



**Mary Black College  
of Nursing**

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA UPSTATE

# **GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA UPSTATE**  
**MARY BLACK COLLEGE OF NURSING GRADUATE PROGRAM**

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The University of South Carolina Upstate reserves the right to make changes in curricula, degree requirements, course offerings, and all regulations when in the judgment of the faculty, the Chancellor, the President, or the Board of Trustees such changes are in the best interest of the students and the University.

The Graduate Nursing Faculty reserves the right to review and make recommendations to revise this handbook annually. Should there be significant changes in policies and guidelines, students will be given copies of the changes.

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

## WELCOME

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

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

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

Sincerely,



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

## **HISTORY OF USC UPSTATE**

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

### **MARY BLACK COLLEGE OF NURSING HISTORY**

The Mary Black College of Nursing is named in honor of Mrs. Mary Black Phillips and the late Miss Rosa Black in appreciation for the generosity of the Black Family for their role in securing funds for the building that houses the College of Nursing. The school began offering an associate degree in Technical Nursing in 1967 with the beginning of the University. This program closed in 2005. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing program began in 1977 as an upper division program for registered nurses. In 1986, the first generic four-year track began. In 2003 the University of South Carolina Upstate opened an additional campus for the University in Greenville, South Carolina at the University Center (UCG). Classrooms, computer laboratories, a learning resource center and faculty offices support the undergraduate program at the Greenville site. In 2008, the Mary Black School of Nursing, Spartanburg campus, moved its offices and classrooms to the new Health Education Complex on North Campus Boulevard. In Spring 2013, the Mary Black School of Nursing received approval from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education for a master's in science degree with an emphasis on the Clinical Nurse Leader with classes beginning in Fall 2014. The Master of Science in Nursing Education and Master of Science in Nursing Leadership were approved in Fall 2019. Mary Black School of Nursing changed its name officially to Mary Black College of Nursing in Fall 2022. In Fall 2023, the college is the first to add a doctoral level program to USC Upstate, specializing in Public and Community Health Nursing.

### **MARY BLACK COLLEGE OF NURSING VISION**

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

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

The University of South Carolina Upstate is a leading regional public university that transforms the lives of our diverse students, their families, and communities – advancing social and economic mobility throughout the Upstate region.

Consistent with the international character of the Upstate, the University promotes global perspectives and serves as a driver of economic growth. Our innovative courses and programs are offered in a variety of formats

and locations to meet undergraduate and graduate student needs. The University attracts exceptional, diverse faculty, staff, and students who engage in high-impact experiential learning, cutting-edge research, and deeply connected community engagement. A University of South Carolina Upstate education empowers students to become lifelong leaders in their professions and communities.

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

- **People First.** USC Upstate cultivates an inclusive community that advances equity, wellness, and civility.
- **Integrity.** USC Upstate prioritizes honesty and ethical conduct as fundamental to our core mission of student success.
- **Access.** USC Upstate removes barriers to opportunity and success.
- **Stewardship.** USC Upstate is committed to affordability and intentional stewardship of resources – human and financial.
- **Continuous Improvement.** USC Upstate strives for excellence in all operations.
- **Community Connection.** USC Upstate prioritizes community collaboration and engagement.

### **MARY BLACK COLLEGE OF NURSING MISSION**

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

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

### **MARY BLACK COLLEGE OF NURSING PHILOSOPHY**

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

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

**Nurse:** A person who intentionally builds relationships with others to enable the condition of giving and receiving help. This person serves as a role model, teacher, and mentor and demonstrates nurturing and caring

to others. Nursing is the art and science of attending to the discovery, creation, refinement of knowledge, and ethical development of an authentic presence to facilitate wholeness.

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

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

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

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

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

*Adopted by faculty 2/15/02.*

*Revised 10/2002; 4/2003; 7/2009; 5/2011; 8/2012; 8/2014; 8/2019, 9/2023*

## **MSN PROGRAM GOALS**

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

Program goals/outcomes:

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

### **Transfer Credit**

A maximum of nine credits can be transferred into an MSN program. Transfer work must be from a regionally accredited and national nursing accredited institution, must be applicable to an MSN degree, and must be completed within five years prior to USC Upstate degree completion. Transfer work is also subject to these additional provisions: (a) the courses must be documented by an official transcript mailed to the admissions office by the awarding institution; (b) the transcript must clearly indicate that graduate credit was awarded or specifically verified by the institution's registrar or graduate dean; (c) the courses must be approved by the USC Upstate dean in nursing; (d) courses graded lower than B are not transferable.

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

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

\*NURS715 optional instead of NURS 703

A description of each of the above courses can be found in the USC Upstate Graduate Catalog.

*This is a sample curricular plan. Course offerings may vary based on program planning.*



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

Full Time Four Semester Plan (38 Hours)					
Course Number	Course Name	Hours	Course Number	Course Name	Hours
<b>Fall Semester I (11 Hours)</b>			<b>Spring Semester II (11 Hours)</b>		
NURS700	Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations for Nursing	3	NURS710	Advanced Evidence-based Practice	3
NURS703	Cultural Perspectives in Healthcare*	2	NURS711	Healthcare Delivery Systems	2
NURS714	Organizational Theory	3	NURS712	Role of the Nurse Leader	3
Elective	Elective	3	NURS733	Nursing Leadership Immersion I	3
NURS 715	<b>Summer Semester (5 Hours)</b> <i>Global Experience (optional substitute for NURS 703)</i>	2			
NURS716	Economic and Healthcare Outcomes	3			
NURS721	Quality and Risk Management	2			
<b>Fall Semester III (5 Hours)</b>			<b>Spring Semester IV (6 Hours)</b>		
NURS722	Data Analysis in the Healthcare System	2	NURS 717	Healthcare Policies and Financing	3
NURS734	Nursing Leadership Immersion II	3	NURS735	Nursing Leadership Practicum	3

\*NURS715 optional instead of NURS 703

A description of each of the above courses can be found in the USC Upstate Graduate Catalog.

*This is a sample curricular plan. Course offerings may vary based on program planning.*

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

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

\*NURS715 optional instead of NURS 703

A description of each of the above courses can be found in the USC Upstate Graduate Catalog.

*This is a sample curricular plan. Course offerings may vary based on program planning.*

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**NURS U700 Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations for Nursing (3)** Exploration of various nursing theories and the utilization of nursing theory to health care delivery and to the role of the Masters-prepared nurse. This course investigates nursing theory and its relationship to providing comprehensive and holistic care. Prerequisite(s): Admission to the graduate program

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

**NURS U702 Advanced Pathophysiology (3)** Examination of the pathophysiological bases of disease processes. Advanced pathophysiological concepts for all body systems as a foundation for clinical decision making and nursing management by the advanced practice nurse are included. Prerequisite(s): Admission to the graduate program

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

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

**NURS U706 Curriculum and Program Development (3)** Curriculum development, revision, and the role of the nurse educator in supporting cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning. Topics include characteristics of a good curriculum, appropriate teaching/learning, and educator resources.

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

**NURS U709 Advanced Rural Health Nursing (3)** Comprehensive review of the social determinants of health and health inequities influencing rural populations. Learners formulate nursing plans to address problems identified. Prerequisite(s): Acceptance to the MSN program or consent of instructor.

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

**NURS U711 Health Care Delivery Systems (2).** Examination of health care policy organization and finance. Topics explore the role of the Masters-prepared nurse in providing high quality, cost-effective care and addresses issues related to the delivery of healthcare. Pre/Corequisite(s): NURS U700.

**NURS U712 Role of the Nurse as Leader (3)** Leadership in the healthcare delivery system across all settings. The definition and role of the transformational nurse leader will be explored as well as implementation across

various settings. Fundamental aspects of nurse leadership will be expanded upon to prepare the graduate for this multifaceted responsibility. Prerequisite(s): NURS U700 or Admission to the post-master's graduate certificate in nursing program.

**NURS U713 CNL Practicum I (1)** Introduces the CNL role as clinician, outcomes manager, client advocate, educator, information manager, systems analyst, team member and lifelong learner. CNL portfolio is initiated. Minimum of 75 clinical practicum hours required. Prerequisite(s): NURS U700. Pre/Corequisite(s): NURS U712.

**NURS U714 Organizational Theory (3)** The challenges that nurse managers and healthcare organizations face including the relationships between healthcare systems and structures within organizational theory and their ability to efficiently plan and organize within an ever-changing and highly complex healthcare system. Prerequisite(s): NURS U700 or admission to the post- master's graduate certificate in nursing program.

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

**NURS U716 Economic and Healthcare Outcomes (3)** Healthcare policy from an economic perspective including alternative healthcare systems and healthcare reform. Content examines the US healthcare structure comprehensively including the important role of finances and policies within the current healthcare system.

**NURS U717 Healthcare Policies and Financing (3)** Exploration of current issues influencing healthcare policies including finance with specific attention to the role of the nursing leader as an advocate. The current health policies at the local, state, and federal level and analysis of nursing contributions to healthcare policies are emphasized.

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

**NURS U721. Quality and Risk Management in Health Systems Leader-ship (2).** Application of the principles of quality improvement and risk management within a healthcare organization. The methods, tools, performance measures, and standards of quality and patient safety to implement quality improvement risk management within a healthcare organization will be synthesized. Prerequisite(s): NURS U711 and NURS U712; or admission to the post-master's graduate certificate in nursing program.

**NURS U722 Data Analysis in the Healthcare System (2)** Examination of appropriate data analysis techniques to various research designs. An overview of health information systems that are utilized to develop patient data sets and safeguard privacy is provided. Prerequisite(s): NURS U710 or admission to the post-master's graduate certificate in nursing program.

**NURS U723 Evidence Based Practice Project I (1)** Provides an opportunity for students to address problems in health systems leadership education using evidence-based approaches. Prerequisite(s): NURS U710 or admission to the post-master's graduate program.

**NURS U724 CNL Practicum II (1)** Transition into the CNL role as clinician, outcomes manager, client advocate, educator, information manager, systems analyst, team member and lifelong learner. Functioning under the guidance of a faculty member and clinical preceptor, the student continues creating the CNL portfolio with additional emphasis on microsystem assessment. A minimum of 75 clinical practicum hours are required. Prerequisite(s): NURS U711, NURS U713, and NURS U720; or admission to the post-master's graduate certificate in nursing program and NURS U713.

**NURS U725 Role of the Nursing Educator (3)** Exploration of the role of nurse educators in academic, community, and clinical settings. Teaching and learning strategies used by nurse educators in various settings including academia, community, and in-patient settings are emphasized. Prerequisite(s): NURS U704.

**NURS U726 Nursing Educator Practicum (4)** Preceptor-guided experience with advanced educational principles and theories. Application of the nurse educator core competencies from the National League for Nurses for a minimum of 250 hours is required. Prerequisite(s): NURS U704, NURS U706, and NURS U707.

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

**NURS U731 Evidence Based Practice Project II (2)** Culmination of evidence-based practice project initiated in NURS U723. A required final portfolio verifies the development and competency of the student in the CNL role and records the student's achievements. Prerequisite(s): NURS U723 and NURS U724. Corequisite(s): NURS U732.

**NURS U732 CNL Practicum III (4)** Immersion experiences in the role of the Clinical Nurse Leader. Involves 300 clinical practicum hours. Prerequisite(s): NURS U720, NURS U721, NURS U722, NURS U723, and NURS U724. Pre/Corequisite(s): NURS U731.

**NURS U733 Nursing Leadership Immersion I (3)** Instruction on performance and organizational dynamics of healthcare. Healthcare organizations throughout American history will be examined with a focus on the twenty-first century healthcare system.

**NURS U734 Nursing Leadership Immersion II (3)** Evaluation of performance and organizational dynamics of healthcare with a focus on healthcare organizations throughout American history emphasizing twenty-first century healthcare systems. Prerequisite(s): NURS U733.

**NURS U735 Nursing Leadership Practicum (3)** Transition into the role of nurse leader. A minimum of 187 hours is required to develop core competencies of the nursing leader, which are communication, knowledge, leadership, professionalism, and business skills. Prerequisite(s): NURS U733.

**NURS U739 Advanced Management of Health (1)** Health care trends, best practice guidelines, and resources related to the care of patients experiencing chronic and acute illness. Prerequisite(s): NURS U704. Corequisite(s): NURS U740.

**NURS U740 Advanced Management of Health Practicum (2)** Experience in various health care settings managing chronic and acute illnesses in a population of interest. Corequisite(s): NURS U739.

**NURS U741 Ethics and Values for Today (3)** Assessment of relevant ethical topics in healthcare. This course will explore and examine fundamental ethical principles and build specialized knowledge with applications to societal and professional ethical challenges and dilemmas to advance the common good. Prerequisite(s): Acceptance to the MSN program or consent of instructor.

**NURS U799: Independent Study: Graduate Level (1-3 hours)** A learning experience collaboratively planned by the nursing faculty member and the student. Prerequisite(s): NURS U700 or consent of instructor.

## **DNP PROGRAM GOALS**

The Doctoral Degree in Nursing Practice program (DNP program) prepares advanced practice nurses in Public and Community Health Nursing. The DNP program focuses on developing nurse leaders in practice who are innovative and use nursing practices that are based on evidence to reflect the application of credible research findings.

The primary goal of the DNP program at the Mary Black College of Nursing (MBCON) is to provide advanced knowledge and immersed leadership practice to nurses dedicated to providing high-quality care to improve health outcomes for patients, families, and populations, transform healthcare, and reduce healthcare costs. The DNP program provides students with advanced knowledge and skills in theoretical constructs for advanced nursing practice, epidemiological and environmental health, organizational leadership, and systems thinking, health care policy, finance, and economics, global and cultural diversity in population-focused health, program evaluation, and advanced leadership concepts in public and community health nursing.

Graduates from the DNP program at the MBCON will influence population-level changes through community health assessments and intervention and by evaluating the outcomes of public health programs. The DNP program is particularly vital for improving healthy living in South Carolina and surrounding states to address specific health challenges such as teen pregnancy, infant mortality, drug overdose, COVID-19, preterm births, and heart disease to name a few. Graduates from our program help protect and promote health and wellness in the community by addressing key health indicators and many others. Doctoral-prepared public and community health nurses serve in roles that plan, pilot, and implement evidenced-based population health programs at local, state, or federal levels.

At the completion of the program, the DNP graduate will be able to:

1. Design clinical prevention and population health interventions through the application, translation, and implementation of evidenced based practice into clinical decision-making in the planning and delivery of care across the health care continuum.
2. Translate scientific underpinnings into practice while influencing health care policy for advocacy in health care and instilling ethical comportment, professionalism, and health equity in nursing practice.
3. Demonstrate organizational and systems leadership in addressing complex health problems while using information systems and patient care technology for the transformation of health care.
4. Demonstrate expertise in advanced nursing practice addressing contributors and barriers to global and cultural inequities, disparities, and accessibility of quality and safe healthcare.
5. Collaborate inter-professionally to improve patient and population health outcomes.

### **Centrality to Institutional Mission/Strategic Plan**

The DNP program is in congruence with the mission of University of South Carolina Upstate “to prepare its students to participate as responsible citizens in a diverse, global and knowledge-based society, to pursue excellence in their chosen careers and to continue learning throughout life.”

### **Transfer Credit**

A maximum of six credits can be transferred into the DNP program. Transfer work must be from a regionally accredited and national nursing accredited institution, must be applicable to a DNP degree, and must be completed within five years prior to USC Upstate degree completion. Transfer work is also subject to these additional provisions: (a) the courses must be documented by an official transcript mailed to the admissions office by the awarding institution; (b) the transcript must clearly indicate that graduate credit was awarded or specifically verified by the institution’s registrar or graduate dean; (c) the courses must be approved by the USC Upstate dean in nursing; (d) courses graded lower than B are not transferable.

**DNP CURRICULUM COLLEGE OF NURSING  
DOCTORAL DEGREE IN NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM  
PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSING (Post Masters)**

<b>Full Time Four Semester Plan (38 Hours)</b>					
Course Number	Course Name	Hours	Course Number	Course Name	Hours
<b>Fall Semester (6 Hours)</b>			<b>Spring Semester (7 Hours)</b>		
NURS U801	Translating Science Based Theories and Evidence into Nursing Practice	3	NURS U803	Global and Cultural Inequities, Disparities, and Access in Pop Focused Health	3
NURS U802	Epidemiology and Environmental Health for Advanced Nursing Practice	3	NURS U805	Disaster Preparedness and Management for Advanced Community and Public Health Nursing	2
			NURS U804	Global and Cultural Diversity in Population Focused Health Practicum	2
<b>Summer Semester (5 Hours)</b>					
NURS U806	Use of Technology in Population-Focused Care	2			
NURS U807	Healthcare Economics, Policy, and Finance	3			
	<b>Fall Semester (8 Hours)</b>			<b>Spring Semester (7 Hours)</b>	
NURS U808	Organizational Leadership and Systems Thinking	3	NURS U810	Program Evaluation in Community and Public Health Nursing	3
NURS U809	Organizational Leadership and Systems Thinking Practicum	2	NURS U812	DNP Project Practicum II	4
NURS U811	DNP Project Practicum I	3			
<b>Summer Semester (4)</b>					
NURS U813	DNP Project Practicum III	4			
<b>Optional Credit Hours</b>					
NURS U814	DNP Project Practicum IV	1-3			
NURS U899	Independent Study for DNP Students	1-3			

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**NURS U801 Translating Science Based Theories and Evidence into Nursing Practice (3)** Ethical, biophysical, psychosocial, analytical, and organizational theories from a range of disciplines. Content targets the principles of philosophy of science, social, political, and historical factors that have shaped the evolution of nursing science and practice. Theories and concepts providing the framework for the practice doctorate in nursing are critiqued. Pre-requisite: Admission to the DNP Program or Instructor's consent.

**NURS U802 Epidemiology and Environmental Health for Advanced Nursing Practice (3)** Epidemiological research and the distribution and determinants of health and disease in human populations. Content targets improving health by altering personal and environmental risk factors. Prerequisite: Admission to the DNP Program or Instructor's consent.

**NURS U803 Global and Cultural Inequities, Disparities, and Access in Pop Focused Health (3)** Global health problems facing the world's population today, efforts taken to improve health at a global level, and its impact at the national, state, and local levels on public and community health among diverse populations. Pre-requisite: Admission to the DNP Program or Instructor's consent.

**NURS U804 Global and Cultural Diversity in Population Focused Health Practicum (2)** Global health problems facing the world's populations today, efforts taken to improve health at a global level, and its impact at the national, state, and local levels on public and community health among diverse populations. 90 clinical hours required. Pre-requisite or co-requisite: NURS U803.

**NURS U805 Disaster Preparedness and Management for Adv Community and Public Health Nursing (2)** The leadership role of the DNP in natural and man-made disasters. Course targets emergency preparedness including planning, response, mitigation, and remediation. Content highlights public health risks. Students will utilize systems analysis to promote effective collaboration in disasters. Pre-requisite: Admission to the DNP program or Instructor's consent.

**NURS U806 Use of Technology in Population-Focused Care (2)** The principles of healthcare informatics, communication networks, and healthcare technology in assessing, delivering, and evaluating healthcare in various settings. Ethical and legal considerations are integrated into the application of technological best practices to care. Pre-requisite: Admission to the DNP Program or Instructor's consent.

**NURS U807 Healthcare Economics, Policy, and Finance (3)** The economic, financial, social, and political forces that influence healthcare policy and examine current healthcare policies and factors that influence policy development. Explores the relationship between healthcare economics, healthcare policy, and population health and examines the role of the nurse in influencing and constructing healthcare policy to support community health. Pre-requisite: Admission to the DNP Program or Instructor's consent.

**NURS U808 Organizational Leadership and Systems Thinking (3)** The dynamic and complex health care system and organizational imperatives to deliver quality health care through clinical initiatives based on ethics, industry standards, key outcome indicators, and cost-quality imperatives. Explores relevant theories of organizational change, system leadership, organizational culture, healthcare finance, communications, and systems-thinking to produce quality patient outcomes. Pre-requisite: Admission to the DNP Program or Instructor's consent.

**NURS U809 Organizational Leadership and Systems Thinking Practicum (2)** The application of best practices to achieve optimal healthcare outcomes. Emphasis is placed on the structures and process in public and community health settings, including alternative strategies to bridge gaps between desired and actual health care outcomes, and upstream strategies for health care systems improvement in quality and safety in complex health



environments. Students complete at least 90 clinical hours in this course. The course may be taken at the same time or after NURS 808

**NURS U810 Program Evaluation in Community and Public Health Nursing (3)** Information and tools for strategically evaluating change initiatives and outcomes in public and community health practice environments. Pre-requisite: Admission to the DNP Program or Instructor's consent.

**NURS U811 DNP Project Practicum I (3)** Essentials of doctoral nursing practice in collaboration with advanced healthcare professionals and faculty. The faculty-guided DNP project practicum course focuses on the application of advanced nursing practice and systems-level knowledge in a public-community healthcare setting. Learners translate current best evidence and use collaboration, leadership, and knowledge of informatics to design, implement, and evaluate a project to improve health outcomes. A minimum of 135 clinical hours is required. Pre-requisite: NURS U801, U802, U803, U804, U805, U806 & U807.

**NURS U812 DNP Project Practicum II (4)** Project implementation of essentials of doctoral nursing practice in collaboration with advanced healthcare professionals and faculty, including in-depth study of a select phenomenon of scholarly interest. This is the second of three faculty-guided DNP project practicum courses focused on providing students with experience in the application of advanced nursing practice and systems level knowledge in a public/community healthcare setting. A minimum of 180 clinical hours is required. Pre-requisite: NURS U811.

**NURS U813 DNP Project Practicum III (4)** Project evaluation and dissemination of essentials of doctoral nursing practice in collaboration with advanced healthcare professionals and faculty, including in-depth study of a select phenomenon of scholarly interest. This is the third of three DNP project practicum courses focused on providing students with experience in the application of advanced nursing practice and system level knowledge in a public/community healthcare setting. A minimum of 180 clinical hours is required. Pre-requisite: NURS U811, NURS U812.

**NURS U814 DNP Project Practicum IV (1 – 3)** Continuation of faculty guided DNP practicum and project hours from previous semesters. The goals for this course are to provide additional time for students to finish the program project. A minimum of 45 practicum hours are required. Pre-requisites: NURS U811, NURS U812, NURS U813.

**NURS U899 Independent Study for DNP Students (1 – 3)** A specialized learning experience regarding the role of the DNP college nursing faculty member and the students. Pre-requisite: Admission to the DNP Program or Instructor's consent.

## **DNP PROJECT GUIDELINES**

DNP project courses (I, II, and III) are designed as a 3-course series that build on each other. The courses provide DNP students with mentored opportunities to identify, develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate a quality improvement project. The 3 courses must be completed in order and students cannot progress to the next course until successfully completing the work in the previous course (with a grade of B or better). The DNP program culminates in the successful completion of the DNP project, which is divided into separate progressive parts, taken throughout the program.

The DNP project is individualized and designed by the student in collaboration with an MBCON faculty member and clinical preceptor/mentor. The project must contribute to the nursing practice in a significant and evidence-based manner. The project should be suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed, practice-focused nursing journal. Students are expected to demonstrate synthesis of scientific knowledge in the public health and community areas and contribute to existing nursing knowledge.

Examples of DNP projects include quality improvement project proposals, program needs assessment, evidence-based program development, existing program evaluations, development of an assessment or therapeutic protocol, or a cost/benefit analysis of program models.

The DNP project chair will support the student to identify a focus area for the DNP project. The project chair will guide the student in procedures for completion of the project. The project chair must have an earned doctorate and hold a regular full-time faculty position at the Mary Black College of Nursing. The student will determine their public and community health site with their DNP project chair. The choice of project topic should be made based on the student's proposed area of clinical inquiry, the faculty member's clinical and scholarly interests, and the collaborative input from the preceptor.

The DNP project chair supervises the project as a whole and is the primary resource person for all aspects of the project. To identify a preceptor/mentor for the project, network with professionals you meet during your studies (e.g. 804, 809 practicum) and ask about scholarly interests and areas of expertise. The student, DNP project chair, and preceptor/mentor will work together in the three DNP project courses, over an extended period, so careful selection of a preceptor/mentor who will also serve on the student's committee is encouraged. An additional committee member may also be selected with the expertise needed to assist the student in completing the project.

The DNP Project committee assists the student in developing a continued plan for the project, monitors the student's progress, and guides the student throughout the DNP project.

The final product from the DNP project should be agreed upon by the student, the DNP project chair, and the preceptor/mentor. This should be documented on the DNP Project Topic Approval Form and DNP Project Committee Approval Form (see Appendix I). Final product examples are as follows.

- A manuscript submitted for publication (Name of journal required)
- A grant proposal
- A publishable clinical guideline
- Innovative change project
- Legislative bill
- Other



## THE DNP PROJECT PROCESS

Course	Steps
DNP Project Practicum I NURS U811	1. Identify DNP project topic area of interest and project title.
	2. DNP Project Committee (Student, DNP project chair, preceptor/mentor, and others as needed). The DNP student is responsible for seeking and asking the appropriate people to join the project committee. Students are responsible for submitting the DNP Project Topic Approval Form and DNP Project Committee Approval Form (see Appendix I).
	3. Write Literature Review. Students will use the findings from the literature review as the foundation for their DNP project.
DNP Project Practicum II NURS U812	4. Write the DNP Project Proposal. What do you wish to accomplish? The DNP project proposal primarily focuses on quality improvement initiatives at the practicum site. Students could also complete a program needs assessment, evidence-based program development, existing program evaluations, development of an assessment or therapeutic protocol, or a cost/benefit analysis of program models. There must be clear evidence that the DNP project proposal came from the findings in the literature review and the established needs of the practicum site. The DNP project protocol must be submitted to the <a href="#">USC IRB</a> for approval (additional IRB practicum site approvals may be required).
	5. After receiving IRB approval, complete (implement) the DNP project, write and submit the entire DNP project (APA required) which will include the literature review, developmental process for the DNP project, and implementation results.
DNP Project Practicum III NURS U813	6. Provide an Oral Presentation. The goals of the DNP oral presentation are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop professional presentation skills.</li> <li>b. Take command of the topic by presenting a literature review and demonstrate how the DNP Project emerged from the literature review.</li> <li>c. Presentation of DNP Project results.</li> <li>d. Disseminate knowledge from the final DNP Project to committee members, nursing peers, and the MBCON community (faculty and students). Students are encouraged to submit the final project to the <a href="#">University's Annual Research Symposium</a>. This is not required. All oral presentations must be live (synchronous) presentations to the DNP committee, MBCON Faculty, Peers, and Students.</li> </ul>
	7. After completion and approval of the oral presentation by the DNP project chair, students are required to submit electronic copies of the final DNP project to the Dean and to the Graduate Program Director. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The final copy should be in APA format using a standard 12-point Times New Roman font</li> <li>b. The finished product must have a signed title page and include all attachments, and forms as well as any final products merged as a pdf document entitled with the student, Last Name, First Name, and "DNP" (insert Class year): Ex; Miller, Kristi, DNP 2023.</li> <li>c. Students must meet the deadlines for completion/presenting, formatting, and submission for the semester in which they will complete degree requirements. The deadlines are published in the USC Upstate calendar. Timelines will be adhered to closely.</li> </ul>

## **GUIDELINES FOR DNP PROJECT AND FINAL REPORT**

The DNP student is expected to submit a quality improvement project that aligns with public and community health nursing. To complete the objectives of the three-course series successfully, the DNP student is expected to submit a doctoral thesis of the Project (i.e., quality improvement project) completed in conjunction with the public and community health nursing practice practicum experiences and disseminate findings of the project. Dissemination activities (NURS U813) may take several forms and must include an oral presentation. Other forms may be an evidence-based practice guidelines, educational modules, curricula, tool kit to move science into practice, publication, and other strategies.

Focus of DNP Project: All students must complete a minimum of 495 supervised practice hours at the DNP level and an additional 180 hours in other practicum courses. NOTE: DNP graduates must have minimally 1,000 documented clinical practice hours post-baccalaureate. Hence students may be required to complete additional practicum hours beyond the required 675 hours in the DNP program.

Transcripts will be evaluated upon admission to the program, and if an MSN transcript reflects less than 325 practicum hours, additional hours will be required. Students will be notified of this need early in the program. NURS U814 is designed to assist students reach the required practicum hours, if needed.

## **PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS**

### **GRADUATE PROGRAMS GRADING SCALE**

A 90-100

B 80-89

C 70-79

D 60-69

<80 is considered a failing grade.

### **PROGRESSION**

You must maintain good academic standing and maintain a cumulative Graduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 (not including undergraduate work) or greater to remain in the program. A minimum grade of B is required in all nursing courses. If you earn below a B in a course, it will not count toward satisfying graduate degree requirements. Students who earn a grade of C, D, WF or U in any two courses, or who earn an F in any nursing course, will be dismissed from the program. Students who receive a C, D, WF or U in any nursing course may repeat that course only one time.

A student's continued enrollment in the nursing program is based on physical as well as emotional health. If the student demonstrates evidence of a physical or emotional illness, he/she may be referred to the Dean of Students and Health Services for additional care as needed. Students who have an extenuating circumstance, such as illness, can withdraw from courses and the program. Students will communicate with their advisor if a withdrawal is needed.

### **DISMISSAL AND READMISSION**

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

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

### **ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS**

You will be given a grade of FN (Failure – Non-Attendance) if you stop attending class. Faculty must report the last date of attendance when submitting the grade. The FN is displayed and calculated as F on the official transcript.

Faculty will assign a grade of incomplete I, when, in the faculty member's judgment, you have a significant disruption in your ability to complete some portion of the assigned work in a course. The grade of I cannot be used to give students additional time to complete course assignments except in unique situations. You may have from one week up to 12 months from the date the I was given to complete and submit the work. It is your responsibility to ensure all arrangements for the removal of the "Incomplete" have been made with the instructor. When all required work has been completed and received, the instructor submits the Grade Change Form to the Registrar's Office. If the faculty member is not available, the Program Director must be notified.

At the one-year limit, the I will convert to an F or a backup grade if designated by the instructor. The changing of an I to a letter grade requires notification and processing at various administrative levels. It may take several weeks before the letter grade and credits earned appear on the student's transcript, and in some cases, may delay approval for graduation. If a student receives an I in a course that is a prerequisite for a subsequent course, they must complete the I and receive a passing grade in the course before taking

subsequent courses for which that course is a prerequisite.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Standard 3. PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES:**

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

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

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

**Standard 6. SMELL:** Smelling ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs. Examples of necessary

functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Have ability to differentiate between various types of smells and odors, and ability to tolerate offensive odors.

### **PRACTICUM PRECEPTOR GUIDELINES**

- Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) 38 credit hrs. (1 credit hour = 75 – 100 hours), 500 practicum hours (120 hours independent; 380 directed)
- Nurse Leader (NL) 38 credit hrs. (1 credit = 62.5 hrs), 187.5 practicum hours (67.5 independent, 120 directed)
- Nurse Educator (NE) 38 credit hrs. (1 credit = 62.5 hrs), 375 practicum hours (157.5 independent, 217.5 directed)
- Doctor of Nursing Practice in Public and Community Health (DNP) 38 credit hrs. (1 credit hour = 45 hours), 675 practicum hours (169 independent, 506 directed)

The Director of the Graduate Programs and Clinical Placement Coordinator are central contacts for student placements at practicum sites, and in collaboration with the dean's office they are responsible for finalizing contracts with prospective clinical sites during the placement process.

You may identify potential preceptors. The Program Director and course faculty review prospective preceptors relative to their educational background and professional experience to determine if the preceptor is suitable.

Preceptors must have a master's degree in nursing as a minimum requirement, however a doctorate degree is preferred. The DNP mentor/preceptor must have extensive clinical expertise in public and community health areas. In all cases, the course faculty works closely with the clinical preceptor and student to ensure the relevance of the student's practice experiences connected to the course objectives.

### **DRESS CODE**

For all practicum experiences, graduate students are expected to dress appropriately. The length of students' dresses and pants should present a professional image. Students' makeup should be minimal, and colognes, perfumes, and aftershave lotions should be avoided. The following apparel will not be acceptable: jeans, sweatpants, shorts, t-shirts as outer garments, and midriff tops. Students can wear scrubs only if stipulated by the clinical site.

Clinical agencies and community partners have the right to refuse the placement of a student who is inappropriately attired; in which event the faculty and Program Director must be notified immediately.

While performing in the graduate student role, the USC Upstate name badge must be displayed.



## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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

### **ADVISORS**

Students will be advised upon admissions and throughout the program. The student and advisor will discuss the academic program of study. If students decide to change their plan of study, they must discuss the plan with the advisor to make revisions as needed.

### **DISABILITY SERVICES**

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

### **UNIVERSITY CATALOG**

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

### **AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION**

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

### **MU RHO CHAPTER OF SIGMA THETA TAU**

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

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

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

### **NURSE FACULTY LOAN PROGRAM**

The Federal Nurse Faculty Loan Program is a federally subsidized loan to cover tuition, fees, books, laboratory experiences and other reasonable educational expenses. The NFLP is a loan cancellation program with a service obligation for recipients of the loans. To be eligible for the maximum 85 percent cancellation, the borrower must agree to serve as full-time nurse faculty at a school of nursing for a consecutive four-year period.

following graduation from the program.

The NFLP is available to U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents who are enrolled full-time in an eligible master's degree program in nursing. The NFLP is not a need-based loan, but students must submit the FAFSA with their application. The program does not cover living expenses, transportation, food, or other personal expenses. NFLP loans may cover educational program costs for the duration of the course of study, not to exceed five years. Loan offers are subject to the availability of funds and to the student's academic status (must be in good standing in the educational program). For more program details, contact the Graduate Director.

### **LIBRARY RESOURCES**

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

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

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

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

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

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

1. No student shall give or receive, or otherwise furnish or procure, assistance not authorized in the preparation of an essay, report, examination, or other assignment in an academic course or in the fulfillment of program or degree requirements such as standardized examinations.

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

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

### **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS**

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

### **LICENSURE**

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

### **ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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

- **Change of address:** may be completed through My SSC. Students are required to keep their addresses current with the University. Students should also contact the College of Nursing to confirm that new addresses have been received.
- **Change of name, major or minor:** requires completing the update form in the Records Office. All changes of name due to marriage, divorce, etc. should be reported to the College of Nursing as soon as the name change is legal.
- **Academic Standing:** refer to the catalog for the minimum GPA required to continue as a graduate student as well as the rules for probation and suspension.
- **Academic Grievances:** students can obtain the form and procedure from their Dean's Office or the Records Office.
- **Dropping a Course:** students must withdraw from courses through SSC by the "last day to withdraw without academic penalty" to receive a "W."

## STUDENT APPEALS PROCEDURES

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

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

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

### **General Guidelines for Students:**

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

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

1. If the initial grievance concerns admissions to the university, the student contacts the Admissions Office (link above). The Admissions Office advises the students of the appeal process involving the Admissions and Petitions Committee.
2. If the initial grievance concerns admission to an academic program, the student contacts the dean of the college ([MBCON](#)) The dean advises the student of the appeal process involving admission to a specific academic program.

3. If the initial grievance concerns an academic suspension policy, the student contacts the Records Office (link above). The Records Office advises the students of the appeal process involving the Admissions and Petitions Committee.
4. If the initial grievance concerns a financial aid policy, the student contacts the Financial Aid Office (link above). The Financial Aid Office advises the students of the appeal process involving the Student Financial Aid Committee.

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

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

9. Further appeal may be made to the Chancellor, the President of the University of South Carolina, and the Board of Trustees in accordance with university policies, procedures, and bylaws.

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

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

## Appendix I

### DNP Project Topic Approval Form

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Banner ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DNP Project Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Committee Members:

Mentor/Preceptor: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Member (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

This proposal is for (*Check one*): Program of practice evaluation.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- A manuscript submitted for publication (Name of journal required)
  - A grant proposal
  - A publishable clinical guideline
  - Innovative change project
  - Legislative bill
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach a one-page narrative with the following:

- Key words that will be used for a systematic literature review.
- List project purpose and specific aims.
- Background
  - How is this issue relevant to nursing?
  - What is the clinical issue that needs addressing with this project?
  - What clinical site will be used for this project? *Attach Clinical Site Agreement form.*
- Method & project plan
  - What sample/population will be included in this project?
  - What is the setting?
  - What methodology will be used to complete this project?
  - What are the expected outcomes of this project?
  - Will you use an instrument to gather data? If yes, describe.
- Implications for practice

**Signature of DNP Project Chair indicates topic approval.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DNP Project Committee Approval Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*Student's name*) request approval for the following individuals to serve on the Project Committee. Each member has been contacted by me. The committee at minimum must include the DNP project chair who must be an MBCON faculty member and a mentor/preceptor.

**Student's signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Banner ID:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's anticipated topic of interest:**

**DNP Project Chair (MBCON Faculty Member):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor/Preceptor Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Member (Optional):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*By signing this form, the committee member willingly agrees to serve on the committee, to meet regularly with the Chair and/or student, to advise the DNP student and to be named a contributing author for any scholarly work resulting from this project.*

*Signature also indicates **no existing conflicts of interest***



## DNP Project Full Proposal Guidelines

- 1) **Project Title**
- 2) **Project purpose and specific aim**
  - Purpose of project/paper
  - List specific aims
- 3) **Background**
  - Relevance to nursing
  - Describe clinical issue that needs addressing.
  - Clinical support
- 4) **Literature Review**
  - Develop an extensive systematic literature review of pertinent current articles.
  - Include APA reference list or based on journal guidelines (discuss with Committee Chair)
- 5) **Methodology (Most important component of the proposal)**
  - Project plan, implementation, and evaluation
  - Expected outcomes (*who, what, when, where*)
  - If project is part of a larger study describe your part and how it will be independent from the rest of the project
  - Sections
    - Setting – *Where will this project be completed? Who will be assisting?*
    - Sample – *Population, recruitment procedures. How will you get access to the population?*
    - Outcomes – *What approvals are needed?*
    - Measurement – *How will data be collected? What instruments will be used? Describe reliability and validity of instruments. Protection of human subjects.*
    - Evaluation – *Who will be involved in data analysis? What statistical tests will be utilized?*
- 6) **Evaluation Plan**
  - Provide an evaluation of project findings.
- 7) **Implications for Practice, Policy, and /or Education**
  - How did your project affect practice, policy and or education?
- 8) **Sustainability**
  - How will the project be maintained after you are done? How will it be funded? Who will be responsible for continued oversight?
- 9) **Plans for Dissemination of Outcomes**
  - Which journals (required) and conferences, or other venues will you target for dissemination?
- 10) **References**
  - Current (<5 years)
- 11) **Appendices**

\* To support diverse learning opportunities, the MBCON Faculty cannot serve as the DNP Project Chair for > 2 DNP Students at the same time.