

**MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF NURSING**

POLICY # A-12

TITLE: UPPER DIVISION PLACEMENT POLICY

POLICY: Placement of students on upper division campuses is based on the following principles:

- 1) maximal placement of the most qualified students;
- 2) optimal use of resources (eg clinical, faculty, financial); and
- 3) increasing the supply of baccalaureate prepared nurses.

Additionally, the MSU-Bozeman College of Nursing Caring for Our Own Program (CO-OP) has a total of seven reserved placements each year (one in fall and one in spring in Billings; one in fall in Bozeman; one in fall and one in spring in Great Falls; and one in fall and one in spring in Missoula). The MSU-Bozeman ARMY ROTC program has five reserved placements for cadets each year. These five placements are split between Great Falls and Billings.

RATIONALE: The College of Nursing placement policy provides for the screening of applicants to the nursing program based on established criteria that demonstrate best potential for student success. Limited resources (eg clinical, faculty, and financial) make judicious use of available upper division placements essential. Every effort is made to maximize the number of placements which may vary each placement round according to available resources. The reserved placements for CO-OP and ROTC students are available to facilitate the progression of these students through the program in a timely manner.

Criteria for Pre-Nursing and Transfer Students applying for Upper Division Placement

- A. A calculated GPA of 2.75 or higher in required prerequisite courses (or their equivalents) is required to apply to the nursing program. Those courses are: BIOH 201, BIOH 211, BIOM 250, CHMY 121, CHMY 123, CLS 101, FCS 101, NUTR 221, PSYX 100, SOCI 101, STAT 216, and WRIT 101.
- B. All required prerequisite courses must be completed with a grade of C or better (C- grades are not acceptable) and no more than two (2) of the required prerequisite courses in #1 above may be repeated one (1) time to earn a grade of C or better.
- C. At least 3 of the 5 required natural science courses must be completed with a grade of C or better to apply to the nursing program. Those courses are: BIOH 201, BIOH 211, BIOM 250, CHMY 121, and CHMY 123.
- D. A MSU-Bozeman cumulative GPA of 2.75 or higher is required prior to enrolling in the first semester of the junior year of upper division coursework.

Procedure I: Upper Division Placement for First Semester Junior Students

- A. The deadlines for submitting an application for upper division placement are January 1st or August 1st each year, one full semester in advance of placement in lower division nursing courses and two full semesters in advance of placement in the first semester of the junior year of upper division placement . Applications are available through the College's Web

- site @ <http://www.montana.edu/nursing/academic/placement.htm>.
- B. The College of Nursing will assume the responsibility for accessing transcripts of courses completed at MSU - Bozeman. However, students are responsible for insuring that official transcripts for all other colleges and universities where course work has been completed are received in the College of Nursing by the application deadline, including transcripts from other units of the MSU system (eg MSU-Billings, MSU-GF College, and MSU-Havre). These transcripts must be submitted directly to the College of Nursing (not to the MSU Admissions Office).
 - C. Completed applications will be ranked according to a calculated GPA in all of the required prerequisite courses for the nursing program. See attachment A-12.1 "Calculation of Grade Point Average (GPA) in Required Prerequisite Courses for the Nursing Program."
 - D. The top ranked students will be offered an upper division placement for four consecutive semesters until all available placements are filled. These students will receive a letter offering them a placement in the College of Nursing but no specific campus assignment will be offered at that time.
 - E. Approximately six weeks later, students with placement will receive a letter offering them a specific campus assignment based on the preferences noted on their applications.
 - F. If a student does not receive his/her first choice placement, s/he may elect to accept or decline the placement offer and be placed on the Wait List by GPA ranking. By declining the offered placement, the student does not have a placement in the College and will only be placed if a slot opens up and s/he is placed off of the Wait List.
 - G. A \$200 deposit is required for students who accept an upper division placement offer. This deposit is retained and applied to the student's fees the first semester of enrollment in junior-level courses. Students with a documented financial hardship must contact the Undergraduate Program Assistant prior to the deadline for accepting placement. If a deposit waiver is granted, the student's record is flagged and she/he is not given the deposit credit. Refund of the \$200 deposit can be arranged if the student provides a written request to the Undergraduate Program Assistant's office at least one month prior to the semester in which s/he is scheduled to begin upper division course work and includes the address to be used in processing the refund which can take up to six weeks.
 - H. Students who fail lower division courses or fail to achieve the required minimum MSU-Bozeman cumulative GPA of 2.75 by the end of the semester prior to beginning upper division course work will forfeit their placement. They can, however, request a refund of the \$200 deposit through the Undergraduate Program Assistant's office and must include the address to be used in processing the refund.
 - I. Students not offered an upper division placement may be placed on a Wait List for that application period. The Wait List is used to fill unexpected vacancies that might occur. If not offered placement while on the Wait List, they may also reapply during the following application period.

Procedure II: Filling Second Semester Junior and Senior Level Vacancies

- A. Clinical placements vacated due to withdrawal, failure or transfer to another campus are offered on a semester-by semester basis according to the following order of priority, by category:
 - 1. All students in good standing (have had no withdrawals or failures) who have requested transfer to another campus due to extraordinary circumstances. These requests for extraordinary circumstances will be submitted to the College of Nursing Scholastic Committee for consideration and approval.

2. All students who have withdrawn from or failed a clinical course. The College is sometimes unable to offer a placement for the course(s) needed on the student's requested campus and may need to offer placement to the student on another campus where a vacancy is available.
3. All other students requesting transfer to another campus who do not have extraordinary circumstances.

- B. Within each of these categories, students are ranked by the date (semester and year) of their initial request. If two requests are submitted in the same semester, students will be ranked according to their cumulative GPA.

[Note: Because the College of Nursing considers a W grade in the same way as a failing grade in that each is a failure to achieve a grade of C or better in an enrolled course, the Scholastic Committee appeal process may be utilized for situations in which a student needed to withdraw for medical, family emergency, or other extraordinary circumstances. Extraordinary circumstances are defined as those situations that occur which are beyond the student's control such as military orders, death of an immediate family member, or personal illness or injury.]

Reviewed/Approved by:

Level I: Executive Council (January 24, 2011)

Level II: Dean (January 24, 2011)

Attachment A-12.1

Calculation of GPA in Required Prerequisite Courses for the Nursing Program

Upper division placements are based upon students' likelihood to be successful in upper division nursing courses as determined by student performance in required lower division prerequisite courses. This assures consistency and maximal use of limited resources. This GPA is calculated based on the MSU-Bozeman courses (or their equivalents) listed below:

CHMY 121	Introductory General Chem/Lab	4	WRIT 101	College Writing I	3
CHMY 123	Organic/Biochem Principles/Lab	4	CLS 101	Knowledge & Community	3
BIOH 201	Anatomy & Physiology I/Lab)	5	STAT 216	Introduction to Statistics	3
BIOH 211	Anatomy & Physiology II/Lab)	4	SOCI 101	Introduction to Sociology	3
BIOM 250	Microbiology for Health Sciences	3	PSYX 100	Introduction to Psychology	4
NUTR 221	Human Nutrition	3	FCS 101	Lifespan Human Develop	3

If the student has completed any of the following courses, those grades will also be included:

NRSRG 115	Nursing as a Profession	2
NRSRG 220	Fnds Ethical Nrsg Practice	2
NRSRG 225	Fnds Plan/Provid. Clin. Care	4
NRSRG 238	Health Assess Across Lifespan	4
NRSRG 258	Principles of Pathophysiology	3

NOTE: The requirements for WRIT 101 and CLS 101 will be waived for all post-baccalaureate students. If these courses were taken as part of a prior degree program, those grades will not be included in the calculation of this GPA.

To assure consistent interpretations, the following guidelines are applied:

1. MSU course equivalents, as determined by the MSU Admissions Office, are used for transfer students.
2. Number of credits used for calculation of this GPA are those for MSU courses (eg CHMY 121, 4 crs), regardless of the number of credits earned for an equivalent course at a transfer institution.
3. Laboratory grades for equivalents to CHMY 121 and CHMY 123 are included in the calculation of this GPA.
4. This GPA is calculated using the last grade earned in any prerequisite or lower division nursing course.
5. Unusual grades found on transcripts will be interpreted by the Registrar's Office at the school sending the transcript. Any grades that are equivalent to an "F" grade, will be calculated as an "F" grade, including "WF."
6. Grades used in the GPA calculations for this application will include all courses completed by the end of the semester before the student applies.

A-12.2

Fall Upper Division Placement Procedure Timeline

(beginning in Fall 2011 for Upper Division Placement in Fall 2012 & every Fall thereafter)

- ❑ **June 15** Applications for Upper Division Placement are available through the College's Web site @ <http://www.montana.edu/nursing/academic/placement.htm>.
- ❑ **August 1** Deadline for receipt of Applications for Upper Division Placement for the following Fall semester.
- ❑ **August 15** Deadline for receipt of all official transcripts through the previous Summer semester. GPAs for all students will be calculated using those grades earned through Summer semester and will not be recalculated when Fall grades are available; Fall grades will simply be audited to determine if all required prerequisite courses for lower division nursing courses have been completed with a grade of C or better. [NOTE: Transfer students who are not able to submit their official transcripts with Summer final grades by this date must notify the Undergraduate Program Assistant prior to the August 15 deadline.]
- ❑ **September 15** The Undergraduate Program Assistant will have all GPAs calculated and provide the Undergraduate Student Services Coordinator with lists of students receiving A, B and C placement letters : students who are offered placement receive letter A; students who are not offered placement but have a calculated GPA of 2.75 or higher and are offered the option to be automatically placed on the Wait List receive letter B; and students whose calculated GPAs are below 2.75 and are not offered the option to be placed on the Wait List receive Letter C. The Undergraduate Student Services Coordinator will use these lists for planning Spring registration in lower division nursing courses (available on the Bozeman campus only) and Transfer Orientation.
- ❑ **By October 1** The Undergraduate Program Assistant will send initial letters offering the top ranked students upper division placement (letters A, B, and C).
- ❑ **October 15** Deadline for receipt of ACCEPTS/DECLINES for initial upper division placement offers for the following Fall semester. The \$200 upper division placement deposit is also required at this time.
- ❑ **By Nov 15** The Undergraduate Program Assistant will send letters offering upper division campus assignments to students who accepted placement in the college for the following Fall semester and will complete lower division nursing courses in Spring.
- ❑ **By Dec 1** Deadline for receipt of ACCEPTS/DECLINES for specific campus assignments and Wait List applications for the following Fall in the event unexpected vacancies occur. Students are ranked on the Wait List by their calculated GPA that included final grades through the previous Summer semester. The Undergraduate Student Services Coordinator will use the Wait List to plan for placing up to ten (10) additional students in lower division nursing courses in Spring in the event they are offered a placement off the Wait List and need to have lower division nursing courses completed in order to start upper division in August.

- **Mid-January** Lower division nursing courses begin for students completing all five lower division nursing courses on the Bozeman campus only.

- **Mid-May** The Undergraduate Student Services Coordinator will audit the academic files for all students completing the five (5) lower division nursing courses and beginning upper division nursing courses in August to determine whether all required prerequisite and lower division nursing courses have been completed with a grade of C or better. Those audited new junior files will be sent to the upper division campuses prior to the start of upper division coursework in August.

A-12.3

Spring Upper Division Placement Procedure Timeline (beginning in Spring 2012 for Upper Division Placement in Spring 2013 & every Spring thereafter)

- ❑ **November 15** *Applications for Upper Division Placement* are available through the College's Web site @ <http://www.montana.edu/nursing/academic/placement.htm>.
- ❑ **January 1** Deadline for receipt of *Applications for Upper Division Placement* for the following Spring semester.
- ❑ **January 15** Deadline for receipt of all official *transcripts* through the previous Fall semester. GPAs for all students will be calculated using those grades earned through Fall semester and will not be recalculated when Spring grades are available; Spring grades will simply be audited to determine if all required prerequisite courses for lower division nursing courses have been completed with a grade of C or better. [NOTE: Transfer students who are not able to submit their official transcripts with Fall final grades by this date must notify the Undergraduate Program Assistant prior to the February 1 deadline.]
- ❑ **February 15** The Undergraduate Program Assistant will have all GPAs calculated and provide the Undergraduate Student Services Coordinator with lists of students receiving A, B and C placement letters : students who are offered placement receive letter A; students who are not offered placement but have a calculated GPA of 2.75 or higher and are offered the option to be automatically placed on the Wait List receive letter B; and students whose calculated GPAs are below 2.75 and are not offered the option to be placed on the Wait List receive Letter C. The Undergraduate Student Services Coordinator will use these lists for planning Summer and Fall registration in lower division nursing courses and Transfer Orientation.
- ❑ **By March 1** The Undergraduate Program Assistant will send initial letters offering the top ranked students upper division placement (letters A, B, and C).
- ❑ **March 15** Deadline for receipt of ACCEPTS/DECLINES for initial upper division placement offers for the following Spring semester. The \$200 upper division placement deposit is also required at this time.
- ❑ **By April 15** The Undergraduate Program Assistant will send letters offering upper division campus assignments to students who accepted placement in the college for the following spring semester and will complete lower division nursing courses in summer and/or fall.
- ❑ **By May 1** Deadline for receipt of ACCEPTS/DECLINES for specific campus assignments and Wait List applications for the following Spring in the event unexpected vacancies occur. Students are ranked on the Wait List by their calculated GPA that included final grades through the previous Fall semester. The Undergraduate Student Services Coordinator will use the Wait List to plan for placing up to ten (10) additional students in lower division nursing courses in summer and fall in the event they are offered a placement off the Wait List and need to have lower division nursing courses completed in order to start upper division in January.
- ❑ **Mid-May** Lower division nursing courses begin for students wishing to complete NRS

115, NRS 220, and/or NRS 258 during summer school sessions.

- **Late August** Lower division nursing courses begin for students completing all five lower division nursing courses (or NRS 225 and NRS 238 if the other three (3) lower division nursing courses were successfully completed in summer).

- **Late December** The Undergraduate Student Services Coordinator will audit the academic files for all students completing the five (5) lower division nursing courses and beginning upper division nursing courses in January to determine whether all required prerequisite and lower division nursing courses have been completed with a grade of C or better. Those audited new junior files will be sent to the upper division campuses prior to the start of upper division coursework in January.