



WESTERN

NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR THE

MASTER OF SCIENCE (MSN)

PROGRAM

Western New Mexico University

School of Nursing and Kinesiology (SONAK)

Academic Year 2026-2027

Reviewed and Revised 07/20256

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Nursing Degrees Offered by SONAK

Bachelor of Science in Nursing;

[Pre Licensure Track](#)

[RN-to-BS Track](#)

Master of Science in Nursing

[BSN to MSN Track \(traditional\)](#)

[RN-to-MSN \(two accelerated tracks\)](#)

[Family Nurse Practitioner \(FNP\) Certificate](#)

Student Acknowledgement

Students enrolled in the Master of Science in Nursing at Western New Mexico University (WNMU) are responsible for their knowledge of an adherence to regulations printed in these Graduate Nursing Guidelines.

The School of Nursing reserves the right to modify any provisions or requirements when such an action serves the interest of the client/patient, the nursing program, track, or its students. Notification of changes will be communicated to students ongoing.

Students will complete an acknowledgement form of receipt found in Appendix A and upload it to CastleBranch.

Mission and Vision of the MSN Program

MISSION

The mission of the Western New Mexico University School of Nursing MSN Program is to offer a caring, diverse, inclusive, and innovative community for learners. The program encourages the advancement of higher-level nursing knowledge established through evidence-based practices and supports the principles of community, nursing scholarship, and sound practices for purposes of health and wellness in rural/frontier communities at the regional, national, and international levels.

VISION

The MSN program prepares the nurse at a higher level of advanced nursing knowledge to be a leader in healthcare delivery systems of rural, regional, national, and international communities

CORE VALUES

The MSN program with its focus on community and rural/frontier healthcare strives to facilitate the ability of graduate nursing students to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Excellence** in clinical practice and healthcare delivery to communities and rural/frontier areas

2. **Integrity** as healthcare professionals entrusted with the lives of individuals, especially those who reside in communities and rural/frontier areas of southwestern New Mexico
3. **Leadership** as healthcare professionals dedicated to the overall health and well-being of communities and rural/frontier areas
4. **Scholarship** by means of maintaining an attitude of lifelong learning

University Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

An open-access Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and New Mexico's Applied Liberal Arts and Sciences University, Western New Mexico University combines a foundation of liberal arts education with quality professional programs and career and technical preparation in a diverse, inclusive, creative, and caring community of learners empowered with the essential skills and knowledge for lifelong success in work and life.

Al ser una Institución al Servicio de Hispanos (HSI) y de inscripción abierta, así como la Universidad de Artes Liberales y Ciencias Aplicadas de Nuevo México, Western New México University combina una base de educación en artes liberales con programas profesionales de calidad y preparación técnica en una comunidad diversa, inclusiva, creativa y solidaria de estudiantes capacitados con habilidades y conocimientos esenciales para el éxito permanente en la vida y el trabajo.

Vision

Western New Mexico University is a premier and innovative Applied Liberal Arts and Sciences University in combination with internationally recognized professional programs and career and technical preparation. Its students achieve career goals, become conscientious citizens, practice social and environmental responsibility, and impact their communities and their futures as independent thinkers who know themselves within the changing context of a global, digital world. Embracing its identity as a Hispanic Serving Institution, WNMU is the central contributor in its region for public service, economic development, and cultural enrichment.

Western New Mexico University es una Universidad de Artes Liberales y Ciencias Aplicadas líder e innovadora que combina programas profesionales reconocidos internacionalmente y la preparación profesional técnica. Sus estudiantes alcanzan metas profesionales, formándolos en ciudadanos comprometidos, que practican la responsabilidad social y ambiental, que tienen impacto en sus comunidades y en su futuro como pensadores críticos independientes que se conocen a sí mismos dentro del contexto cambiante de un mundo global y digital. Adoptando su identidad como una institución al servicio a hispanos, WNMU es la contribuyente central en su región para el servicio público, el desarrollo económico y el enriquecimiento cultural.

Core Values

1. **Innovation/Creativity:** In every obstacle we see opportunities to provide practical solutions to problems, addressing and redefining them to match our institutional strengths. We embrace continuous improvement, encourage invention, and continually seek better, more efficient ways to achieve our goals. We reward creativity and support actions toward positive changes for society.
2. **Integrity:** We operate ethically, and hold ourselves accountable to our students, the community, and all who serve WNMU's mission. We uphold standards of honesty, confidentiality, trust, respect, and transparency. We recognize that we are individually accountable and collectively responsible for living and encouraging the highest of ethical standards.
3. **Intellectual Curiosity:** We seek the advancement of knowledge, critical thinking, inquiry, and discovery through our teaching, service, and research. We continuously learn from our achievements and our challenges. We encourage our students and colleagues to challenge each other in the support of academic freedom: inquiry, pursuit of ideas, and creative activity.
4. **Personal Responsibility:** We recognize our responsibilities to the students, to each other, and to the community. Individually and collectively, we strive to exceed our students' and our colleagues' expectations, achieving teaching and service excellence and creating a welcoming positive learning environment.
5. **Service to University and Community:** We are good neighbors and a positive force for change. We foster communities of caring, respect, and civility. We engage with our communities, serve society, and build capacity for relating to one another.
6. **Student Success:** We provide our students with the tools essential to build their futures and succeed in life as productive, educated citizens who can think critically about, adapt to, and change the world around them.

Program Outcomes

1. Ten percent (10%) of graduates will apply to a post-MSN program (i.e., doctoral degree, nurse practitioner certificate program) within five years after graduation.
2. Per alumni surveys, 50% of graduates will have served in at least one professional leadership role within five years after graduation.
3. Graduate employer surveys will reflect a score of at least 3.0 on a 4.0-Likert scale at one year and five years post-graduation.

Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the MSN program with its focus on community and rural/frontier health will:

1. Employ collaborative strategies in the design, coordination, and evaluation of outcomes across diverse populations to improve quality of care.
2. Apply decision-making and leadership skills in the provision of culturally responsive, high-quality healthcare through community partnerships.

3. Translate evidence into practice from nursing science and other sciences into the delivery of care to rural/frontier underserved communities.
4. Analyze current and emerging technologies to support safe practice environments and to optimize patient safety, cost effectiveness, and health outcomes.
5. Advocate for care that is based on ethical principles and respects diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Program Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes for the MSN Program are based on *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (AACN, 2021).

- Domain I: Knowledge for Nursing Practice
- Domain II: Person-Centered Care
- Domain III: Population Health
- Domain IV: Scholarship for Nursing Discipline
- Domain V: Quality and Safety
- Domain VI: Interprofessional Partnerships
- Domain VII: Systems-Based Practice
- Domain VIII: Informatics and Healthcare Technologies
- Domain IX: Professionalism
- Domain X: Personal, Professional and Leadership Development

School of Nursing Accreditation

Western New Mexico University's accreditation is reaffirmed by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The commission is scheduled to conduct its next reaffirmation of accreditation for WNMU in Academic Year (AY) 2034-2035. Please see <https://www.hlcommission.org/Directory-of-HLCInstitutions.html> for additional details.

The master of science in nursing track at Western New Mexico University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<https://www.ccneaccreditation.org>), 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC, 20001, Telephone (202) 887-6791.

The master of science in nursing program through Western New Mexico University is scheduled for reaffirmation of accreditation in 2027. *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (AACN, 2021) are integrated throughout the MSN program.

School of Nursing Team	
Associate Dean, School of Nursing and Kinesiology (SONAK) Professor	<i>Dr. Kimberly Petrovic, PhD, MSN, MA, RN</i>
Pre-licensure BSN Program Director Professor	<i>Charnelle Lee, MSN-Ed, RN</i>
Professor	<i>Krista Wood, MSN, RN</i>
Associate Professor(s)	<i>Angela (Angie) Cox, PhD, RN, AHN-BC, HWNC-BC Margaret "Fran" Driver, PhD(c), RN Joline Lowe, DNP(c), MSN-Ed, RN Erin Wood, MSN, RN</i>
Assistant Professor	<i>Ariana Yurcic, MSN-Ed, RN, CNC</i>
Deming Campus Coordinator, Assistant Professor	<i>Brandalyn Hassman, MSN, RN, CNL, CMSRN</i>
Family Nurse Practitioner Program Director Associate Professor	<i>Brittany Parks, FNP-C, MSN, RN</i>
RN-to-BSN Program Coordinator MSN Program Director Assistant Professor	<i>Mary McBrayer, MSN-Ed, MA, RN, CNE</i>
Simulation & Lab Coordinator Assistant Professor	<i>Lorenzo Saenz, MSN, RN, CHSE</i>
Adjunct Faculty	<i>Amber Rose King, APRN, CPNP-C Amanda Winter, FNP-C</i>
Senior Program Manager	<i>Socorro Rico, BS</i>
Nursing Advisor	<i>Sandra "Serene" Vannoy, BA</i>
Clinical Coordinator	<i>Elisha Sanchez</i>
Customer Service Assistant Office Manager, Deming	<i>Sarah Anderson Aziza Espinoza</i>
Simulation Technician Analyst	<i>Marlene Holman, CHSOS</i>

MSN Program and Admission Requirements

MSN Program Description

Western New Mexico University offers a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program. Students shall be selected for admission to this graduate nursing program on a competitive basis. The MSN program is presented entirely online via the Canvas LMS. Graduates of the MSN program will be prepared for positions in leadership, management, community, and healthcare delivery systems. The Master of Science in Nursing program at WNMU encompasses 33 credit hours. A rolling admission process is used by the MSN program. The degree may be completed in as little as one year.

Holidays and breaks follow the regular WNMU academic calendar. All graduate nursing courses are completed online. A practicum component is part of the Professional Development for Advanced Practice Nurses I & II. These components may be completed in the rural/frontier area where the student lives.

Plan of Study

Students may enroll in the MSN program during Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. For course rotation planning, please visit the link <http://sonak.wnmu.edu>

Program Admission Requirements

- A minimum Grade Point Average/GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- The Graduate Record Examination/GRE is not required.
- Must hold a valid RN license from any state within the United States
- Completion of an undergraduate or graduate statistics course within the last five years
- Official transcripts from all degree-granting institutions
- Two letters of recommendation*
 - One letter from an individual within academic settings
 - One letter from a supervisor
- *Please contact the MSN program with questions about letters.
- Personal/Professional Statement
- Please use the information found on the SONAK website for further details.
- <https://sonak.wnmu.edu/msn/>
- The application for admission to the WNMU SON Graduate program requires the submission of a Personal Statement that should be created as a Microsoft Word document. The Personal Statement is to be uploaded and attached at the time of the application to the electronic application form for which the link is posted.

Active RN License

Students will maintain an active, unencumbered RN license in the United States. Students will complete the acknowledgment form in Appendix A and upload it to CastleBranch.

Resident Credit Requirements

Sufficient coursework must be taken through WNMU to satisfy the resident credit requirement.

Policy for Transfer Students

Students applying to transfer into the MSN program at Western New Mexico University from another academic program first must be admitted to the University and submit official transcripts from the college/university attended to the admissions office.

Transfer credit will be granted after a review of transcripts by the Admissions Officer and the Associate Dean for the School of Nursing. A grade of “B” or better is required for transfer of credit.

Students wishing to transfer may be asked to submit a catalog or course description in effect at the time the course was taken as a condition to receiving transfer credit for such coursework. Students requesting transfer credit for nursing courses must have attended a state board of nursing approved school of nursing or an accredited college/university.

Any student wishing to transfer to WNMU should review the academic regulations regarding transfer credit in the University catalog. A maximum of 11 transfer credits may be applied towards the MSN program at WNMU.

Retention

The MSN program requires that students receive a minimum grade of “B” (80%). Students must assume responsibility for monitoring their own progress throughout the semester. If the student is having difficulty, then it is the responsibility of the student to seek help from nursing faculty (including preceptor/s and clinical site/s) or from their advisor. Students must receive a passing grade in their practicum regardless of the didactic grade to continue in the program.

General Education and Other Course Requirements

General Education Supporting Coursework Credits are based on the year of entry and must comply with university guidelines.

Graduate Nursing Courses for the MSN Program

The number of courses and hours in each major instructional area of the MSN degree directed at community and rural/frontier health are found in Table 1.

Table 1

Instructional Areas for Master of Science in Nursing in Community & Rural/Frontier Health Core Required Coursework

Course Number	Course Title	Credits	Clinical/ Practicum Hours
NUR 501	Theory and Science of Nursing	3	
NUR 502	Research Utilization for Evidence-Based Practice	3	
NUR 503	Innovation in Informatics and Healthcare Technology	3	
NUR 505	Advanced Pathophysiology Across the Lifespan	3	
NUR 507	Issues in Contemporary Healthcare Environments	3	
NUR 510	Advanced Physical Assessment Across the Lifespan	3	45
NUR 515	Advanced Pharmacology Across the Lifespan	3	
NUR 520	Epidemiology and Population Health	3	
Elective	500-Level Elective	3	
Subtotal(s)		27	45

Professional Education Required Coursework

Course Number	Course Title	Credits	Clinical/ Practicum Hours
NUR 595	Professional Development for Advanced Practice Nursing I	3	30
NUR 596	Professional Development for Advanced Practice Nursing II	3	60
Subtotal(s)		6	90
Final Total		33	135

Graduate Nursing Course Descriptions

NUR 501 Theory & Science of Nursing (3 credits)

Course Catalog Description: This graduate-level course will provide the foundation necessary to understand the development, analysis, and evaluation of nursing theory including the major streams of nursing scientific development. The focus of the course is on the application of theory for evidence-based practice. The integration of leadership theory also will be emphasized using collective theories from other disciplines such as the educational, sociological, behavioral, and biomedical sciences.

NUR 502 Research Utilization for Evidence-Based Practice (3 credits)

Course Catalog Description: This graduate-level course will analyze research principles to address clinically- derived questions in nursing practice. Emphasis is placed on problem identification, design principles, sources and levels of evidence, and the utilization of research.

NUR 503 Informatics and Healthcare Technology (3 credits)

Course Catalog Description: This course is designed to provide a foundation in the understanding of the concepts and principles of healthcare information technology. The course will explore information systems, electronic health records, clinical decisions, telemedicine, bioinformatics, e-Patients, social media tools, data science and analytics as well as implementation.

NUR 505 Advanced Pathophysiology (3 credits)

Course Catalog Description: This graduate-level course focuses on the pathophysiological processes across the lifespan that alter health status. Emphasis is placed on the development of clinical reasoning skills that will distinguish the relationships between normal physiology and specific system alterations produced by injury and/or disease as related to etiology, pathogenesis, developmental and environmental influences, and clinical manifestations of major health problems.

NUR 507 Issues in Contemporary Health Care Environments (3 credits)

Course Catalog Description: This course examines health care policy in terms of contemporary issues related to the delivery of health care, health care access, ethics, quality, and cost. The course will be presented from a Public Health perspective with the critical analysis of health policy and legal issues with special emphasis on health and health care disparities in target populations.

NUR 510 Advanced Health Assessment (3 credits)

Course Catalog Description: This graduate-level course presents the principles and techniques of advanced health assessment across the lifespan as they are examined and practiced in the development of the clinical basis for advanced nursing practice. The course focuses on the acquisition of advanced health assessment and clinical reasoning skills. Faculty and preceptors facilitate the didactic and clinical hours respectively, including a 2-credit didactic component and 1-credit clinical practicum.

NUR 515 Advanced Pharmacology Across the Lifespan (3 credits)

Course Catalog Description: This graduate-level course focuses on the nursing management of pharmacologic therapies associated with common healthcare problems across the lifespan. The course expands the baccalaureate foundation of applied pharmacology with the application of pharmacokinetic methods, pharmacodynamic principles, and pharmacotherapeutic nursing interventions.

NUR 520 Epidemiology and Population Health (3 credits)

Course Catalog Description: An introductory course to epidemiology and its approach to problems of health and disease in target populations. Basic concepts and the application of epidemiology and biostatistical principles for clinical practice will be presented.

NUR 595 Professional Development for Advanced Practice Nursing I (3 credits)

Course Catalog Description: This graduate-level course examines the history and role of the community and rural/frontier health nurse. Students will identify an area of interest related to community/rural/frontier health nursing for the development of a scholarly project.

NUR 596 Professional Development for Advanced Practice Nursing II (3 credits)

Course Catalog Description: This graduate-level course provides transition from theory to practice through synthesis of theory, public health concepts/principles, and skills gained during the program through development of a scholarly project related to community and rural/frontier health nursing. This course is Part II of a two-part consecutive course offering. Prerequisite: NUR 595.

Clinical/Practicum Agency Clearance for NUR 510, NUR 595, and NUR 596

These documents must be uploaded to CastleBranch at the beginning of semester courses:

- Verification of the RN License
- Proof of their Own Individual Malpractice Insurance – this may be purchased through the Nurses Service Organization (NSO)
- CPR

Students who are enrolled in NUR 510 (Advanced Physical Health Assessment Across the Lifespan) and Professional Development for Advanced Practice Nursing I and II (NUR 595 and NUR 596, respectively) must ensure that the following are current and ready for their clinical sites. Students are responsible for contacting their clinical site point of contact person to check what the requirements will be.

- Rubella
- Rubeola
- Mumps

- Varicella
- Hepatitis B
- Tdap
- Influenza (Flu)
- TB skin test or negative chest x-ray
- Background Check
- Drug Screen
- BBP

Students should be sure to work with their clinical site(s) to determine the specific types of clearance requirements. The requirements may vary.

Malpractice Insurance

Additionally, students should possess one's own sufficient malpractice insurance. This is a mandatory requirement. This is the case regardless of clinical site(s), workplace(s), or other agencies with which the student is involved. An example of how malpractice insurance can be purchased is the Nurses Service Organization (NSO).

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS IN THE MSN PROGRAM

Responsibilities of the Student

- Students are required to pay all tuition and fees when due. Students who experience financial difficulties must see the WNMU Financial Aid Officer.
- Students should check announcements and campus emails frequently (e.g., at least daily).
- Students who require accommodations should meet with Wellness and Accessibility Services at the Global Resources Center.
- Students in the MSN program are expected to purchase their own supplies, including a stethoscope and protective eyewear, as indicated by clinical and community-health settings.
- Students also are expected to purchase and to maintain individual malpractice insurance while in the MSN program.
- Students are responsible for their own transportation and lodging for out-of-town practicum hours that include mentored community-health hours and precepted clinical practice hours.
- Because nursing courses for the MSN program are online, students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with all aspects of the online courses.
- Students must post assignments in their appropriate places, check, and reply to email on a regular basis (e.g., daily), and post to discussion boards per the syllabus guidelines for each course syllabus.
- Students are responsible for following the timeline for each of the MSN courses. This includes all assignments and exam due dates.

- Students must be on time for all practicum placements in NUR 510, NUR 595, and NUR 596. Your punctuality demonstrates respect for the clinical site(s).
- Persistent absences and/or tardiness constitute grounds for course failure.
- Any fundraising activities undertaken by students as these efforts pertain to coursework and/or clinical requirements must be approved by the Associate Dean for the School of Nursing.

Canvas Learning Management System

The School of Nursing utilizes Canvas, an internet-based learning platform. This learning management system (LMS) allows students to submit assignments, take exams, view grades, discuss course readings and topics, among other course-related activities. Students access Canvas from their WNMU account.

Digital Literacy Skills

Students will need digital literacy skills to complete assignments in the MSN Program. These skills include:

- Use of online course libraries and databases to locate and gather appropriate information.
- Use of computer networks to locate and store files or data.
- Use of online search tools for specific academic purposes that include search criteria, keywords, and filtering options.
- Proper citation of information sources.
- Preparation and presentation of research finding.

Course Syllabi

All graduate nursing course syllabi are posted at the beginning of the semester as part of the Canvas course shell for each MSN course. Students are responsible for accessing the course and reviewing the syllabus. If the student does not understand the syllabus and/or has questions about the course, then the student should plan to talk with the course instructor for more information to gain clarity.

Academic Integrity and Code of Civility (Conduct)

Western New Mexico University policies on Academic Integrity and Student Code of Conduct specified in the WNMU Catalog and WNMU Student Handbook apply to students enrolled in any program offered by the School of Nursing and Kinesiology. Students are expected to abide by these policies and by all policies and procedures established by WNMU. The WNMU Catalog and WNMU Student Handbook are linked to your student account through [Mustang Express](#).

Online Exams

Failure to complete online exams during the allotted timeframe will result in a grade of zero for the exam. Exception may be made, and a make-up exam possibly offered if the student (a) has a reasonable excuse for not taking the exam during the regular timeframe and (b) contacted the instructor in a timely manner. Illnesses will require a signed note from the student's healthcare provider. Respondus with Lock-Down Browser and Monitor are utilized for examinations in NUR 505: Advanced Pathophysiology, NUR 510: Advanced Health Assessment, and NUR 515: Advanced Pharmacology. Student purchase of this software is required for an annual fee.

Assignments and Due Dates

Assignments are due by the dates specified in the assignment schedule. All assignments/discussions are due in Mountain Time (MST). Unless otherwise specified in the course syllabus, if an assignment will be late, then the instructor must be contacted before the due date and will decide whether to grant an extension or not. If the instructor is not contacted prior to the assignment due date, then a score of '0' will be given for that assignment. Late assignments will **not** be accepted without prior arrangements. If an extension is granted, then there will be a 5% (or 5 points) grade deduction per day up to three days. After three days, a score of '0' will be given for the assignment.

Incomplete Grades

The MSN program follows the University's incomplete grade guidelines. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor to request a grade of "I" and develop a plan to complete coursework. Students may not request an incomplete if they are failing (F) a course.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Software and Platforms

Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) resources can be useful and powerful tools in the educational experience. As an institute of higher learning, WNMU also promotes expectations for the development of human skills and learning. For each WNMU course, the instructor will establish guidelines and rules for the use of A.I.-based resources, including whether their use is permitted at all. To satisfy University standards of academic integrity, students must read and adhere to the specific A.I. usage policies and guidelines established for each course by its instructor. This information will be in each course syllabus. (Credit to Professor Jost, WNMU).

Wearable AI and Recording Devices in Class, Exams, Lab, Simulation, and Clinical Settings

To protect patient privacy, maintain HIPAA compliance, and uphold professional standards, students may **not** use wearable AI devices or recording technologies (including AI note-taking tools, smart glasses such as Meta or similar devices, AI-enabled earbuds, wearable cameras, or audio recording devices) in any clinical setting unless expressly authorized in writing by both the clinical agency and course faculty. The use of these devices to record, transcribe, summarize, photograph, or otherwise capture patient

interactions or protected health information (PHI) is prohibited. Students are expected to comply with all applicable clinical agency policies, university requirements, and federal and state privacy regulations and to use only approved methods of documentation and note-taking during clinical experiences.

Student Accessibility Information

Services for student accommodations are provided through the Wellness and Accessibility Services office in the Global Resources Center. Services may vary depending on the need

s. Mailing Address:

Wellness and Accessibility Services Coordinator

P.O. Box 680

Silver City, NM 88062

Telephone Number: 575-

538- 6277 Email: accessibility@wnmu.edu

edu

Website: [Wellness and Accessibility Services - Center for Student Success](#)

Scope of Practice

The WNMU School of Nursing recognizes that students from all over the United States can apply to the RN-to-BSN Program through WNMU. The RN-to-BSN Program has the expectation that all enrolled students adhere to their state Nurse Practice Act, which can be found [here](#) (NCSBN, n.d.) In addition, licensed nurses are expected to utilize the American Nurses Association [Code of Ethics](#) (2025) (Table 3) and the American Nurses Association professional [Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice](#) (2021) (Table 4) as guidelines for safe and ethical practice.

Professional Standards and Code of Ethics

Table 2

Provisions of the Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements

Provision	Description
Provision 1	The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth and unique attributes of every person.
Provision 2	The nurse’s primary commitment is to the recipient(s) of nursing care, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.
Provision 3	The nurse establishes a trusting relationship and advocates for the rights, health, and safety of recipient(s) of nursing care.
Provision 4	Nurses have authority over nursing practice and are responsible and accountable for their practice consistent with their obligations to promote health, prevent illness, and provide optimal care.
Provision 5	The nurse has moral duties to self as a person of inherent dignity and worth, including an expectation of a safe place to work that fosters flourishing,

	authenticity of self at work, and self-respect through integrity and professional competence.
Provision 6	Nurses, through individual and collective effort, establish, maintain, and improve the ethical environment of the work setting that affects nursing care and the well-being of nurses.
Provision 7	Nurses advance the profession through multiple approaches to knowledge development, professional standards, and the generation of policies for nursing, health, and social concerns.
Provision 8	Nurses build collaborative relationships and networks with nurses, other healthcare and nonhealthcare disciplines, and the public to achieve greater ends.
Provision 9	Nurses and their professional organizations work to enact and resource practices, policies, and legislation to promote social justice, eliminate health inequities and facilitate human flourishing.

Table 3*ANA Standards of Professional Nursing Practice*

Standard	Description
Standard 1: Assessment	The registered nurse collects pertinent data and information relative to healthcare consumer's health or information.
Standard 2: Diagnosis	The registered nurse analyzes assessment data to determine actual or potential diagnosis, problems, and issues.
Standard 3: Outcomes Identification	The registered nurse identifies expected outcomes for a plan individualized to the healthcare consumer or the situation.
Standard 4: Planning	The registered nurse develops a collaborative plan encompassing strategies to achieve expected outcomes.
Standard 5: Implementation	The registered nurse implements the identified plan.
Standard 5a: Coordination of Care	The registered nurse coordinates care delivery.
Standard 5b: Health Teaching and Health Promotion	The registered nurse employs strategies to teach and promote health and wellness.
Standard 6: Evaluation	The registered nurse evaluates progress toward attainment of goals and outcomes.

Essential Eligibility Requirements

Table 4

Essential Eligibility Requirements for Participation in the School of Nursing

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS	SOME EXAMPLES OF NECESSARY ACTIVITIES
Critical thinking abilities sufficient for clinical judgment	Identify cause/effect relationships in clinical situations; develop nursing care plans.
Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.	Explain treatment procedures, initiate health teaching, document and interpret nursing actions and patient/client responses.
Communication abilities sufficient for interactions with others in verbal and written form.	Observe patient/client responses.
Abilities sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in nursing care. Abilities sufficient to monitor and assess health needs.	Hear monitor alarms, emergency signals, auscultate sounds, and cries for help.
Abilities sufficient to move from room to room and to maneuver in small places.	Move around in patients' rooms, workspaces, and treatment areas, and administer cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.
Abilities sufficient for physical assessment. Establish rapport with patients/families and colleagues.	Perform palpation, functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic intervention, e.g., insertion of a catheter.
Abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care.	Calibrate and use equipment, position patients/clients. Safely lift and move clients/patients.

Technology Requirements

Students must have access to a desk or laptop computer capable of high-speed internet use. Computers are available for checkout, on a first-come/first-serve basis at the WNMU media center. Computers should have the capability to support the Canvas LMS. Also, a current version of JAVA, Microsoft Office 2010 or higher for documents and written assignments and Adobe Reader for opening PDF files will be needed.

Smart-phone application

Access to a smartphone is recommended to review and interpret laboratory results, medications, and other findings that will help the student to care for clients/patients.

Attendance

Attendance is tracked in online courses within the Canvas LMS tracking mechanisms. Unexcused absences will activate the Early Academic Warning System. Absences from arranged practicum hours require that the community agency/preceptor is notified at least one hour prior to the absence. Any missed practicum hours must be rescheduled with the community mentor and/or clinical preceptor.

Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences

A practicum absence is defined as “excused” when the student personally notifies the instructor (including clinical preceptors) prior to the absence; and the notification method is at the discretion of faculty. Examples of excused practicum absences include, but are not limited to personal illness, family death, unexpected life emergencies. Determination of what constitutes an excused absence is at the discretion of the assigned practicum faculty member. An **unexcused** community-health and/or clinical absence is defined as:

- A student is absent without prior notification to the instructor facilitating the community-health and/or clinical experience.
- A student is sent home for being unprepared for clinical.
- Tardiness or late arrival that may result in an excused or unexcused absence at the discretion of the clinical instructor. *A student with more than two unexcused absences will be dismissed from the program.*

Practicum Absences Related to Illness/Injury

Should a student with an injury or illness not be able to fulfill the scheduled practicum activities at the assigned agency, then the clinical activities may be accomplished per the clinical instructor’s discretion through alternate methods such as rearrangement of clinical schedule, virtual technology, another assignment that meets the clinical objectives. Specific abilities are required for certain tasks in order to

protect the students and the patients from injury or illness. See “Essential Eligibility Requirements for Participation in the School of Nursing.” Additional information on practicum experiences will be specified in individual course syllabi.

Appearance and Hygiene

Professional dress is expected during all community and clinical experiences in the MSN program. Check with the community and/or clinical practicum leader(s) as well as the facility for expectations regarding dress code. When attending practicum agency sites or attending any other scholarly function, students must wear an identification badge.

Students are expected to always follow the rules of good hygiene to be clean, odor-free, and well-groomed. Hair must be clean and neat. Beards, mustaches, and sideburns must be neat, trimmed and meet infection control guidelines for personal protective equipment. No bandanas or other hair or head coverings are permitted. Fingernails are to be clean and short; and artificial nails are not permitted. Fragrance may not be worn in clinical or community settings for practicum hours.

In the practicum settings, a flat wedding band with no protrusions, wristwatch, and small pieced jewelry (studs) are the only permissible articles of jewelry. Chewing gum, tobacco products of any kind, and/or foul language are not allowed. Students in violation of the aforementioned may be asked to leave the clinical and/or community health agency/facility. Picture identification badges are to be worn at all times by lanyard or pocket clip.

Student Practicum Clinical Error Policy

The faculty recognize that no student intentionally will make an error when participating in practicum hours involving patients. Faculty also realize that students are human, and mistakes can and do occur. To ensure patient safety, the School of Nursing determined that – to protect the patient and to verify that the student is a safe practitioner – these procedures will be followed if a clinical error occurs.

1. When a student or licensed personnel member recognizes that an error has been made, the student will take responsibility for reporting the error immediately to the preceptor and community agency.
2. The student will adhere to liability insurance and community agency protocol.
3. MSN faculty will be notified, and an incident/clinical occurrence report will be completed and filed with the School of Nursing (Appendix B).
4. The community agency also will maintain a copy of the report per agency policy (please see Appendix B for the Clinical Occurrence Form).
5. Failure to complete the above steps within ten class days will result in suspension of the student from the agency/community setting/facility and also may result in dismissal from the program.

Student Health

[Student Health Services](#) for all WNMU students are provided by Hidalgo Medical Services (HMS), although coverage is [limited to areas where HMS is located](#). Explanation of coverage is found on the [WNMU Coverage website](#).

Accidents

Any accidents that occur in the practicum setting must be reported immediately to the instructor. Illness or injury incurred during participation in the nursing program are not covered by the University risk management policy or the clinical agency policies (e.g., employee health or worker compensation policies). Students are encouraged to purchase personal medical insurance before attending an affiliated clinical agency. Students are expected to schedule for themselves and/or family any appointments with dentists and/or Primary Care Providers at times that do not conflict with class, clinical, and/or exam times.

Needle Stick Policy

Students sustaining a needle stick injury and/or percutaneous or mucous membrane exposure to blood and bodily fluid should:

- Report the incident to the infection control nurse at the facility and follow facility policy/protocol.
- Report the incident to the faculty as soon as possible/safe to do so.
- Complete an Incident Report form for the facility and WNMU School of Nursing.
- Evaluation and management of exposure will follow the latest CDC guidelines.

Student Clinical Error Policy

The faculty recognizes that no student will intentionally make an error when providing patient care. They also realize that students are human and that mistakes can and do occur.

To ensure client safety and because of an increasingly litigious society, the faculty has determined that to protect the patient, the student, and to verify that the student is a safe practitioner, the following procedures will be followed if a clinical error occurs.

When a student or licensed personnel recognizes that an error has been made, it is the student's responsibility to report the error immediately to the BSN nursing faculty, community agency and to follow liability insurance and community agency protocol. An incident/clinical occurrence report will be filled out and filed with WNMU School of Nursing, and the community agency according to agency policy. See Appendix B for the clinical occurrence form.

Failure to complete the steps outlined within 10 class days will result in suspension of the student from the community setting and may result in dismissal from the program.

Student Retention and Progression

- Graduate nursing students enrolled in the MSN program must achieve a minimum score of 80% or higher in coursework and a grade of "B" or better in all courses.
- Individual assignments and/or exam scores will not be rounded up or down. For example, a score of 79.7% will not be rounded up to 80%.

- No retakes of exams are allowed.
- No extra-credit opportunities will be offered as part of the MSN courses and/or program.
- Complete scoring and grade calculation information may be found within the course syllabus for each individual course. The scoring and grade calculation information contained within an individual course syllabus will determine the final grade calculation for the course.
- A student who fails one course or receives a grade of less than 80% will be ineligible to progress within the MSN program.
- However, the student may reapply to the program.
- The criteria for passing practicum components (such as those in NUR 595 and NUR 596) are included in the evaluation rubrics/tools included in the courses.
- Students marginally passing or potentially failing may be placed on probationary status. Conditions of probationary status will be detailed in a Learning Contract with the student.
- As adult learners, students are expected to assume responsibility for monitoring their own progress throughout the semester. If a student experiences difficulty, then the student must take responsibility to seek help from the nursing faculty and/or the academic support center.

Holistic Nurse Coach

The School of Nursing utilizes a holistic success model for all enrolled nursing students. A resource that is free to students enrolled in a School of Nursing Program is the services of one of our certified Holistic Nurse Coaches. To access this resource, the student may directly contact a Nurse Coach. Also, faculty, with student consent, may refer students to a Nurse Coach.

Code of Civility

In order to promote a positive, professional atmosphere among students, faculty and staff, the following Code of Civility has been developed:

Respect: Treat all students, faculty, staff, and property with respect and in a courteous and professional manner. This includes all communications, whether verbal or written. Let your actions reflect pride in yourself, your university, and your profession.

Kindness: A kind word and gentle voice go a long way. Refrain from using profanity, insulting slang remarks, or making disparaging comments. Consider another person's feelings. Be nice.

Truth: Exhibit honesty and integrity in your dealings with fellow students, faculty, and staff members. Don't lie, don't cheat, and don't steal.

Responsibility: Take responsibility for your actions. This includes gracefully accepting the consequences of your behavior.

Cooperation: Exhibit a cooperative manner when dealing with students, faculty, and staff so we may all work towards our common goals and mission.

Acceptance: Accept differences in others, as they accept differences in you. This includes diversity in opinions, beliefs, ideas, and everything else that makes us unique individuals.

Professionalism: Always conduct yourself in a manner that will bring pride to your profession, to the School of Nursing, to Western New Mexico University, and most importantly, to yourself.

Grading, Exam, and Progression Policies

The grading scale used within the WNMU MSN Program is as follows:

A: 90 – 100% **B:** 80 – 89% **C:** 70 – 79% **D:** 60 – 69% **E:** 59% and below

Again, a grade of at least 80% or “B” or better must be maintained to progress and to remain in the MSN program. The School of Nursing will **not** round scores up or down. Any one course failure at any point in the MSN program will result in dismissal from the program.

Students may petition to reapply to the MSN program. Students who are readmitted after the one-year dismissal timeframe will be required to repeat the entire program and will not receive credit for courses completed successfully prior to the dismissal. A course withdrawal will not be treated as a failure.

Extra-Credit Policies

The WNMU School of Nursing does **not** allow extra credit assignments within courses. Students who encounter difficulties with course material should contact faculty as soon as such difficulties surface within a course. *There will be no extra credit opportunities to allow students who are unsuccessful in course assignments and/or exams to achieve passing scores.*

Exam Policies

Exams must be taken at scheduled times. Students must notify the instructor **prior to the exam time**. if unable to take the exam at the designated time. Failure to notify faculty will earn the student a grade of zero, with no option of a make-up exam. Missed exams must be re-scheduled with course faculty within 24 hours and taken within one week of the original exam day/time. Students will be allowed to make up a maximum of two exams in different courses per semester (one exam per course if the student is taking two courses) if faculty receives notification prior to the missed exam. Additional exams missed after the student has completed two different make-up exams shall receive a score of zero (0).

APA Style Guidelines for Nursing Papers

Graduate nursing students are expected to use the most current American Psychological Association (APA) edition and guidelines for all written work unless specified in the guidelines for the paper. A tutorial is provided at the following web-link: <https://apastyle.apa.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial> .

Communications Policy Statement

As with all practices in the School of Nursing, students, faculty, and staff are expected to conduct themselves ethically and professionally. This includes professionalism with respect to all written and verbal communication, regardless of its purpose. When sending written communication, the use of correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, appropriate professional titles, and generally accepted professional etiquette is essential to maintain a professional atmosphere conducive to a positive

working and learning environment. For telephone communication, professionalism is also required, which includes the provision of identifying information and a return contact number as part of any voicemail message. Parties who do not leave a voicemail message with identifying information and/or contact information should not expect their call to be returned.

Program faculty and staff strive to respond to student email and telephone communication in a timely manner and are allotted up to two (2) business days to respond to these communications. Please note that this timeline may be adjusted due to a variety of conditions such as holiday or break schedules, timing (during finals week or the first week of classes, for instance), workload, or other factors, so patience is appreciated. If urgent attention is required, students should follow up on initial communication with a second follow-up communication. After the second follow-up, students should contact the School of Nursing main line at (575) 538-6960.

WNMU policies require that all official communication be sent via Mustang Express/WNMU e-mail addresses. As a result, all emails related to enrollment at WNMU, and class communication (including changes in assignments and grades) will be sent to wnmue.edu email addresses. It is very important that students access their WNMU email daily to check for correspondence from the University. If students prefer to receive their email at a different address, they are expected to forward their messages from Mustang Express to the other address.

Forwarding WNMU Email

1. Log on to Mustang Express.
2. Click on the purple MAIL icon.
3. When this opens, click on the tool icon on the top right of the screen.
4. Scroll down to Your App Settings and click on Mail Communications Policy Statement Regarding Official Email (cont.)
5. On the left of the screen, scroll down to Accounts and click on Forwarding.
6. Enter the preferred email address.

Graduate Nursing Student Involvement in School of Nursing Governance

Students are encouraged to participate in governance activities related to their nursing program. To that end, faculty meeting agendas include student representative participation in bringing student concerns forward to faculty and taking program information back to their fellow students. Students will be excused from faculty meetings when discussion items are confidential or not appropriate for student participation.

Patient Confidentiality

The Privacy Rule of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protects all individually identifiable health-related information pertaining to individuals. Nursing students will have access to protected information during clinical experiences and may discuss cases in confidential conferences with faculty and other students. They may not discuss this information with others outside of the activities of the nursing program. Any such breach of privacy shall be considered a breach of client confidentiality and constitutes grounds for immediate dismissal from the WNMU nursing education program. Students will sign a Confidentiality Agreement which will remain in the student file for the duration of the program. Students may be asked to sign confidentiality agreements at clinical agencies in addition to the agreements retained by the School of Nursing.

Social Networking Policy

The American Nurses Association (ANA) *Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements* (2021) defines social media as any form of “electronic communication such as web sites for social networking and blogging where users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (p. 46).” Anyone using these social networking sites should become familiar with the concepts of defamation and invasion of privacy (ANA, 2021), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) (USDHHS, 2023; CMS, 2023), and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (USDE, 2022). Provision Three (3) of the *ANA Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements* (2021) requires the nurse to promote, advocate for and protect the rights, health, and safety of the patient. Interpretive statement 3.1 clearly outlines the nurse’s responsibilities toward protection of the rights of privacy and confidentiality (pp. 9-10). Individuals or groups within the school community are not permitted to present personal opinions in ways that imply endorsement by the School of Nursing or WNMU.

Disqualifying Convictions

Conviction of a criminal statute while enrolled in the nursing program will result in referral to the Dean of the College of Professional Studies, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Student Affairs for possible further action which may include disciplinary action including but not limited to reprimand, probation, suspension, and/or dismissal from the nursing track.

Graduate Nursing Student Suspected of Impairment in Class or Clinical Setting

Impairment is the inability or impending inability to deliver safe, professional care because of a behavioral, mental, or physical condition associated with drugs or alcohol (Toney-Butler & Siela, 2022). Impairment occurs when providers of care, such as nurses, are unable to provide safe and competent care because of the use of any mind-altering substances. Due to these conditions, nurses cannot perform their professional responsibilities and duties consistent with nursing standards (Lengel, 2023).

Although WNMU maintains and enforces policies regarding substance and alcohol use, the special needs of the School of Nursing programs require additional procedures for handling the suspected drug/alcohol impairment of students enrolled in nursing coursework. Due to the nature of the course of study, students enrolled in nursing courses must not be under the influence of any substance (regardless of whether the use of the substance is legal or illegal, prescription or otherwise), which impairs or is likely to impair the student's clinical judgment while in the classroom, clinical practicum, or laboratory setting.

Purpose

This policy aims to provide guidelines for identifying and addressing student impairment among master degree clinical students enrolled in the School of Nursing. Student impairment, which includes physical, psychological, or substance-related issues affecting a student's ability to fulfill academic and professional responsibilities, will be addressed with sensitivity, fairness, and a commitment to student well-being.

This policy demonstrates the School of Nursing's commitment to safeguard the health of the students and the public and provides a safe place for students to learn.

Drug or alcohol use, either while on-campus or in a classroom, clinical practicum, or laboratory setting can seriously endanger the safety of patients and students, as well as render it impossible to provide safe healthcare and service. Impairment or potential impairment of judgment in the clinical, practical or laboratory setting places the safety of students, patients, clinical staff, faculty, and the general public at unacceptable risk. This policy:

- Provides clear recommendations and consistent procedures for handling incidents of student under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances that affect or are likely to affect judgment in the classroom, clinical, practical, or laboratory setting.
- Informs students of their responsibility to conform to all state and federal laws and regulations and WNMU policies, rules, and regulations regarding alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances.
- Provides recommendations regarding student impairment for all nursing faculty regarding problem recognition and implementation of this policy.
- Balances the need to safeguard the public with that of recognizing the rights of the student.

Student Impairment

WNMU SONAK recommends the following:

- Students who appear to be impaired or under the influence of drugs or alcohol while engaged in public contact related to coursework be asked to submit to drug or alcohol tests at their own expense.
- WNMU recognizes that facility policies differ and recommends that the preceptor follow all facility policies and procedures related to suspected caregiver impairment.
- Students who refuse to submit to testing will be sent home by their community preceptor.
- Students who refuse to submit to testing will not be allowed to participate in any classroom, laboratory, simulation, or clinical agency experiences; the refusal of a urinalysis related to suspected impairment follows the same protocol as a positive drug screen. Please see the Substance Use Testing Procedures outlined on pages 31-35 of the MSN Student Handbook.
- Depending on the circumstances, absences related to impairment will result in a clinical absence at a minimum and may result in dismissal from the program.
- Students who are impaired should coordinate transportation from the clinical site and should not drive themselves to the testing site and/or home.

WNMU requires that should an incident regarding suspected impairment occur, the clinical preceptor/mentor notifies the WNMU course faculty as soon as possible.

Substance Use Testing Procedures

Note that testing procedures may vary according to state and – in the information provided below – are based on the procedures for New Mexico.

- 1) The student will be removed from the practicum or clinical site without delay.
 - a) The student will be given an opportunity to explain the student's behavior.
 - b) If the instructor/preceptor suspects impairment, the student shall be sent for a drug screen to a suitable laboratory.
 - c) The preceptor should follow facility protocol for suspected impairment.
 - d) It is the recommendation of WNMU that a student suspected of impairment coordinates transportation from the clinical site rather than driving themselves.
- 2) To obtain a urine analysis for alcohol and drug testing, the student will follow the protocol established by the facility where they are conducting their clinical/practical experience.
- 3) The reporting of any incident to the applicable state Board of Nursing is at the discretion of the precepting agency, their policies, and individual state and licensing statutes.
- 4) The student will not be able to return to the clinical or practicum site until they have met with the Associate Dean of the School of Nursing to review the urinalysis results. The student remains responsible for all course or program requirements during such period.
 - a) If the urinalysis is negative, after meeting with the student as outlined above, lead faculty of the course will notify the agency preceptor that the student is able to return to the clinical site.

- b) If the urinalysis is positive, after meeting with the student as outlined above, faculty will notify the agency preceptor that the student is not able to return to the clinical site.
- 5) The SONAK will only accept urinalysis results sent certified mail from the testing facility.
 - i) A copy of the urinalysis will be uploaded to the students CastleBranch account, but it will not be accepted as the final result without a paper copy that originates from the testing site, sent to the Associate Dean of SONAK via certified mail.
- 6) If the test results are negative, then the student will meet with the instructor and the Associate Dean of the School of Nursing within two working days of the receipt of the test results to discuss returning to classes (see 4a).
- 7) If the test result is positive, then the student may request and pay for a retest of the collected (split) urine specimen at the original laboratory or another certified laboratory.
 - i) Results from the second test will be sent to the Associate Dean of SONAK via certified mail, originating from the testing facility. This is the only way a second test result will be accepted by SONAK MSN Program.
- 8) If the initial drug or alcohol screen is positive and the student declines a second test at their own expense (see item 7, 7i), then the following actions will occur:
 - a) The student will be notified by the Associate Dean of the School of Nursing or identified designee of the results of the test and will be dismissed from the program.
 - b) All documentation will be sent to the Dean of the College of Professional Studies, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management for further action per the WNMU Sanctions for Violations of the WNMU Student Code of Conduct.
 - c) If the student opts for a re-test of the split specimen at their own expense, they remain on suspension from clinical site activities awaiting the test results of the second specimen. Students are responsible for all coursework during this period.
 - d) The results of the second test will follow the same procedure as outlined above, depending on the results of the second test.
- 9) If a student admits to being impaired by drugs or alcohol at the clinical site, then the student will be removed from the site and treated as for a positive drug screen. The admission of drug or alcohol related impairment follows the same protocol as a positive drug screen.
 - a) Impairment related to other factors that do not include drug or alcohol, i.e. sleep deprivation, will be assessed individually. The student may still be asked to submit to a urinalysis and follow all clinical site policies and procedures.
- 10) If a student fails to comply with clinical site protocol for urinalysis, or refuses to have a drug screen completed, then such failure or refusal shall be treated as a positive drug screen. All documentation will be forwarded to the Dean of the College of Professional Studies, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management for further action.
- 11) Students testing positive for drugs and/or alcohol will be strongly advised to complete Drug/Alcohol Rehabilitation Program or a Diversion Program through their state Board of Nursing.
- 12) Results of the test(s) and the contents of the Student Documentation Form shall remain confidential and may be released only to the appropriate faculty of the School of Nursing, Associate Dean for

Nursing and Kinesiology (SONAK), Dean of the College of Professional Studies, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and those with a legitimate need to know.

Re-admission Opportunities After Program Dismissal (Impairment)

In the event that a student is dismissed from the School of Nursing and/or WNMU for impairment and the student thereafter appeals and is allowed to return to the nursing program, the following steps will be required prior to re-entry.

- a) All WNMU School of Nursing requirements associated with the dismissal must be met.
- b) All general admission criteria to the [Graduate Division](#) and the [MSN Program](#) must be met.
- c) The student must hold a valid, unencumbered RN license in the United States.
- d) The student must provide a negative drug and alcohol urinalysis prior to re-entry.
 - i) The student will pay for the test, which will be conducted at a designated or certified laboratory.
 - ii) For results to be accepted by the School of Nursing and Kinesiology, the results must be sent from the testing laboratory to the Associate Dean of Nursing via certified mail.
 - iii) The student may be requested to submit to a random urinalysis at the discretion of the clinical preceptor/agency per their facility policy and protocol.
 - iv) A positive test will result in immediate dismissal and referred to the Vice President for Student Affairs office for further action with a recommendation from the School of Nursing for permanent dismissal from the nursing program. University guidelines, policies, and procedures will be followed.

13) Students who appeal any of the above decisions will remain on suspension pending outcome of the appeal. The procedure for the student appeal process may be found in the [WNMU Program Dismissal Appeals Policy AA310](#).

Definitions

Drug: A drug is any chemical substance that when consumed causes a change in an organism's physiology, including its psychology, if applicable. Drugs are typically distinguished from food and other substances that provide nutritional support. Consumption of drugs can be via inhalation, injection, smoking, ingestion, absorption via a patch on the skin, suppository, or dissolution under the tongue. In pharmacology, a drug is a chemical substance, typically of known structure, which, when administered to a living organism, produces a biological effect. A pharmaceutical drug, also called a medication or medicine, is a chemical substance used to treat, cure, prevent, or diagnose a disease or to promote wellbeing (AHSD, 2007; SMD, 2008; Ritter et al., 2023).

Legal Drugs: Legal drugs include over the counter and prescribed medications for the specific individual. The School of Nursing prohibits the use/abuse of such drugs to the extent that behavior or judgment is adversely affected.

Per the Food and Drug Administration (FDA, n.d.), a [legal] drug is defined as:

- A substance recognized by an official pharmacopoeia or formulary.
- A substance intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease.
- A substance (other than food) intended to affect the structure or any function of the body.
- A substance intended for use as a component of a medicine but not a device or a component, part or accessory of a device.
- Biological products are included within this definition and are generally covered by the same laws and regulations, but differences exist regarding their manufacturing processes (chemical process versus biological process) (n.d., para. 15).

Illegal Drugs: Illegal drugs include those controlled substances (certain drugs or substances that are subject to or have potential for abuse or physiological dependence) under federal or state law that are not authorized for sale, possession or use/abuse confirmed, detectable levels), and legal drugs which are obtained or distributed illegally. Manufacture, use/abuse, possession, sale, purchase, or transfer of illegal drugs is prohibited (Title 42, 2008). The WNMU Student Handbook and WNMU Policies further elaborates on University policies concerning illegal drugs.

Impairment: the state of being diminished, weakened, or damaged, especially mentally or physically (Toney-Butler & Siela, 2022).

Chemical Impairment: [specific to healthcare]: The inability or impending inability to provide safe, professional activities and duties due to a behavioral, mental, or physical disorder related to alcohol or drugs. A chemically impaired person is one who is under the influence of a substance that interferes with mood, perception, or consciousness resulting in the physical and/or behavioral characteristics which affect the individual's ability to meet standards of performance, behavior and/or safety in classroom, clinical, practical or laboratory course settings (Toney-Butler & Siela, 2022; Lengel, 2023).

Legal Use of Substance under Direction of Healthcare Provider: A student taking legal drugs must be able to provide documentation of a medical reason for such in the event of a positive drug screen. This student may not participate in any clinical, practical or laboratory settings if impaired. All attendance policies remain in place, and the student remains responsible for completing all requirements of the course or program.

Working days are defined for the purpose of this section as Monday through Friday, excluding school holidays or WNMU closure periods. If the last day of the designated time period is a school holiday or WNMU closure period, the designated time period will run until the end of the next day which is not a

school holiday or WNMU closure period. The term "WNMU closure period" includes the week of final exams.

Factors Suggesting Impairment

Students while in the classroom, patient care area, clinical, practical or laboratory setting may be asked to submit to a drug test, if cause or reasonable suspicion of substance use exists. Factors which could establish cause/reasonable suspicion include, but are not limited to:

- Unsteady gait
- Unusual sleepiness or drowsiness
- Slurred speech or change in the student's usual speech pattern
- Blood-shot eyes
- Unusually disheveled appearance
- Aggressive tone of voice or body language
- Physical aggression
- Odor of alcohol or marijuana
- Residual odor peculiar to some chemical or controlled substances
- Unexplained and/or frequent absenteeism during a scheduled class or clinical laboratory
- Personality changes or disorientation
- Inappropriate behavior which suggests that the student is under the influence of a chemical substance that impairs or could impair clinical, practical or laboratory judgment.
- Repeated failure to follow instructions, policies or procedures
- Violation of clinical, practical or laboratory facility or WNMU or School of Nursing safety policies
- Involvement in an accident or near-accident
- Decrease in manual dexterity and/or coordination in body movement
- Presence of drugs/drug paraphernalia in student's possession
- Alcohol in a student's possession
- Theft or absence of narcotics from the student's clinical or practical site(s) (Toney-Butler et al., 2022; Trinkoff et al., 2021; Lengel, 2023; Knipe & Petula, 2007).

MSN Program Dismissal

In addition to those conditions described elsewhere in these guidelines, any of the following or a combination of the following are grounds for dismissal from the MSN program. Performance in the clinical agency which could jeopardize the patient including:

Physical Hazard: Any action or inaction on the part of the student which threatens the patient's physical well-being. The critical elements for concluding that the student has caused a physical hazard will depend on the situation as judged by the instructor, in conjunction with the clinical preceptor (when one is involved), and the instructor's evaluation of the student's behavior. The instructor is alerted of

behavior in the student which violates principles of safety, and/or lack of student preparation. Documentation is the responsibility of the instructor (Hughes, 2008).

Emotional Hazard: Any action on the part of the student which threatens the patient's emotional wellbeing. There are no pre-determined criteria listed under this area because they are entirely dependent upon the student, the patient, and the situation. The instructor will evaluate student behaviors, in conjunction with the clinical preceptor, which creates emotional distress to the student's patients. Documentation is the responsibility of the instructor (Hughes, 2008).

Failure to maintain patient confidentiality: Students must comply with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) standards within each clinical/practicum facility. These standards for security, privacy and confidentiality apply to paper documents, electronic documents, information systems and verbal communications. Students will be cited and summarily dismissed from the program for failure to maintain patient confidentiality. Violations may include, but are not limited to:

- Username/Password/Log-in sharing
- Accessing a record of a patient and/or verbally communicating information about a patient without a legitimate reason.
- Releasing, disclosing, or sending patient data inappropriately or without proper permission or authorization, including social networking sites. (See the social networking policy.)
- Releasing data for personal gain.
- Intentional destruction or falsification of data
- Releasing data with the intent to alter any personal or associated outcome or to harm any individual or the organization.
- Inappropriate use of systems resources with knowledge and intent to cause corruption of data or network systems.
- Accessing the student's own medical records information or those of one or more relatives and taking inappropriate actions because of this access.
- Removal of patient data from the facility upon which the patient's identifying information is displayed (without marking out or otherwise covering the identifying information).
- Photographing or recording a client/patient without appropriate consent.
- Unacceptable behavior including behavior that is contrary to the philosophy of the University, the nursing program, and/or the clinical agency. This includes any of the
 - above listed behaviors, exceeding the proper scope of practice, breaching academic integrity, and failure to maintain ethical standards, legal standards, and client/ patient confidentiality.
- Violation of codes of conduct specified in these guidelines, the WNMU catalog, or the WNMU Student Handbook.

If a student violates one of the above areas of concern, then the student will receive an "F" for the course or will be dropped from the course. Appeal of such action shall be provided under the Student Academic

Complaints in the WNMU Student Guidelines. Students who are dismissed from the program for jeopardizing the patient or for unacceptable behavior will not be considered for readmission.

Scope of Discipline

In addition to dismissal, graduate nursing students may be subject to grade reduction, suspension or expulsion or other forms of discipline as deemed appropriate by the Associate Dean for the School of Nursing or WNMU Administration in accordance with WNMU policies and procedures.

Appeal from Dismissal

A nursing student dismissed or recommended for dismissal may appeal such action under the WNMU Program Dismissal Appeals Policy.

Discrimination and Harassment Information

To report a violation of the Policy of Discrimination and Harassment, please refer to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX:

Mailing Address:

Office of Civil Rights & Title IX

P.O. Box 680

Silver City, NM 88062;

Telephone Number: 575-538- 6025

Website: [Home](#) - [Title IX](#)

Academic Integrity

The WNMU Academic Integrity Policy covers cheating and plagiarism. Violations of this policy are addressed through the Academic Integrity Procedures. Further details and information are available in the WNMU Student Handbook concerning academic integrity.

Student Academic Complaint Procedures

Students with a complaint involving the assignment of grades or the professional conduct of an instructor that does not involve a complaint of discrimination or harassment will refer to the [Student Academic Complaint Policy AA312](#) for the appropriate steps and information to address said complaint.

Early Academic Warning System

Any student whose class grade is less than 80% at the midterm of the semester should be brought to the attention of the course instructor and the MSN Program Director. The instructor is encouraged to use the system earlier in the semester if the student is failing the course. The following apply:

- Instructors should initiate contact via email with the student to explain the academic issues in the course. Academic issues can be – and are not limited to – these:
 - no class participation, did not take exams, late submission of assignments, and other(s) as determined by instructor.
- The instructor should make at least two attempts to contact the student.
- If the student does not respond after two attempts or within 48 hours after the second attempt is made, then the instructor will complete an Early Academic Warning System form and forward this to the Nursing Advisor and Program Director.
- The Nursing Advisor will contact the student by email and/or phone to inquire about the student's situation.
- The Nursing Advisor will keep the instructor and the Program Director updated regarding the student's response to the inquiry.
- If the student does not respond, then the instructor, Program Director, and Nursing Advisor will discuss the next best step(s).
- The form will be placed into the student's file within the School of Nursing

Program Evaluation

Faculty members will meet each semester to review all courses required of graduate nursing students. Data from student evaluations will be reviewed.

Course evaluation forms submitted by students will be available to nursing faculty. A summary of student comments and suggestions are utilized to revise course content.

Changes in course sequence, teaching methods, required courses and prerequisite courses will be discussed by faculty in May of each year.

Data needed for the meeting will be presented by the Graduate Program Director/Associate Dean of Nursing. Information on the evaluation process will be submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Students will be asked to submit information on clinical/practicum learning. This information will be used to evaluate and revise plans for clinical/practicum experience.

Information on library and audiovisual resources will provide data for future acquisition of materials. The Graduate Program Director will set a meeting for collaboration between library personnel and nursing faculty.

Review of course evaluation forms will be completed at the end of each semester and/or summer session. Specific course revisions will be implemented before the course is presented again.

The Graduate Program Director will be responsible for collecting and summarizing the data necessary for curriculum revision. All revisions will be submitted to university committees and the Board of Nursing.

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Appendix A: Release and Waivers

Consent or Declination of Use of Image/Recordings

I hereby grant to Western New Mexico University, its successors, licensees, affiliates, agents, and assignees, the right to photograph me, to make audio and video recordings of me, and to use such photographs and recordings in University publications, including the University's website.

Signature: _____

Please print name: _____

Date: _____

Licensure as a Registered Nurse (RN)

The student agrees to maintain a current, valid, unencumbered U.S. RN license while enrolled in either the RN-to-BSN, MSN or other WNMU SONAK program where applicable.

Student Signature: _____

Please print name: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgement of Receipt STUDENT HANDBOOK

_____ I have read the following handbook

(please initial the appropriate selection)

_____ RN-to-BSN Student Handbook _____ MSN Student Handbook and
agree to abide by the outlined policies, procedures, and guidelines within.

Signature: _____

Please print name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Clinical Occurrence Form

Patient Initials:

Room/Location:

Faculty representative notified:

Instructors/Preceptors Notified:

Student Name:

Date:

Describe the occurrence:

Action(s) taken to correct occurrence or prevent incident from happening again:

If applicable, student/instructor/facility remediation plan (use Student Success form in Appendix C.

Please attach any additional narrative to this form.

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Signature

Date

Appendix C: WNMU School of Nursing and Kinesiology Student Success Plan

Student Name:	Program Track:	Date:
Course:	Instructor:	Grade/Code:

Student's Strengths (completed by student and instructor)	Concerns (include level specific SLO followed by brief narrative)	Strategies to address concerns: (what student can do to help with improvement; can include what student needs from faculty member)	Measures/Outcomes (What student behaviors need to be exhibited consistently by the end of the course)	Evaluations

- Failure to demonstrate program expectations and/or course evaluation guidelines may lead to removal for the duration of the course(s) involved and/or a failing grade.
- The Student Success Plan may be shared with instructors involved in the course to assist the student in successfully completing the plan.
- The student must demonstrate passing performance for each of the program expectations to avoid removal from the course.
- Student signature indicates receipt and understanding of the Student Success Plan. **Signatures:**

Student:		Program Director:
Date:		Date:
Course Instructor:		Preceptor (if needed):
Date:		Date:

Appendix D: Prior Learning Assessment Course Equivalency (PLACE)

The RN-to-MSN Bridge Program recognizes that students may acquire college-level knowledge through prior education, professional practice, leadership, specialty certification, research, military service, or other structured learning experiences. Students may request a Prior Learning Assessment Course Equivalency (PLACE) packet for selected bridge courses by submitting the required application and supporting documentation.

PLACE is **not** based solely on years of experience or employment history. Faculty evaluate whether the applicant has demonstrated learning equivalence to the published course outcomes and academic expectations of successful completion of the course. The application must demonstrate synthesis, reflection, critical analysis, and evidence-based application of knowledge. Approval of prior learning credit is considered an exception rather than the standard pathway and is granted only when faculty determine that course equivalency has been clearly demonstrated.

Because the RN-to-MSN pathway is not a direct-entry MSN program, approval of multiple course waivers is uncommon. The bridge curriculum is intentionally designed to prepare students for graduate-level scholarship through development of academic writing, critical thinking, systems thinking, evidence-based practice, and successful participation in an online graduate learning environment.

For more information, please contact the Nursing Advisor or RN-to-BSN Program Coordinator (listed in the faculty roster, page 10.)

