to comply with these immunization requirements by the stated deadlines will prevent you from moving forward in your nursing education. Visit the [health requirements](#) link for the latest information about these policies. Starting in Fall 2009 students starting NUR 213 will be submitting health requirement information on-line at <http://www.usmnursingcompliance.com>. There is a fee associated with this service which must be paid by credit card.

Background Check Policy: Students must pay for and complete a comprehensive background check prior to starting junior level clinical courses (NUR 325/331). In addition, students must sign a disclosure agreement allowing the school to provide access to this background information to our clinical affiliates. Affiliates have the right to deny clinical placement based on criminal background. Denial of clinical placements will stop progression in the nursing program. Background check information is submitted on line at <http://www.usmnursingcompliance.com>

Uniform Requirements: Check this website for information about clinical uniform requirements.

Student Incident Exposure Tracking Procedure and Form

Learning Resource & Simulation Center (LRSC) Portland: The School of Nursing's Learning Resource and Simulation Center (LRSC) is located in Masterton Hall and offers hospital beds, equipment, mannequins, a small nursing library, and a quiet place to study as well as:

Audiovisual programs and equipment: Audiovisual equipment is available for use in any of the LRSC rooms. In addition, equipment may be reserved for use in Masterton Hall, as part of a classroom assignment. Contact Media Services and Instructional Technology (207 780-4280) to arrange for equipment to be placed in any room in Masterton Hall.

Computers and computer assistance Students may use the LRSC computers on a first-come, first-serve basis. We hold computer-assisted learning programs and several word processing programs. There is also an Ethnography program to assist with coding qualitative research data. Assistance with any of these programs and troubleshooting is provided by the LRSC staff. Computers are also available for student use in the [Luther Bonney computer lab](#). LAC has a computer/library common area available for student use.

Skills practice equipment and materials: Many of the skill practice items (e.g. blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes, reflex hammers, etc.) may be signed out for short periods of time for at-home practice. Students may use these materials independently or in small groups. Fragile, scarce, or controlled items are restricted to use in the LRSC.

Skills Practice Tutoring: It is possible to arrange for assistance with skills practice/ tutoring for special content areas.

The LAC Nursing Lab is in Room 228. Skill practice times must be coordinated between the faculty and Elaine Ogrodnik or a work-study student assigned to the lab.

[CNA Registry Form:](#) Students in the undergraduate program who have successfully completed the following course requirements have met the requirements for CNA registration: Human Growth & Development, Introductory Psychology, Anatomy & Physiology I & II, Total Health Assessment, Fundamentals of Nursing Lab, Nursing Arts and Science (*Please note that eligibility is subject to change by the Maine State Board of Nursing.*)

Declaring a Minor: Undergraduate nursing students in the traditional nursing program may choose to complete additional coursework in order to obtain a Minor. [Holistic Health](#) is a popular minor for nursing students. Other minors are listed in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#). A [Declaration of Minor](#) form must be completed by the student and signed by the student's advisor as well as the chairperson of the Minor. The Minor must be completed by the time the student is ready to graduate.

Graduation: During the semester the student expects to graduate, the student must contact the Registrar's Office (207) 780-5230 to request an application for graduation, or go to <http://www.usm.maine.edu/~reg/Forms.htm> to print a copy. Refer to the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) for graduation requirements. Regular undergraduate nursing students graduate in May or December. Graduation dates for other students may vary. Caps and Gowns are ordered from the USM Bookstore.

Convocation is the School of Nursing's pinning ceremony that takes place at the end of each semester. An e-mail will be sent during the semester about ordering pins. Tickets to Convocation are limited depending on how many students are graduating

USM Commencement takes place in May, usually at the Cumberland County Civic Center in Portland.

National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN): This nationwide computerized test was developed and is regulated by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing <https://www.ncsbn.org>. Visit the state board of nursing website in the state to which you plan to apply for your first license for information about how to apply to take the NCLEX. [Brenda Webster](#) is the contact person for information about the NCLEX and reviews the 2-part registration process with students who are enrolled in NUR 470 (Leadership, Management and Ethics) each semester.

Scholarships & Other Funding Sources:

[Federal Work Study](#): There are some work study jobs at CONHP for those students who have work study funds. Contact Elaine Ogrodnik on the LAC campus for info about LAC opportunities. On the Portland campus, contact [Susan Taylor](#) for more information.

[College of Nursing and Health Professions Scholarships](#) : The [Application Information Page](#) has more information about applying for nursing scholarships. For more information regarding other financial aid available to nursing students contact Helen Parker in the Financial Aid Office (207 780-5250), 202 Corthell Hall, Gorham Campus. The Reference Librarians at the University Library on the Portland Campus can help locate other scholarship/ financial aid sources.

The CONHP Scholarship Awards ceremony is held each year in April.

USM [Orientation](#) is an on-line resource for students new to USM

[USM Counseling Services](#) are available to all USM Students

Transportation: Since clinical experiences occur in a variety of settings in the southern and south central Maine areas, students must be prepared to provide their own transportation to rural as well as urban areas.

During fall and spring semesters, USM operates a free shuttle bus service on a regular [schedule](#) between the Portland and Gorham campuses.

[Campus Maps & Directions](#)

[USM Commuter Student Services](#)

Nursing Organizations

Student Nurses Organization of Portland and Lewiston (SNAPL): A local organization, SNAPL consists of nursing students who unite to explore issues in nursing. It frequently acts as a liaison between faculty and students in the School of Nursing. Members of SNAPL are responsible for organizing some aspects of Convocation (pinning), and other events such as blood drives, stethoscope sales, and various School of Nursing activities and workshops including CPR training. Membership dues are nominal. All nursing students are invited to join.

[Sigma Theta Tau International](#) - Honor Society of Nursing

Organizational Mission: The mission of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International is to support the learning, knowledge, and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide.

Society Vision: The vision of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International is to create a global community of nurses who lead in using knowledge, scholarship, service and learning to improve the health of the world's people.

Membership: Membership is by invitation to baccalaureate and graduate nursing students who demonstrate excellence in scholarship, and to nurse leaders exhibiting exceptional achievements in nursing.

The Local Chapter: [Kappa Zeta Chapter-at-Large](#) was established in 1988 and is co-sponsored by the University of Southern Maine College of Nursing and Health Professions, St. Joseph's College Department of Nursing, and the University of New England Department of Nursing. Undergraduate students, upon completion of their junior year, graduate students, and RN students who meet the grade point average and class standing criteria are eligible to join. Contact members of Sigma Theta Tau International to learn more about the organization.

Part IV: Policies

Please refer to the [Graduate](#) or [Undergraduate](#) Catalog for comprehensive policy information

USM Academic Integrity Policies:

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism, cheating, and falsification of information are violations of academic integrity that will not be tolerated by the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Please check the [USM Office of Community Standards](#) website for more information.

Harassment: Harassment is defined as looks, words or actions between unequals in social authority (e.g., professor/student) and/or between students and staff/peers that create a chilling environment for the student resulting in impaired work and/or learning. Students who feel they have been harassed should report the harassment to the Chairperson/Director of the Department offering the course, or to the Chairperson/ Director of the Department where the incident has occurred, as soon as possible. At the Chairperson/Director's request, students who report harassment should be prepared to provide, in writing, examples/incidences of behavior, which would support the perception of harassment. If the perceived harassment involves the Department Chairperson/ Director, the students should report the harassment to the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions. The Chairperson/Director or Dean will investigate the complaint, including talking to the involved parties separately. In the case of harassment based on any of the protected classes, see the University's Sexual Harassment Policy in the University's Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs. Protected classes include race, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, physical and mental disability, and sexual orientation.

School of Nursing Policies

Undergraduate & Graduate Policies

Attendance:

- **Clinical attendance is mandatory** - In case of inclement weather, students are responsible for ascertaining whether or not clinical is canceled.
- **Classroom attendance** - The expectation is that students will attend class. Content presented in class may be amplification of material read or material not found in the readings. Students are responsible for missed classes. A course syllabus may expand upon this policy.

Exams: Exams will not be given early. If an exam must be missed due to extraordinary circumstances, the course faculty member(s) must be notified personally prior to the exam. Exam make-up may be arranged with the faculty member(s), who reserves the right to change the examination format or defer the exam. A course syllabus may expand upon this policy.

Papers: APA Format - Students are expected to follow the format of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). The APA Publication Manual presents explicit style requirements for authors and students in the preparation of manuscripts and papers. The sample paper found in the back of the APA manual may be very helpful. APA tutoring is available through the Learning Center located in Luther Bonney Hall (207) 780-4228. Papers are due on the date specified in the syllabus or negotiated with the faculty member. Any paper received after the designated date will be considered late. Exception to the due date will be made only under extraordinary circumstances and must be negotiated before the paper is due. A paper may have 5 percentage points deducted for every day it is late. Students should keep a clean copy of all papers submitted. If a student wishes to contest a grade on a paper, he/she may submit this clean copy to the Director of the School of Nursing with a request for a second reader. Second reader and student will remain anonymous. The final grade for a paper submitted for a second reading will be the average of the original grade and the grade given by the second reader.

Confidentiality: Students are expected to maintain professional confidentiality regarding clients' identities and sensitive information by: not including identifying information (client initials, address, employment, etc...) in course work or course notes; guarding any notes carefully; limiting discussions of clients to clinical instructor, fellow students during clinical conference and with appropriate staff members of the clinical agency. This expectation is required by federal law with fines and punishment for disclosure of a patient's personal health information. It is also important to treat any sensitive information related to peers and faculty with confidentiality, accountability and responsibility.

The School of Nursing subscribes to the ANA guidelines for ethical practice. These guidelines state that:

1. The nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurses' primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.
4. The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and determines the appropriate delegation of tasks consistent with the nurse's obligation to provide optimum patient care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to preserve integrity and safety, to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth.

6. The nurse participates in establishing, maintaining, and improving health care environments and conditions of employment conducive to the provision of quality health care and consistent with the values of the profession through individual and collective action.
7. The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to practice, education, administration, and knowledge development.
8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public in promoting community, national, and international efforts to meet health needs.
9. The profession of nursing, as represented by associations and their members, is responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy.

* American Nurses' Association (2001) Code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements. Washington, DC: Author.

Cheating: If a student is found cheating on an exam or an assignment, the policies stated under plagiarism in the appropriate undergraduate or graduate catalog *will* be followed.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined by the faculty, in part, as "the submission of another's work as one's own, without adequate attribution." Should a student be found plagiarizing in a paper, nursing care plan, or log, the student will be reported by the faculty member to the Director of the School of Nursing. The process described in the [USM Student Academic Integrity Policy](#) will be used. See the current edition of the USM [undergraduate](#) or [graduate](#) catalogs for specific information. Plagiarism is a serious offense in academia and may result in expulsion from the College and the University.

Undergraduate Policies

ERI Tests - Nursing students are required to take the Educational Resources Incorporated (ERI) tests when they are registered for courses which require these tests. This program helps students prepare for the NCLEX-RN examination and helps the School of Nursing with curriculum evaluation. For unproctored exams, students will be able to access exams in the last two weeks of class through the exam period. Students must take the test in this time period. For the comprehensive RN Assessment exam students must take a proctored exam which will be scheduled during the semester. Students in the traditional and accelerated baccalaureate programs take this exam in their final clinical semester at scheduled testing times. Master's Option students may take this exam in their first graduate semester, prior to taking their NCLEX-RN exam. Students who fail to take the required ERI exams by the end of exam week will lose a minimum of 2 points from their final grade in the course requiring an ERI. There are no makeup exams after exam period. Faculty may choose to subtract additional points for missing the exam and may opt to give incentive points.

Clinical Policies - Students are required to attend all clinical experiences. It is the student's responsibility to arrange transportation to and from the clinical setting. If a student, due to extraordinary circumstances, must miss a clinical experience, the instructor and the clinical site must be notified prior to the time of the clinical. Clinical make-ups will be at the discretion of the instructor.

Responsibility and Accountability in nursing practice are required at all times. Failure in these areas may result in dismissal from the college. Students are expected to be aware of their clinical practice limitations and to seek appropriate guidance from clinical faculty as appropriate and necessary. Use of mind-altering drugs (alcohol, marijuana, depressants, etc.) before or during clinical experiences is grounds for dismissal from the nursing program. See The USM [Substance Abuse Policy](#) in the current undergraduate catalog.

Care Plans and Logs: Care Plans are tools for providing high level care. Therefore, care plans need to be prepared before your nursing experience whenever possible and appropriate. Care plans are required to meet minimum guidelines as established by individual clinical instructors. It is important to remember the nursing care for the client and not the care plan itself is the end product of your planning. Logs are tools for learning. In them you reflect for yourself and your instructor what, where, when, and how you have learned from your experience. Consistent lateness or failure to complete care plans and logs may result in an unsatisfactory evaluation in safety and accountability and thus a failure in the course.

Grading Policies

Classroom Grading: See the [USM catalog](#) for general University grading policies.

Clinical Grading: Clinical undergraduate nursing courses are graded as follows:

- H- Pass with distinction
- P- Pass
- L- Low Pass
- F- Fail

Pass with distinction represents the exceptional student: It begins with requiring that a student be successful in all criteria identified on the [Clinical Performance Appraisal Tool](#). Further criteria include:

- Someone who is self-directed and seeks opportunities on her or his own.
- Someone who assumes responsibility for learning in new situations.
- Someone who identifies and manages conflict effectively.
- Someone who examines ethical issues in practice and can identify the ethical components of her or his practice.
- Someone with strong evidence of theory or research-based practice.
- This honor is ultimately based on the opinion of the individual clinical instructor.

The faculty member will write an exemplar or narrative of exemplary nursing care demonstrated by the student during the clinical rotation. Clinical faculty in a given course will meet at the end of the course to discuss those student(s) worthy of receiving a pass with distinction.

Low Pass: A clinical instructor choosing to give a low pass to a student is required to clearly identify, using the [Clinical Performance Appraisal Tool](#), areas where the student is lacking, and, in association with the student, identify strategies for addressing those weaknesses. This appraisal is to be placed in the student's file. If a student receives a second low pass grade, this second low pass constitutes an F which stops progression in clinical course work and necessitates a repeat of the clinical course in which it was received. Please review CONHP policies related to repeating coursework in the Academic Policies section of the [Undergraduate Catalog](#). This notification is to be copied to the student's advisor. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor of the subsequent clinical course to discuss the weaknesses identified in the clinical appraisal resulting in a low pass designation.

Undergraduate Student Academic Appeal Policy

USM functions for the higher good, not to further the interest of either the individual faculty member or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free expression. Academic freedom is essential for protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching, and the rights of the student to freedom learning. Along with rights come corresponding duties. Both faculty and student are called upon to exercise these freedoms in a responsible manner.

In the College of Nursing and Health Professions, we recognize that students' grievances in the area of academic affairs do occasionally occur. In an effort to ensure fairness for both student and faculty member as well as protect the rights of freedom of both, an appeal of a grade must be initiated within 30 days after the final grade is posted.

The student must produce the appeal in writing and discuss with the faculty member responsible for the appeal in a good faith effort to resolve the misunderstanding. If, after such a discussion, the student remains unsatisfied, the student may appeal to the Department Chairperson. After receiving the academic appeal of a grade the Department Chairperson will interview the student, the faculty member, any witnesses, review the course syllabus and establish the facts of each case.

In order to guarantee a fair and equal adjudication of student grievances in the area of academic affairs, the following policy is in effect: Academic grievances generally involve such matters as the process used to derive a grade granted by individual members of the faculty, or student appeal of what he or she feels to be unfair, or discriminatory treatment by a faculty member.

The steps to be followed are:

1. The student first proceeds through the regular administrative appeal process which involves, in the order stated, the student appealing to the following:
 - the faculty member involved
 - the department chairperson
 - dean of the school or college involved
 - provost
2. If, after this administrative appeal process has been completely pursued, the student continues to feel the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, he or she may request that the University of Southern Maine Student Senate convene the “Student Grievance Committee” as outlined in the [USM Governance Document](#).
3. The final decision on any student academic grievance, after it has progressed through (1) and (2) above, rests with the President.

Graduate Policies

Program Policies - In addition to the general policies described in the University of Southern Maine Graduate Catalog Academic Policies chapter, specific policies for the graduate program in nursing are as follows:

Admission Credit - This credit, which has been earned at USM, must be approved by the graduate faculty prior to admission and is subject to the condition that a grade of B- or better was received for the coursework. No graduate courses that are older than five years will be accepted for admission credit. Graduate courses in Advanced Pharmacology, Advanced Psychopharmacology, or Advanced Health Assessment will not be accepted for admission credit if older than three years. A maximum of six credit hours may be approved for admission credit provided a grade of at least a B was earned in each individual course. Exceptions to the maximum credits allowed at time of admission must be approved by the Graduate Curriculum, Admission, and Advancement Committee (GCAAC).

Transfer Credit - This credit must be approved at the time of admission and request for approval included as part of the admissions application. No graduate courses that are older than five years will be accepted for transfer credit. Graduate courses in Advanced Pharmacology, Advanced Psychopharmacology or Advanced Health Assessment will not be accepted for transfer credit if older than three years. Up to a total of nine credit hours may be approved as transfer credit provided a grade of at least a B was earned in each individual course. Additional transfer credit may be approved in unusual circumstances.

Background Check Policy - Students must pay for and complete a comprehensive background check prior to starting graduate clinical courses. In addition, students must sign a disclosure agreement allowing the school to provide access to this background information to our clinical

affiliates. Affiliates have the right to deny clinical placement based on criminal background. Denial of clinical placements will stop progression in the graduate nursing program.

Program Grade Policies - In the undergraduate portion of their program, students in the R.N.-M.S. Program and students in the M.S. Option Program for non-nurses, must achieve a minimum of a B- in all NUR, CON, statistics, and pathophysiology designated undergraduate courses. If such students earn below a B-, they may retake the course one time; however, they will be placed on probation and may not progress to graduate courses. Failure to correct probationary status after one semester will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University. A grade of less than C- in a required undergraduate course will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University.

Second degree option students must receive a minimum of “pass” in undergraduate clinical courses to progress. For a second degree option student who receives a first low pass grade in an undergraduate clinical course, the first low pass course may be repeated once. If the student receives a second low pass in the same or another undergraduate clinical course, the student will be dismissed from the Graduate Nursing Program. Second degree option students complete all undergraduate course and clinical requirements before being eligible to start graduate courses.

Second degree option students who fail NCLEX-RN cannot progress in their course of studies without review by the GCAAC and permission of the Director of the School of Nursing.

In the graduate portion of their program, all students must achieve a minimum of a B- grade for all required graduate courses. The first time a student earns below a B-, the course must be retaken successfully (B- or above) in order to continue with program progression. A graduate course can only be retaken one time. Failure of the course retaken or of a second course will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University. If the course in which a grade below a B- has been earned has a concurrent clinical course, progression in the theory/practice course sequence stops. A grade of B- or better must be achieved in the course which is repeated before the theory/practice course sequence resumes.

Because of the interrelatedness of concurrent clinical and theory courses, the following policies apply:

If a student fails a clinical course (C+ or below) but passes the concurrent theory course (B- or above), the student must repeat the clinical course within one calendar year. If more than one calendar year elapses between failing and repeating the required clinical course, the student will be required to retake the concurrent theory course.

If the student fails a theory courses (C+ or below) but passes the concurrent clinical course (B-or above), and the student retakes the theory course within one calendar year, the student will be

required to perform 8 hours of clinical, including attendance at clinical seminar every week. If more than one year elapses between failing a required theory course and retaking it, the clinical course must be repeated in its entirety.

A grade of C or below in the clinical component of a course will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University (please refer to the Academic Policies section of this catalog).

In any semester in which the cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 (B average) the student will be placed on probation. Failure to correct probationary status after one semester will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University. An incomplete grade in a clinical and/or concurrent theory course must be satisfied prior to progression to the next sequential course unless an arrangement involving the student and the faculty of both courses has been agreed to in writing. A 3.0 GPA is necessary for graduation. Students may only count 3 credits of C in an elective toward graduation. A cumulative GPA below 2.0 in any one semester will result in dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program and academic withdrawal from the University.

The GCAAC and program faculty reserve the right to review a student's record to make recommendations regarding progression.

Current Nursing License and Liability Insurance

All students in the graduate program, except MS-Option for Non-Nurses students, must hold and maintain current Maine Registered Nurse LICENSURE. MS Option for Non Nurses students upon completion of the summer of the second year or after completing 9 credits of graduate study following completion of undergraduate courses, must sit for the State Board Examination (NCLEX-RN) and become licensed as a registered nurse. Failure to pass the NCLEX-RN licensure examination prior to the first graduate clinical practicum will stop progression in the program.

Health Policies

Students are to fulfill the University's published Health Policies and Regulations (see catalog). In addition, students are to comply with the [health policy requirements](#) of the College of Nursing and Health Professions.

Directed Study

Directed Study should be planned with a faculty advisor prior to the semester in which it is to take place. Credit allocation (up to three) is negotiated with the faculty person.

Thesis

All students have the option of completing a thesis. Information regarding the entire thesis process will be provided by your academic advisor.

Graduation Process

During the semester of expected graduation, students are to complete an application for graduation available through the Registrar's Office. Refer to the [Graduate catalog](#) for graduation requirements. For additional graduate financial aid opportunities contact the USM Financial Aid Office (207) 780-5250 on the Gorham campus.

Financial Resources

Professional Nurse Traineeships may pay all or part of the cost of the tuition, books, and fees of the program of nursing and reasonable living expenses of the individual during the period for which the traineeship is provided. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in full-time study.

As available, USM Graduate Research Assistantships and Teaching Assistantships provide a stipend or tuition credits. Contact the Director of the School of Nursing for details regarding Professional Nurse Traineeships and for Graduate Assistantships.

University Academic Policies for Graduate Students

Full-time status: Students must register for nine (9) credits per semester in order to achieve full-time status.

Continuous Enrollment Policy

In extenuating circumstances a graduate student may petition for exception to the continuous enrollment policy (refer to USM graduate catalog); the petition must bear approval of the student's advisor and the Coordinator of the Graduate Nursing Program. A signed Leave of Absence form must be sent to the Office of Graduate Admissions and a copy forwarded to the Coordinator of the Graduate Nursing Program. Forms are available on the Office of Graduate Studies Web site at www.usm.maine.edu/grad.

Student Appeals and Complaints - Graduate Policies

Non-Academic Complaints

To provide graduate students with assistance in resolving disagreements or complaints of a non-academic nature, the University has designated the Office of the Dean of Student Life (ODSL) to respond to student inquiries. The mission of ODSL is to provide impartial guidance to students in identifying the nature of their disagreement or complaint. ODSL staff will guide students to the appropriate University policy or procedure to utilize in seeking resolution. The academic policies described below are not applicable to student complaints about unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment; however, an ODSL representative can advise the student about the University policies and procedures to follow when student complaints of this nature arise.

Academic Grade Appeal Policy

The purpose of the academic grade appeal policy is to provide a fair and speedy review of all student appeals of academic grades in graduate/professional programs at the University of Southern Maine; this policy will permit such appeals to be determined in a manner that reflects the interests of both the student and the instructor. The only matters reviewable under this policy are claims of prejudice on the part of an instructor in an academic exercise or activity for which a grade leading to academic credit is awarded, and/or evident and prejudicial error in the administration or grading method used for any paper, examination, performance, or other exercise or activity for which a grade leading to academic credit is awarded, provided that the academic judgment used in determining the merits of the grade to be awarded to such exercise or activity shall not be reviewable.

An appeal under this policy shall be carried out according to the following procedures:

- The student should present his or her claim, in writing, to the instructor involved and shall seek to have the matter resolved by the instructor. In no event shall there be a right of appeal hereunder for a claim presented to the instructor more than 30 days after a final grade is posted to the student's record. The instructor must respond within 14 days of receiving the appeal.
- If the student remains aggrieved by the decision of the instructor under step (1), he or she may, within 14 days after formal receipt of the instructor's final decision, appeal, in writing, to the chairperson of the department or program director of the college in which the course or other exercise or activity is offered. The chairperson/program director must respond within 14 days of receiving the appeal.
- If the student remains aggrieved by the decision of the chairperson or program director of the department under step (2), he or she may, within 14 days after formal receipt of the chairperson's or program director's final decision, appeal, in writing, to the dean of the college in which the course or other exercise or activity is offered.
- The dean, after discussion with the student and instructor, may resolve the grievance by agreement or render a decision within 21 days of receipt of the written appeal. The decision may be (a) that the appeal be dismissed or (b) that a grade be changed or the student be

allowed an opportunity to retake an examination or other exercise or (c) that another appropriate remedy be administered.

- The student or the instructor may, within 14 days of the receipt of the decision of the dean, appeal to the associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies in writing, stating the reason for the appeal and delivering a copy of the writing to the opposing party and the dean. The opposing party may, within 10 days of receipt of the reasons for appeal, reply in writing to the associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies. The associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies shall review the original claim, the written decision of the chairperson or program director and dean, and the written reasons for the appeal and reply. The associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies shall, within 28 days of receipt of the appeal and after reviewing the matter, prepare a written decision which shall uphold the decision of the chairperson, program director, or dean, or prescribe any other appropriate remedy. The associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies' decision shall be final and not subject to further review. Copies of the decision of the associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies shall be delivered to the student, the instructor, and the chairperson or program director and dean. The total time for resolution from the first appeal to the final decision shall be less than 120 days. If a faculty member/administrator fails to address the appeal within the specified time frame, the student may take the appeal to the next level.

Appeals of Dismissal or Withdrawal

All appeals of dismissal or withdrawal must follow the appeals process defined by the program's school or college. The dean of the school or college must be included in this process. Within 14 days following the student's receipt, in writing, of the decision by the department/dean, the student may appeal in writing to the associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies. The decision of the associate provost/dean of Graduate Studies shall be rendered within three weeks and shall be final.

If a student withdraws or is withdrawn from the University during the first two weeks of the semester, there will be no courses or grades recorded. A student withdrawing or being withdrawn after the second week through the eighth week will receive a W grade for each course in which the student was enrolled. A student withdrawing or being withdrawn after the eighth week will receive regular grade designations as determined by the instructor(s). Under unusual circumstances, grades of W can be assigned after the eighth week if approved by the instructor and the director of the program, and with final approval of the associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies.

These graduate appeal policies can be found at <http://usm.maine.edu/catalogs/graduate/policies.htm#p18>