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Important reminder:
You understand that it is your responsibility to read the MSU College of Nursing student Graduate Program Handbook, Clinical Manual that applies to your option, and Professional (MN) or Scholarly (DNP) Project Handbook, which contain the policies and procedures that govern your education while in the College of Nursing. You understand and agree that you will be subject to the policies and procedures as outlined in the handbooks.
I. Introduction

The MSU College of Nursing offers Master of Nursing (MN) and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degrees. The MN degree was first offered at MSU in 1957 and the inaugural class seeking the DNP degree matriculated in 2013. The MN degree focuses on the Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) role and the DNP degree focuses on advanced practice nursing for Family/Individual or Psych/Mental Health populations. A Certificate in Nursing Education can be earned while working on either the MN or DNP degrees, but is separate from degree requirements.

Vision of the College of Nursing
MSU College of Nursing will be internationally recognized for innovation, discovery, excellence, and leadership in education, research, and practice.

Mission of the College of Nursing
Our mission is to enhance the health of the people of Montana, our nation, and the global community by providing leadership for professional nursing through excellence in education, research, practice, and service.

The graduate program is recognized nationally for leadership in rural nursing and the MN and DNP degree programs are fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The College of Nursing enrolls between 85 and 95 graduate students.

The main campus of Montana State University (MSU) is located in Bozeman and includes extensive library facilities and access to the full array of courses and research opportunities available through all departments at MSU. The administrative offices of the College of Nursing are located in Bozeman. The Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education has general responsibility for the graduate program and is located in Bozeman.

Students access all graduate courses through Desire2Learn (MSU’s computer software used for distance delivery of courses). Graduate courses may be enhanced with teleconference and/or interactive video at the instructor’s discretion and a one-day orientation for new graduate students is held in the fall in Bozeman. Students must travel to Bozeman at the beginning of each fall semester for face-to-face classes.

Students should bear in mind that each lecture credit requires one hour of class time per week and each clinical credit requires three hours of practicum per week. Students should plan time for class preparation and assignments, library work, and clinical experiences including preparation and travel to rural sites. Clinical sites are arranged on an individual basis in collaboration with clinical course faculty for the MN (CNL) degree or with the Clinical Coordinators, Family/Individual or Psych/Mental Health, for the DNP degree.

We are proud of our graduate program and we welcome strong, enthusiastic, and hard-working graduate students to join us each year. Graduates from the MSU College of Nursing are readily employable in a variety of nursing and health care settings.
II. College of Nursing Philosophy

Introduction
We believe in excellence in nursing education through a teaching-learning process that is the responsibility of both faculty and student. We promote the development of lifelong self-directed learning that fosters leadership in education, research, practice, and service. We believe in a learning environment that supports diversity of people and ideas. Our efforts are directed toward achieving higher levels of education for all nurses and transforming healthcare in the United States and the world. We believe that nursing education is framed within the context of nursing’s metaparadigm: person, environment, health, and nursing.

Person
A person is any individual, family, group, community, or population. Each person is unique and is entitled to treatment with dignity and respect.

Environment
Environment includes all factors influencing a person’s health perceptions, behaviors and responses. The human experience is contextually defined by the interrelationship of spiritual, cultural, developmental, physical, psycho-social, political, and economic subsystems. The appropriate arena for nursing action extends beyond the person and includes promotion of healthy environments through social action.

Health
Health is a state of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being defined by the person. It is not merely the absence of disease or disability. Health is multi-factorial and is influenced by many factors such as behaviors, environments, genetics, and resources. There are diverse cultural definitions of health. Health activities include those directed at maintenance, enhancement, prevention, and promotion.

Nursing
Nursing is a discipline of science and art requiring synthesis of evidence based knowledge, professional skills, ethical values, and human caring. Nurses assist persons to achieve optimal health. Nurses generate a unique body of knowledge to meet the complex needs of persons in a variety of health care settings from rural to urban.

Nursing education
Nursing education focuses on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by nurses to practice effectively within a complex and changing environment. It “intentionally fosters use of multiple fields of study, use of wide-ranging knowledge of science, cultures, and society; high level intellectual and practical skills; an active commitment to personal and social responsibility; demonstrated ability to apply learning to complex problems and challenges; and personal engagement as a responsible citizen in a global society” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, College Learning for the New Global Century, 2007, p. 4). The education of nursing students is based on professional, regulatory, and organizational standards.
III. Master of Nursing Graduate Degree: Purpose and Program Objectives

The purpose of the Master of Nursing (MN) graduate degree is to educate nurses to function in advanced leadership roles in nursing and health care. The Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) graduate who has earned a MN degree is an advanced generalist prepared in theory and practice to assume leadership positions in meeting the health care needs of individuals, families and communities.

The graduate who earns the MN degree from Montana State University is prepared to:

1. Effect change through advocacy for the client, interdisciplinary health care team and the profession.
2. Communicate effectively to achieve quality client outcomes and lateral integration of care for a cohort of clients.
3. Pursue knowledge and skills as the CNL role, needs of clients, and the health care delivery system evolve.
4. Delegate and utilize the nursing team resources (human and fiscal) and serve as a leader and partner in the interdisciplinary health care team.
5. Identify clinical and cost outcomes that improve safety, effectiveness, timeliness, efficiency, quality, and the degree to which they are client-centered.
6. Use information systems and technology at the point of care to improve health care outcomes.
7. Participate in systems review to critically evaluate and anticipate risks to client safety to improve quality of client care delivery.
8. Assume accountability for healthcare outcomes for a specific group of clients within a unit or setting recognizing the influence of the meso-system and macro-system on the microsystem.
9. Assimilate and apply research-based information to design, implement and evaluate clients’ plans of care.
10. Synthesize data, information and knowledge to evaluate and achieve optimal client and care environment outcomes.
11. Use appropriate teaching-learning principles and strategies as well as current information, materials and technologies to facilitate the learning for clients, groups, and other health care professionals.
12. Complete and successfully defend a professional project appropriate to the role and scope of the Clinical Nurse Leader.
IV. Doctor of Nursing Practice Graduate Degree: Purpose and Program Objectives

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree focuses on educating baccalaureate (BSN to DNP) and Masters (MN to DNP) prepared nurses to the highest standards of the profession to care for people living in Montana and beyond and lead change in health care systems. The DNP degree is a clinical degree designed to prepare advanced practice nurses as nurse practitioners who focus on either Family/Individual or Psych/Mental Health populations. The purpose of the DNP is to prepare advanced practice nurses who demonstrate clinical expertise, judgment, scholarship, and leadership and provide the highest level of nursing practice in the primary health care setting.

The graduate who earns the DNP degree from Montana State University is prepared to:

1. Integrate nursing science and theory, biophysical, psychosocial, ethical, analytical, and organizational sciences as the foundation for the highest level of nursing practice.
2. Analyze complex health care systems to assess strengths and weaknesses to facilitate organization-wide changes in practice delivery.
3. Synthesize, interpret, and apply knowledge from nursing practice, research, theory, and informatics to evaluate outcomes and sustain evidence-based advanced nursing practice.
4. Advocate for health care policy addressing issues of social justice and equality in the delivery of advanced practice nursing services.
5. Enact leadership and effective communication in inter- and intra-professional collaborator relationships to facilitate and improve outcomes for individuals, populations, and health care systems.
6. Assess epidemiological, financial, sociopolitical, occupational, and organizational forces in the development, implementation, and evaluation of clinical prevention and population health.
7. Integrate professional standards, values, accountability, and ongoing self-reflection into role acquisition as an advanced practice nurse.
8. Influence health outcomes by providing advanced independent comprehensive health care services including health promotion and counseling, health assessment and diagnosis, and disease prevention and management of health and illness of individuals and families throughout the lifespan.
9. Complete and successfully defend a scholarly project appropriate to the role and scope of the doctorally prepared advanced practice registered nurse.
V. Certificate In Nursing Education

The Certificate in Nursing Education prepares registered nurses for teaching in academic settings or practice environments. Outcomes are consistent with the competencies for nurse educators described by the National League for Nursing. See Appendix A for course sequencing.

Certificate objectives:

1. Use assessment strategies to evaluate educational needs.
2. Facilitate learning in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.
3. Implement teaching strategies in classroom, clinical, or online situations.
4. Evaluate course or program outcomes.
5. Participate in curriculum development.
6. Function within an educational environment.

VI. Temporary Academic Advisor

The Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education serves as temporary academic advisor for all newly admitted MN and DNP degree-seeking graduate students until a major advisor/chairperson is identified by each student by the end of their first semester (end of first fall semester). If a major advisor/chairperson is not identified by the end of the first semester, the Associate Dean will assign an advisor to guide you until a major advisor/chairperson is selected.

VII. Major Advisor/Chairperson and Committee

All graduate students at Montana State University are required by the Graduate School to demonstrate scholarship and mastery of course content. The chairperson and committee members have oversight and ultimate responsibility for the scholarship and content mastery components of your degree.

Chairperson
Your major advisor serves as the chairperson of your committee and acts as a channel of communication for you within the college. You are responsible for staying in contact with your major advisor/chairperson during your time in the graduate program. The chairperson is responsible for contracting with you each semester regarding the specific aspects of your MN or DNP Project and your Comprehensive Exam. A negotiated time frame for your timely progression with project and preparation for the comprehensive exam should be constructed and a written contract or plan is recommended. The contract can be altered by mutual consent. The chairperson will submit a letter grade each semester that you are registered for course # NSRG 575 (MN degree) or NRSG 675 (DNP degree), which is your Project work.

Committee Members
You and your major advisor/chair negotiate selection of committee members. All faculty
members in the College of Nursing who have earned masters or doctoral degrees are available to participate on project committees whether or not they teach in the graduate program. Committee membership should reflect knowledge in project methodology, knowledge in the specific content area of your project, and/or expertise in writing.

Non-tenure track faculty members and community members may participate as chairs or committee members by following the approval process. The chair obtains an Activity Insight vitae or non-MSU resume to verify the individual’s credentials. The chair then writes two or three sentences describing the individual’s general qualifications, one or two sentences describing the student’s proposed project topic, and one or two sentences describing how the individual’s expertise matches the proposed topic. All of this information is sent electronically as one package by the chair to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education. The Associate Dean reviews all materials, approves committee qualifications, and writes a letter of recommendation for each non-tenure track and/or community member on the committee (see also section VIII). Table 1 summarizes requirements for committee membership and documentation.

**Student Responsibilities**

As a MN or DNP degree-seeking student, you must be responsive to the direction of your chairperson and committee members regarding all matters of content and quality of your project and formal paper. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to know what is required by the College of Nursing and Graduate School and to follow the established deadlines.
Table 1. Summary of Committee Requirements and Documentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee membership</th>
<th>4 total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>one (1) chairperson and at least three (3) members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 committee members, including chairperson, must be from the College of Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson qualifications</td>
<td>faculty member in the College of Nursing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>doctorate (PhD, EdD, and/or DNP).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tenure/tenure track status not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee member</td>
<td>faculty member in the College of Nursing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>faculty from outside the college or qualified professional from outside MSU may be included on committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation for non-tenure track committee chairs, non-tenure track committee members, and professional/community committee members</td>
<td>information is gathered by chair and sent electronically as one package to Associate Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for non-tenure track committee chairs and members:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- current curriculum vitae (generated from Activity Insight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- two or three sentences describing the proposed member’s general qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- one or two sentences describing the student’s proposed project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- one or two sentences describing how the chair and/or member’s expertise matches the topic of the proposed project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for professional members from outside MSU:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- non-MSU vitae/resume (Form 2, Appendix D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- two or three sentences describing the proposed member’s general qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- one or two sentences describing the student’s proposed project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- one or two sentences describing how the professional member’s expertise matches the topic of the proposed project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VIII. Formalizing Graduate Program of Study, Chairperson, and Committee

The Graduate Program of Study & Committee form (Form 1, Appendix D) makes you “official” as a degree-seeking graduate student at Montana State University. Form 1 must be on file with the Graduate School by the end of the second (MN degree) or third (DNP degree) active semester.

Form 1 formalizes the coursework that is approved to meet the minimum requirements for the MN or DNP degree at Montana State University, signifies all requirements for the MN or DNP degree, and serves to establish officially your chairperson and committee members. The information on Form 1 will be compared to your transcript at the end of your program. Satisfactory completion of all requirements will result in conferring of the degree.

Form 1 must be signed by the committee chair, all members of the committee, and you (the student). The committee chair must initial at the bottom of pages 2 and 3, assure that subtotals and total credits are indicated and accurate, and mark College of Nursing degree requirements (MN degree – oral comprehensive exam and defense of thesis/project); DNP degree – written comprehensive exam, oral comprehensive exam, and defense of dissertation/project. Once everything is in order (letters of recommendation are written, cv/resume forms are current and included as described in section VII), the Associate Dean signs Form 1 and forwards the entire package to the Graduate School for review and final approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Committee Changes
Students have the right to change members of their committee. In the event that changes occur in committee membership, revisions are submitted to the College of Nursing using the Graduate Committee Revision form (form available at http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html). Both the original and revised committee sections must be filled out with the person(s) being removed and the one(s) being added to the committee. Documentation listed in Table I must be followed for any new non-tenure track or community members added to the committee. Members being added and removed must initial next to their name to indicate their concurrence. An explanation for the revision(s) must be included. Once complete the Revision form and supporting documents (if applicable) are sent to the college’s Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education for letter/s of recommendation, signature of approval, and delivery to the Graduate School for final approval.

IX. Qualifying Exam

The College of Nursing does not require a qualifying exam for the MN or DNP degrees.

X. Scholarship - Project Proposal

Students seeking the MN degree are required to complete a Professional Project (course #: NRSG 575, Graduate School Plan B, 4 credits maximum). Students seeking a DNP degree are required to complete a DNP Scholarly Project (course #: NRSG 675, Graduate School Plan B, 9 credits maximum).
The College of Nursing requires you to propose, present, and explain the details of your Professional Project (MN degree) or DNP Scholarly Project (DNP degree) to your committee before it is submitted to the IRB and implemented in a clinical setting.

The project proposal informs committee members about your project and allows them to make suggestions to strengthen the project. Your chairperson will guide the project proposal, format, and timeline for presentation to the committee. When satisfied, the chairperson and committee members sign the Professional (MN) and Scholarly (DNP) Project Proposal Approval Form (Form 3, Appendix D), which may include modifications to the project. The signed form is forwarded to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education for signature and filing. The project proposal is attended by student and committee only – video conference is not required.

**XI. Scholarship - Project Defense**

According to Graduate School policy, two-thirds (2/3) of the course work required for the MN or DNP degree must be completed prior to defending the Professional Project (MN degree) or Scholarly Project (DNP degree). Students must be registered for at least 3 credits during the semester of the defense.

MN degree-seeking students should be ready to defend their Professional Project during their last fall semester in the graduate program. DNP students should be ready to defend their DNP Scholarly Project during their last fall semester in the graduate program. The chairperson decides when your project is ready for the defense. The defense is conducted only when the final draft of the project is complete (as determined by the chair).

The project defense is considered an exam. The project is defended by you in front of your committee. It is a formal presentation that is open to all faculty and graduate students. Your formal presentation should describe key components of your project. You should consult with the committee chairperson to determine format and stylistic issues of the presentation. The use of visual aids is encouraged. The time allotted for the defense is 2 hours: 30 minutes for the presentation followed by 30 minutes for audience questions. The remaining time will include committee questions without audience plus the committee deliberation. The committee may formulate specific questions to ask the student or the committee may choose a more spontaneous format for questions.

Per Graduate School policy (http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_general.html#degreq_general_video), the student, committee chairperson, and committee members must attend the project defense in person or via videoconference from a College of Nursing campus (Billings, Bozeman, Great Fall, Kalispell, Missoula). Graduate committee members are not allowed to attend project defenses via teleconference.

**Scheduling**
The committee chairperson, committee, and student decide on a date that is at least 10
business days in advance of the defense to assure scheduling efficiency and accommodate IT staff workflow. Once a mutually acceptable date is determined, the chairperson schedules the defense using the CON Graduate Program Video Conference Event Request Form found on the Resources for Faculty & Staff page of the college website (link: http://www.montana.edu/nursing/facstaff/index.html).

The Associate Dean’s office will announce the defense presentation date, time, locations, title of the MN Professional Project or DNP Scholarly Project, chairperson’s name, graduate student’s name, and committee members to all college graduate students and faculty. The defense also will be posted on the Graduate School and MSU calendars by the Associate Dean’s office. All are welcome to attend.

**Grading**
The student is excused from the room while the committee determines adequacy of the student’s presentation and responses to questions. A majority of the committee members must deem the presentation and responses to be adequate for a judgment of “pass.”

At the time of the examination/defense, the Report on Qualifying Exam/Comprehensive Exam/Thesis Defense **Masters Students Only** (Form 4, Appendix D) or Report on Qualifying Exam/Comprehensive Exam/Dissertation Defense **Doctoral Students Only** (Form 4, Appendix D) must be completed and signed by all committee members. The completed form will be sent to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education for signature and forwarded to the Graduate School. The Graduate School allows 5 business days after the project defense is held to receive the signed form. Refer to the Graduate School website for more details (link: www.montana.edu/gradschool/).

Please refer to the Graduate School policy for Defense of Thesis (which applies to MN Professional Projects) or Dissertation (which applies to DNP Scholarly Projects).

**Final Approval of Project**
The chairperson has the responsibility of final review of the scholarly paper before it is submitted to the Graduate School. Final acceptance or rejection of the scholarly paper is the responsibility of the Dean of the Graduate School.

Scholarly papers from the College of Nursing graduate students are subjected to rigorous standards and must be submitted electronically to the Graduate School by the published deadline before graduation. Refer to the Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) website for further information (http://www.montana.edu/etd/). The Certificate of Approval (Form 5, Appendix D) is used for archiving the ETD with the MSU library. The Graduate School prefers that this form be typed prior to committee signatures.

Note: The ETD Certificate of Approval Form (Form 5, Appendix D) requires original signatures. The Graduate School will accept more than one copy of the ETD Certificate of Approval form if more than one copy is needed to obtain original signatures in a timely manner. Students must factor in the extra time needed to circulate this document prior to the deadline, which is published on the Graduate School website. For detailed information
regarding ETD preparation, formatting, submissions, including a checklist, go to http://www.montana.edu/etd/.

XII. Mastery of Content - Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam assures that the student has attained sufficient mastery of course content in the approved program of study, including sufficient knowledge and clinical expertise. The chairperson and committee members have oversight and ultimate responsibility for the comprehensive exam.

MN degree-seeking students are required to take and pass an oral comprehensive exam that is focused on the Graduate Program Objectives (see section III) and the Essentials of Master’s Education in Nursing (American Association of Colleges of Nursing). DNP degree-seeking students are required to take and pass a written and oral comprehensive exam focused on the DNP Graduate Program Objectives (see section IV) and The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (American Association of Colleges of Nursing).

Appendix B contains the Comprehensive Exam Procedure for the MN degree. Appendix C contains the Comprehensive Exam Procedure for the DNP degree.

Per Graduate School policy,
Two-thirds (2/3) of the course work required for the MN or DNP degree must be completed prior to sitting for the comprehensive exam and students must be registered for at least 3 credits during the semester that they take the comprehensive exam.

Per Graduate School policy, (http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_general.html#degreq_general_video), the student, committee chairperson, and committee members must attend the oral portion of the comprehensive exam in person or via videoconference from a College of Nursing campus (Billings, Bozeman, Great Fall, Kalispell, Missoula). Graduate committee members are not allowed to attend exams or defenses via teleconference.

Scheduling
The committee chairperson, committee, and student decide on a date that is at least 10 business days in advance of the oral comprehensive exam to assure scheduling efficiency and accommodate IT staff workflow. Once a mutually acceptable date is determined, the chairperson schedules the defense using the CON Graduate Program Video Conference Event Request Form found on the Resources for Faculty & Staff page of the college website (link: http://www.montana.edu/nursing/facstaff/index.html). The comprehensive exam is attended by student and committee only.

At the time of the oral examination, the Report on Qualifying Exam/Comprehensive Exam/Thesis Defense **Masters Students Only** (Form 4, Appendix D) or Report on Qualifying Exam/Comprehensive Exam/Dissertation Defense **Doctoral Students Only** (Form 4, Appendix D) must be completed and signed by all committee members. The completed form is sent to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education for
signature and forwarded to the Graduate School. The Graduate School allows 5 business days after the project defense is held to receive the signed form. Refer to the Graduate School website for more details (link: www.montana.edu/gradschool/).

XIII. Overall Progression in the Nursing Graduate Program

MN degree-seeking students follow the program of study for the CNL focus. DNP degree-seeking students select either a 3-yr or 4-yr program of study. All programs of study have been designed to facilitate logical progression through the curriculum of choice and many courses have pre- or co-requisites to maintain proper sequence. All courses, course sequences, and programs of study have been approved by the general faculty of the College of Nursing.

Important forms are required by the Graduate School and the College of Nursing to document your progression through the graduate program (Appendix D). Signatures of chair and committee members signify approval of your Program of Study (Form 1), approval of your proposed project topic and plan (Form 3), passing of your Master’s or Doctoral Project Defense (Form 4), passing of your Master’s or Doctoral Comprehensive Exam (Form 4), and electronic submission of the project formal paper (Form 5).

The most up-to-date forms should be used from the Graduate School (http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html) and College of Nursing (http://www.montana.edu/nursing/student/graduate.html) websites.

Members of the MSU College of Nursing faculty are available in person, by phone, or by e-mail to guide you through your Program of Study (coursework) and Professional (MN) or Scholarly (DNP) Project. Faculty teaching in the graduate program can be accessed during the fall, spring, and summer semesters when school is in session. Faculty chairs are available during fall and spring semesters when you are registered for NRSG 575 (MN) or NRSG 675 (DNP) credits.

XIV. Grades and Grading

To earn a graduate degree from MSU, a student must have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of B (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher in the major and elective areas in order to graduate. Any course listed on the Program of Study in which a grade lower than C (a C- is not acceptable) must be repeated.

Incomplete ("I") grades must be made up no later than the end of the next semester that the student is in attendance (other than summer semester). "I" grades not made up within the prescribed time will lapse into "F" grades. Once a course listed on the Program of Study has been taken it may not be removed from the Program of Study.

All required nursing courses, nursing education elective courses and NRSG 575 or NRSG 675 credits receive a letter grade. This information is important to know as it can impact one’s cumulative GPA.
Good Standing
The student has a cumulative and semester GPA of 3.0 or higher and has met the provisions of admission as stated in The Graduate School admission letter, the student is in good standing.

College Probation
http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/cat_academic_prob.html
A student will be placed on College Probation if the semester GPA falls below a 3.0, even though the cumulative GPA remains above a 3.0.

University Probation
http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/cat_academic_prob.html
A student may be placed on University Probation if:
- The semester GPA and cumulative GPA or graduate program GPA falls below a 3.0.
- The student fails to successfully complete a majority of the courses each semester with a grade of B or better.
- The student does not meet the Graduate School or college provisions of admission (e.g. statistics requirement).

Suspension
A student with a cumulative or program GPA below a 3.0 after University Probation status, who did not meet the provisions of admission, who has failed to make satisfactory progress toward their degree, or who did not maintain a cumulative or program GPA for two (not necessarily consecutive) semesters may be suspended from the College of Nursing graduate degree program and the Graduate School. Students admitted on a provisional basis may be suspended without a probationary period if the provision of admission has not been met.

Graduate Student Academic Appeals
Appeals by graduate students seeking exceptions from established University academic policies such as admission, retention, or graduation requirements must be made in writing by the student. Appeals must include a letter from the student and approvals (signature and/or letter) from the major advisor/chair and Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education prior to submission to the Graduate School. In instances where the advisor and/or Associate Dean choose not to endorse the request, this must be noted and the student may then forward the appeal directly to the Graduate School.

Appeal letters should include the following:
1. State in writing, the policy or decision that is being appealed
2. Note the reasons you believe the decision should be changed or policy be waived
3. Include your major advisor/chair’s and Associate Dean's approval statements or signatures with the appeal.

Graduate Student Academic Grievance Procedure
A copy of the current academic grievance procedures is available upon request from the Graduate School, 9 Montana Hall.
www2.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/student_conduct_code.htm
XV. Guidelines For Tracking Unsatisfactory Academic Progress
In The Graduate Nursing Program

1. The individual course instructor notifies the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education, in writing, in the event of problems, concerns, or issues relevant to graduate student progression. These concerns may include, but are not limited to, such things as health issues, scheduling problems (including excessive working outside of school), deficits in progress, and writing and/or verbal skill difficulties. Concerns related to Family/Individual or Psych/Mental Health clinical course progress will be referred to the appropriate DNP Clinical Coordinator as well as the Associate Dean.

2. The Associate Dean and/or the DNP Clinical Coordinators will maintain tracking records and follow progress in the noted areas.

3. The Associate Dean will contact the faculty major advisor/chairperson and/or others as necessary (for example, Dean, Clinical Coordinator) to share the profile (from any or all courses) that best represents the faculty concerns about the individual student and to determine a plan for resolution with the student.

For further information, refer to College of Nursing Policy D-6 Clinical Site Visits and Performance in Required Graduate Clinical Nursing Courses and Policy D-8 Denial of Graduate Student Access to Clinical Experiences at http://www.montana.edu/nursing/facstaff/policies.html.

XVI. Graduation and MSU Commencement

The Master of Nursing (MN) degree or Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree will be conferred at the completion of all requirements indicated on each student’s Program of Study including passing the Comprehensive Exam and Project Defense.

The chairperson signs the student’s Application for Advanced Degree (Graduate School form – http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html) near the beginning of the semester in which the student expects to complete the degree requirements. The deadline for filing the application plus other important Graduate School dates are provided on the Dates & Deadlines page (link: http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/cat_dates-dead.html).

The date on the diploma will coincide with the end of the semester in which the MN or DNP degree is granted. Students who have completed the degree requirements and who have confirmation from their chairperson that they will complete all degree requirements may attend the University Commencement (held in May or December). Graduates who attend the MSU Commencement must purchase academic robes, hoods, and caps through the MSU Bookstore. It is the student's responsibility to contact the MSU Bookstore for information on ordering academic regalia (usually available the first week of February for spring commencement or the first week of September for fall commencement). Students must complete all financial obligations to the University prior to the degree award.
XVII. Graduate Student Resources

The MSU home page (www.montana.edu) includes an A-Z Index tab to quickly find information and resources such as Renne Library http://www.lib.montana.edu/, Information Technology Center (computer assistance) http://www.montana.edu/wwwitc/, residency information, academic calendar and student health service. Other universities and MSU campuses (University of Montana, MSU Billings) may have similar resources available (student health clinic, library facilities). Keep in mind; however, you are a MSU student regardless of your geographical location.

Students are encouraged to become familiar with the Graduate School’s website. For masters and doctoral degree requirements, graduation requirements, dates and deadlines, procedures and forms, refer to the Graduate School at http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/.

Course descriptions are accessible online at http://www.montana.edu/wwwcat/courses/courses2.html.

Teleconference Use and Etiquette
Course instructors may elect to use teleconference for graduate intensives. To make the teleconference learning environment effective and pleasant, a few “rules of etiquette” are suggested:

- Call in on time – when people arrive late, it disrupts the class and the learning environment.
- Mute your microphone unless you are ready to speak and contribute to class discussion – it is disruptive to the class to hear papers shuffling, dogs barking, children crying, etc. If your phone does not have a “mute” function, make sure you are on the phone in a quiet location.
- Identify yourself when you are ready to participate in a discussion so that everyone knows who is speaking – remember that the teleconference system will only allow one person to speak at a time.
- Be sure to “ unmute” the microphone when speaking.
- Do not leave before class ends unless the class is on a break – it is disruptive to the class for students to be leaving and returning in the middle of class. If the class is on a break, be sure to come back on time to avoid disruption.

Your courtesy in teleconference classes is much appreciated by faculty and classmates.

Fax and Photocopy Use
The following guidelines have been established:
- College of Nursing faxes may be sent in response to a faculty member's specific request.
- Faxes should be no more than five pages.
- Faxes must be sent through local campus Administrative Assistants.
- Students are not allowed access to the College’s photocopy machines.
NOTE: Faxes that do not meet the guidelines listed above should be sent through an outside source (for example, Kinko’s).
Appendix A
Certificate in Nursing Education
Elective Coursework

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 1 - Summer</th>
<th>Credits &amp; Format</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NRSG 503 Curriculum Development</td>
<td>3 lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRSG 504 Assessment and Evaluation of Education</td>
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<td><strong>Total Semester Credits</strong></td>
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<th>Credits &amp; Format</th>
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<th>Credits &amp; Format</th>
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<td>or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRSG 504 Assessment and Evaluation of Education</td>
<td>3 lecture</td>
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<td><strong>Total Semester Credits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective Nursing Credits*</td>
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</table>

**Total Credits to Earn Certificate**        **10-14**

♦ NRSG 503 and NRSG 504 are offered in alternate summer semesters: NRSG 504 is offered in odd years and NRSG 503 is offered in even years.

♦ *NRSG 574 Teaching Practicum is a 1-4 variable credit elective clinical practicum that can be taken any semester. Prerequisites are NRSG 504 or Consent of Instructor.
Appendix B

Masters of Nursing Degree
Oral Comprehensive Exam Procedure

The Oral Comprehensive Examination is required for the Masters of Nursing degree and is the major academic examination of masters-level study that assures the student has attained sufficient mastery of the discipline. The Oral Comprehensive Exam will be generated from the MN curriculum (MN Essentials and MN Graduate Program Objectives).

Students and faculty are responsible for following Masters Degree Graduate School policies (link: http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_masters.html) and the procedures outlined below that refer specifically to the College of Nursing.

Scheduling
MN degree-seeking students may take the Oral Comprehensive Exam at the same time as the defense of their MN Professional Project during the last semester of coursework. All committee members participate in the Oral Comprehensive Exam and Project Defense.

Students should discuss the Comprehensive Exam with their major advisor/chair throughout their Program of Study. Prior to scheduling, the major advisor/chairperson ensures via transcript review that: 1) 2/3s of student’s coursework as outlined on the Program of Study is completed at a satisfactory level and 2) no incomplete courses from prior semesters remain.

Once the major advisor/chairperson has ascertained that the student is “ready” to take the Oral Comprehensive Examination and defend the MN Professional Project, the major advisor/chairperson and student meet to organize a potential timeline for the exam and defense. The date for the exam and defense is set far enough in advance to give the student time to systematically and thoroughly review key content and for the chairperson and committee members to read and critique the final draft of the formal project paper as well as prepare exam questions.

The Graduate School policy on Video Conferencing is followed: http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_general.html#degreq_general_video.

College of Nursing chair and committee members attend the Oral Exam at their workplace (chairperson works with IT to accommodate outside committee members if necessary).

The chairperson schedules the Oral Exam no less than 10 business days in advance of the exam to assure scheduling efficiency and accommodate college IT staff workflow. The exam is scheduled using the CON Graduate Program Video Conference Event Request Form found on the Resources for Faculty & Staff page of the college website (link: http://www.montana.edu/nursing/facstaff/index.html) (no telephone connections are allowed).

Administering the Oral Exam
The Oral Exam will be administered for one hour of the two hour exam/defense block of time. The major advisor/chairperson will collect and organize the Oral Comprehensive Exam
questions from all committee members into one document prior to the exam/defense. Each member of the committee will have an opportunity to ask questions.

**Grading of the Comprehensive Exam/Defense**
Grading of the comprehensive exam will follow Graduate School policy.

Per Graduate School policy results of the Comprehensive Exam/Defense are submitted in writing to the student and the Associate Dean’s office. The Graduate School shall receive the results from the Associate Dean’s office no later than five (5) business days after the Oral Exam/Defense are held.  
(http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_masters.html#degreq_mast_comp)
Appendix C

Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree
Comprehensive Exam Procedure

Preparation
Students discuss the Comprehensive Exam with their chairperson throughout their Program of Study. During the semester prior to the last semester of course work, the chairperson ensures via transcript review that: 1) 2/3s of student’s DNP coursework as outlined on the Program of Study is completed at a satisfactory level and 2) no incomplete courses from prior semesters remain. Students review all course content systematically and thoroughly. The chairperson then schedules the Comprehensive Exam.

Scheduling
The Comprehensive Exam is scheduled during the last semester of coursework and is administered separate from the Project Defense. All committee members participate in the Comprehensive Exam.

The chairperson and student determine dates for the exam (one (1) week for the Written portion; two (2) hours for the Oral portion; the Oral Exam occurs within three (3) weeks of completing the Written portion). The start date for the exam is set far enough in advance to give the chairperson and committee members adequate time to prepare written exam questions.

The chairperson informs the Graduate Program Assistant (Kate Hallowell) of exam dates.

The chairperson schedules the Oral Exam no less than 10 business days in advance of the exam to assure scheduling efficiency and accommodate college IT staff workflow. The exam is scheduled using the CON Graduate Program Video Conference Event Request Form found on the Resources for Faculty & Staff page of the college website (link: http://www.montana.edu/nursing/facstaff/index.html).

The Graduate School policy on Video Conferencing is followed: http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_general.html#degreq_general_video. College of Nursing faculty attend the Oral Exam at their workplace (chairperson works with IT to accommodate outside committee members if necessary).

Administering the Written Exam
The office of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education administers the written exam. The Associate Dean’s signature on the Graduate School Comprehensive Exam form certifies that the comprehensive exam has been administered fairly.

The chairperson assembles the exam questions from all committee members into one document.

The chairperson forwards the student name and exam questions to the Graduate Program Assistant (Kate Hallowell) no later than three (3) business days before the start date of the
written exam.

The student receives the exam questions from the Associate Dean’s office (Kate Hallowell) Monday morning between 08:30 and 09:00 AM (Mountain Time) on the exam start date. Five (5) days later (Friday of the exam week), the student returns their answers to the Associate Dean’s office (Kate Hallowell) by 3:00 PM (Mountain Time).

The Associate Dean’s office (Kate Hallowell) emails a copy of the entire, completed exam to all committee members between 3:00 and 4:00 PM (Mountain Time) on Friday of the exam week.

**Administering the Oral Exam**

Committee members provide critique for their portion of the Written Exam to the committee chair within five (5) business days after the written exam is complete. Committee chair collects critiques (provided electronically or hand-critiqued scanned into a pdf document), compiles critique into a single document, and sends to the student no later than 5:00 PM (Mountain Time) five (5) business days after the written exam is complete. The student may contact chairperson and/or committee members after receiving written critiques.

Based on feedback from the chairperson and committee members, the student prepares for the Oral Exam. The Oral Exam requires the student to clarify, strengthen, or augment the responses from the written exam. Each member of the committee will have an opportunity to ask questions. The student should answer questions and then be excused so the committee can deliberate and decide pass or fail. The student should then be invited back into the room and informed of the decision verbally. The Graduate School form then will be filled out, signed by all committee members, and delivered to the Associate Dean’s office for signature and delivery to the Graduate School (within 5 days of oral exam).

**Grading of the Comprehensive Exam**

Grading of the comprehensive exam will follow Graduate School policy.

Per Graduate School policy results of the Comprehensive Exam are submitted in writing to the student and the Associate Dean’s office. The Graduate School shall receive the results from the Associate Dean’s office no later than five (5) business days after the Oral Exam is held. 
(http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_doctoral.html#degreq_doc_comp)
Appendix D

Sequence of Required Forms

- **Form 1:** Graduate Program of Study & Committee Form and Instructions (Graduate School form - [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html). This form must be on file at the Graduate School by the end of the second (MN degree) or third (DNP degree) semester that you have registered for classes.

- **Form 2:** Non-MSU Committee Membership CV/Resume (College of Nursing form - [http://www.montana.edu/nursing/student/graduate.html](http://www.montana.edu/nursing/student/graduate.html))

- **Form 3:** Professional (MN) and Scholarly (DNP) Project Proposal Approval Form (College of Nursing form – [http://www.montana.edu/nursing/student/graduate.html](http://www.montana.edu/nursing/student/graduate.html)). This form is to be completed and signed by your committee at your proposal meeting and submitted before you submit to IRB and actually begin your project.

- **Form 4:** Report on Qualifying Exam/Comprehensive Exam/Dissertation Defense **Masters Students Only** or **Doctoral Students Only** (Graduate School form – [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html)). Must be filed in the Graduate School within 5 business days of the exam or defense.

- **Form 5:** Certificate of Approval Form for Theses and Dissertations - (Graduate School form – [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html)) - electronic submission/ETDs of project papers is required by the College of Nursing.