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I. INTRODUCTION

The MSU College of Nursing offers a Master of Nursing (MN) degree that emphasizes rural nursing and rural health care. The MN degree was first offered at MSU in 1957. The program is recognized nationally for leadership in the field of rural nursing and is fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

The options available in the MN degree program are Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL), Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), and Family Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (FPMHNP). A Certificate in Nursing Education also can be earned while working on the MN degree.

Faculty teaching in the MN degree program can be accessed during the academic year at any of the College's campuses located in Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls or Missoula. The main campus of Montana State University (MSU) in Bozeman includes extensive library facilities and access to the full array of courses and research opportunities available through all departments at MSU. Students access all graduate courses through Desire2Learn (MSU’s computer software for distance delivery of courses), teleconference, and/or interactive video. Students must be prepared to travel to Bozeman at the beginning of each fall semester for face-to-face classes. A one-day orientation for new graduate students is held in the fall in Bozeman.

The College of Nursing (CON) enrolls about 800 undergraduate and approximately 90 to 95 graduate students. Students work under the supervision of more than 80 faculty. The administrative offices of the College are located in Bozeman. The Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education has general responsibility for the graduate program and is located in Bozeman. Each campus has a Campus Director. The Campus Directors act as temporary advisors for graduate students until a permanent faculty advisor is identified, usually during the student’s first semester. Faculty advisors are available in person, by phone, or by e-mail to guide students through their Program of Study and thesis or professional project.

Students should bear in mind that each lecture credit requires one hour of class time and each clinical laboratory credit requires three hours of practicum each week. In addition, students should plan time for class preparation and assignments, library work, and clinical experiences including preparation and travel to rural sites. Clinical laboratory experiences are arranged by students on an individual basis and supervised by clinical faculty.

The MSU College of Nursing is enthusiastic about its rural MN options. Graduates are readily employable in a variety of nursing and health care settings. The MN degree program provides students with a strong base for future doctoral study, if desired.
II. GRADUATE PROGRAM: PURPOSE AND TERMINAL OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the graduate nursing program is to educate baccalaureate prepared nurses to function in advanced roles in nursing. The graduate with a Master of Nursing (MN) is prepared in theory, research and practice to assume leadership positions in meeting the health care needs of rural individuals, families and communities.

The graduate of the program is prepared to:

1. Manage health of individuals, families, and/or communities in environments characterized by limited health resources.
2. Design nursing care based on theory and research for individuals, families and communities in rural areas.
3. Provide nursing leadership in the evolution and evaluation of rural health care systems.
4. Contribute to the development of nursing knowledge, practice, and health care delivery in rural areas.
5. Participate in the nursing research process which expands nursing knowledge, improves nursing care and directs health policy and planning.

III. CERTIFICATE IN NURSING EDUCATION

The Certificate in Nursing Education is designed for nurses who seek professional advancement and preparation for teaching nursing students. See Appendix A for course sequencing.

IV. 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 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 master’s degree requirements, graduation requirements, dates and deadlines, procedures and forms, refer to the Graduate School’s website at http://www.montana.edu/wwwdg/.

Course descriptions are accessible online at http://www.montana.edu/wwwcat/courses/courses2.html.
Fax and Photocopy Use
The following guidelines have been established for fax use.

- 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.

NOTE: Faxes that do not meet the guidelines listed above should be sent through an outside source (for example, Kinko's). Campus Directors are given the discretion to determine if faxes are appropriate.

Students are not allowed access to the College’s photocopy machines.

Videoconference and Teleconference Reservations
All reservations (committee meetings, thesis/professional paper defense scheduling) are made through the College of Nursing Information Technology Specialist. For reservations, please use the videoconference/teleconference reservation form available at [http://www.montana.edu/nursing/facstaff/videotcrequest.htm](http://www.montana.edu/nursing/facstaff/videotcrequest.htm). Limited use of the teleconference equipment will be made available to students who are responding to a specific request made by a faculty member.

Teleconference Use and Etiquette
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.
V. SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS
FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE, PROGRAM OF STUDY,
THESIS, PROFESSIONAL PROJECT, AND COMMITTEE

Ultimately, it is the student’s responsibility to know what is required by the Graduate School and to follow the established deadlines. Links to important forms required by the College of Nursing and the Graduate School are listed in Appendix B. Detailed information is available at http://www.montana.edu/wwwdg/cat_for_masters_stud.html.

The Graduate Program of Study and Committee Form (Form 1, Appendix B) must be signed by the student and all members of the student’s committee signifying committee approval of the student’s Program of Study. The form is sent to and signed by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education in the College of Nursing (Bozeman) for signature, and finally routed to the Graduate School. The form must be completed and on file with the Graduate School by the end of the second semester.

All students seeking a Master of Nursing degree are required to complete:

- Thesis (NRSG 590) - Plan A, 10 credits minimum (Appendix C) or
- Professional project (NRSG 575) - Plan B, 6 credits maximum. (Appendix D)

For the thesis option (Plan A) register for NRSG 590 credits – graded Pass/Fail (P/F). For the professional project option (Plan B) register for NRSG 575 credits – graded with a letter grade (A, B, C, etc).

Important Note: Students who initially select the thesis option (NRSG 590) may switch to the professional paper option (NRSG 575). However, students who initially select the professional paper option (NRSG 575) may not switch to a thesis option (NRSG 590).

The graduate student and the student’s faculty academic advisor negotiate selection of the student’s committee chair and members. Each committee consists of at least three members (two members must be from the College of Nursing). The chair must be tenured or on tenure track in the College of Nursing. Committee membership collectively should reflect knowledge in research methodology, knowledge in the specific content area, and expertise in writing. All College of Nursing faculty are expected to participate on thesis or project committees whether or not they teach in the graduate program. Community members are encouraged to participate in committees. The community member must provide a vita or resume which is subject to College of Nursing review. The Non-MSU Resume Form is available at http://www.montana.edu/nursing/student/graduate.php.
Summary of NRSG 590 Thesis versus NRSG 575 Professional Project

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<tr>
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<th>NRSG 590 Thesis</th>
<th>NRSG 575 Professional Project</th>
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<td>Minimum credits</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Maximum credits: 6</td>
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<td>Grading: Pass/Fail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can change to NRSG</td>
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<td>May work with non-research</td>
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<td>to NRSG 590</td>
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<td>committee from the</td>
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<td>the College of Nursing</td>
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<td>College of Nursing</td>
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<td>Professionals from outside the College of Nursing or University. For example, a practicing FNP, faculty from another department, or others may serve on committees (vita required with Graduate Program of Study and Committee Form (Form 1, Appendix B)</td>
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<td>who are outside the</td>
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<td>Vita required from committee members who are outside the University system</td>
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<tr>
<td>University system</td>
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Committee Chairperson and Member Responsibilities

The chairperson and committee members sign off on and give approval for the student’s topic before the student performs the study (Thesis and Professional Project Proposal Approval Form 2, Appendix B).

The chairperson is responsible for guidance and arbitration on all matters of content and format in the thesis or professional paper. This is done in consultation with the student and committee members. The chairperson and the committee members have primary responsibility for matters of the document content and quality.

The chairperson is responsible for contracting with the student each semester regarding the specific aspects of thesis/professional paper work to be completed. A negotiated time frame for the overall document should be constructed. A written contract or plan is recommended. The contract can be altered by mutual consent. The chairperson will submit a grade each semester (pass/fail for NRSG 590 or letter grade for NRSG 575) for the supervised work.

The chairperson signs the student’s Application for Advanced Degree (Form 3, Appendix B). The deadline for filing the application is on (or before) the third Friday of the semester in
which the student expects to complete the degree requirements. Refer to the online Graduate Dates and Deadlines at http://www.montana.edu/wwwdg/cat_dates&dead.html. The committee approves the defense of the thesis/paper when it is completed (Form 4, Appendix B).

Committee members are responsible for providing guidance to the student in their area of expertise as it relates to the thesis or professional paper. The committee is responsible for helping the student identify format errors, particularly with regard to APA editorial standards. The chairperson has the responsibility of final review before it is signed by the Dean of the College of Nursing (Form 6, Appendix B) and submitted to the Graduate School. Final acceptance or rejection of the thesis or professional paper, however, is the responsibility of the Vice Provost of Graduate Education. Professional papers are subjected to the same rigorous standards as a thesis and are submitted electronically to the Graduate School.

Committee Changes
In the event of committee changes, revisions are submitted to the College of Nursing using a Graduate Committee Revision form. 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 initialing next to their name indicating their concurrence. An explanation for the revision(s) must be included. The Revision form is then sent to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education (College of Nursing, Bozeman) for signature and finally routed to the Graduate School. The form is available at http://www.montana.edu/wwwdg/forms.html.

Student Responsibilities
Students must be responsive to the direction of the chairperson and committee members regarding all matters of content and quality of the thesis or professional paper.

The student is responsible for all format requirements and corrections. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and meet all deadlines with regard to thesis or professional paper review and approval.

The Graduate School requires all students to submit an electronic version of their thesis or professional paper (ETD). The Certificate of Approval (Form 5, Appendix B) is used for archiving your ETD with the MSU library and requires original committee signatures. The Graduate School prefers that this form be typed prior to committee signatures. The form is available at http://www.montana.edu/wwwdg/forms.html.

Note: the Graduate School will accept more than one copy of this Certificate of Approval form if more than one copy is needed to obtain original signatures in a timely manner. For detailed information regarding ETD preparation, formatting, submissions, including a checklist, see http://www.montana.edu/etd/.
VI. ORAL DEFENSE OF THESIS/PAPER

The Graduate School and the College of Nursing require that students successfully defend their thesis or professional paper or project as a requirement for graduation. The primary purpose of the defense of the thesis/paper is demonstration of scholarship by the graduate student.

It is advisable to complete the Thesis/Project Defense before the Graduate School deadline for electronic submission to insure enough time for any last minute revisions if required by the Committee. Exact deadline dates vary by semester and should be checked ahead of time.

Oral Defense of Thesis/Paper or Project

The student must be registered for a minimum of three credits in the term in which the thesis/paper defense takes place. The thesis/paper or project defense is conducted only when the final draft copy of the thesis/paper or project, in its entirety, is complete. The thesis/paper or project defense is a formal presentation open to all faculty and graduate students.

The thesis/paper defense must be scheduled by the student before the end of the term in which the student completes graduate work. In consultation with the Committee chairperson, the student schedules the date of the defense with the Information Technology Coordinator and notifies the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education’s office of the presentation title, date, time, and delivery mode. This information is announced to all graduate students and faculty.

The formal presentation by the student describes key components of the thesis/paper. The student consults with the committee chairperson to determine format and stylistic issues of the presentation. The use of audio-visual aids is encouraged. The time allotted for the defense is one hour: 20-30 minutes for the presentation and 30 minutes for committee and audience questions. The committee may formulate specific questions to ask the student or the committee may choose a more spontaneous format in questions.

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

For students who do not pass the thesis/paper defense, a record of the questions posed, brief notes capturing the essence of the student’s response and a record of the committee vote is prepared and forwarded by the Chair to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education within one week of the examination. Students who do not pass may repeat the defense once with a different set of questions after two months have elapsed. Failure to pass a second defense will result in the student’s termination from the graduate nursing program.

At the time of the examination, the Report on Comprehensive Exams/Thesis Defense (Form 4, Appendix B) must be completed and signed by all Committee members. The completed Report form will be sent to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education for signature and forwarded to the Graduate School.
**Final Approval of Thesis/Professional Paper or Project**

The thesis/professional paper must be submitted electronically in final form to the Graduate School by the published deadline. Refer to the ETD website for further information ([http://www.montana.edu/etd/](http://www.montana.edu/etd/)).

The student’s Chairperson is the final reviewer. After the Chairperson signs the Approval Page (page ii - Form 6, Appendix B), the Approval Page is forwarded to the College of Nursing Dean for signature then to the Graduate School. The ETD Certificate of Approval Form (Form 5, Appendix B) must be submitted in hard copy (faxed copies are not permitted) with original committee member signatures. Note: the Graduate School will accept more than one copy of this Approval Form if more than one copy is needed to obtain original signatures to meet the deadline. Students must factor in the extra time needed to circulate this document prior to the published deadline.

**VII. GRADES AND GRADING**

To complete a graduate degree from MSU, a student must earn 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) has been earned 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 Professional Paper credits receive a letter grade. NRSG 528 Family Mental Health Nursing IV, NRSG 571 Primary Care IV and NRSG 590 Thesis are graded as pass/fail. This information is important to know as it can impact one’s cumulative GPA.

**College Probation**

[http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/cat_academic_prob.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/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/cat_academic_prob.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/cat_academic_prob.html)

A student will be placed on University Probation if:

- her/his semester GPA, cumulative GPA or graduate program GPA (or any combination of the above) 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 provisions of admission (e.g., statistics requirement)

Suspension
A student whose semester, cumulative, or program GPA falls below a 3.0 after University Probation status, who did not meet the provisions of admission, or who has failed to progress satisfactorily through the program, may be suspended from the 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. Students may be suspended for failing to maintain a cumulative or program GPA for two (not necessarily consecutive) semesters without a previous probationary status.

Petitions, Appeals and Grievances
For information see http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/cg500.html.

VIII. GUIDELINES FOR TRACKING UNSATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS WITHIN 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 FNP or FPMHNP clinical course progress will be referred to the Clinical Coordinator for the respective option.

2. The Associate Dean and the Clinical Coordinator will maintain tracking records and follow progress in the noted areas.

3. The Associate Dean will contact the faculty academic advisor/chairperson and/or others as necessary (for example, Dean, Campus Director, 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-8 Unacceptable Performance in Required Graduate Nursing Courses and Policy D-10 Denial of Graduate Student Access to Clinical Experiences at http://www.montana.edu/nursing/facstaff/policies.htm.

IX. MSU Commencement

Degrees are conferred at the completion of the students’ Program of Study. The diploma will show the date of the end of the semester in which the degree is granted.
Students completing the Master of Nursing (MN) degree requirements and who’s Chairperson confirms that they will complete all MN degree requirements before April of each year may attend the University Commencement held in May. Graduate students 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 ordering information (usually available the first week of February). Students must complete all financial obligations to the University prior to the degree award.
Appendix A

Certificate in Nursing Education
Elective Coursework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 1 - Summer</th>
<th>Credits &amp; Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
<td>3 lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Semester Credits</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Semester 2 – Fall                    |                  |
| NRSG 501 Teaching Concepts for Nursing Educators | 2 lecture |
| **Total Semester Credits**           | 2                |

| Semester 3 – Spring                  |                  |
| NRSG 502 Effective Clinical Teaching | 2 lecture        |
| **Total Semester Credits**           | 2                |

| Semester 4 - Summer                  |                  |
| NRSG 503 Curriculum Development     | 3 lecture        |
| or                                  |                  |
| NRSG 504 Assessment and Evaluation of Education | 3 lecture |
| **Total Semester Credits**           | 3                |

**Summary**

- Required Nursing Credits 10
- Elective Nursing Credits* 1-4

**Total Program Credits** 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

Sequence of Required Forms

• Form 1: Graduate Program of Study & Committee Form (page 4)
• Form 2: Thesis and Professional Paper or Project Proposal Approval Form (page 5)
• Form 3: Application for Advanced Degree
• Form 4: Report on Comprehensive Exam/Thesis Defense
• Form 5: Certificate of Approval Form for Theses and Dissertations (electronic submission/ETDs)
• Form 6: Approval Page (page ii)
**Graduate Program of Study & Committee Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Student ID</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Middle/Maiden</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Mailing Address:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Street</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>E-Mail:</th>
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</table>

Please list all degrees you currently hold (include both undergraduate and graduate degrees):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Date Conferred</th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Date Conferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

****My signature is an acknowledgement of service on this committee and it certifies that the student's coursework on this Program of Study meets the minimum requirements for the degree and Montana State University.****

**Graduate Committee Appointment & Program Approval:**

1. **Name (please print) (Chair)**
   - Signature
   - Date
   - E-Mail

2. Name (please print)
   - Signature
   - Date
   - E-Mail

3. Name (please print)
   - Signature
   - Date
   - E-Mail

4. Name (please print)
   - Signature
   - Date
   - E-Mail

5. Name (please print)
   - Signature
   - Date
   - E-Mail

6. Name (please print)
   - Signature
   - Date
   - E-Mail

**Program & Committee Approval:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Head</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>The Graduate School</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Signature*</td>
<td>Date</td>
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*Please note a one-time $50 processing fee will be charged to your student account for processing this form.*

**Office Use Only:**
**ID#**

**Semester of Acceptance into Degree Program:** _____________

**Graded coursework:** Please list all courses to be completed at MSU after admission to your degree program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric &amp; Course #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Credits each Semester in Chronological Order</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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**Subtotal Graded Coursework**

**Transfer/Non-Degree/Reserved Credits (9 credits max, grade of B or better):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric &amp; Course #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Credits each Semester in Chronological Order</th>
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**Subtotal Additional Work**

**Research Credits: 590/ 690 or Professional Paper/Project Credits (575)**

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<thead>
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<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Credits each Semester in Chronological Order</th>
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**Subtotal Research Credits**

**Advisor’s initials** __________

**TOTAL CREDIT HOURS** __________

*List any courses required by department that do not count towards degree requirements:*

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Guidelines and Instructions for Completing the Master’s Program of Study & Committee Form

A student’s Program of Study is a contract created between the student and the committee members that is approved by the department head. This contract establishes the requirements that the student must meet in order to earn a Master’s degree from Montana State University.

The Graduate School takes great pride in helping to ensure the quality and integrity of the graduate programs at MSU. The following is a set of instructions and requirements to aid in the process of properly filling out a Program of Study. Please read them carefully. (A more comprehensive description of these policies may be found at www.montana.edu/gradschool)

As always, please feel free to contact The Graduate School office directly with any questions.

**Personal information Section:**

▪ Complete with the most current and complete contact information.
▪ Use only your MSU student ID number. Please do not use your social security number.
▪ The degree you are seeking and the degree title must be filled in.

**Committee members Section:**

▪ As a master’s student, you must have a minimum of 3 members on your committee. The chair (also known as your major advisor) of your Graduate Committee must be a tenure track (or tenured) faculty member within your department at MSU and the person with whom you will be working with the closest.
▪ The majority of your committee should be from your department. All committee members must sign and date the form.
▪ Please attach vitas for all off-campus committee members or faculty affiliates (adjunct faculty, research faculty etc.)
▪ The department head must also sign to acknowledge the appropriateness of your Program of Study and committee.

**Policy and Deadlines:**

Master’s Programs of Study must be completed by the end of the second semester of registration. (First semester submission is required for one year degrees.)

▪ Course work may not be more than 6 years old at the time of graduation.
▪ Transfer credits: a maximum of 9 credits are allowed and cannot be approved without an official transcript from the previous University(s).
▪ Non-Degree/Reserved credits: a maximum of 9 credits allowed.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The combination of transfer credits, reserved credits, & non-degree credits may not exceed more than 1/3 of the credits on your Program of Study.

▪ Pass/Fail: A maximum of 3 credits allowed.
▪ 594(500), 592(570), 598(576): May not exceed 1/3 of total credits required for degree.
▪ 570: A maximum of 4 credits for plan “A”, 6 credits for plan “B”.

05/04/2011
• 4XX level courses may be used on a Program of Study: a maximum of 9 credits are allowed
• PLEASE NOTE: 494(400),492(470),498(476),482(489), 588, & 589 courses are not allowed on the Program of Study
• 3XX level courses are not allowed on the program of study.
• Grade Performance on Program of Study: Grades below “C-” must be repeated.
• “I” grades must be resolved before graduation.
• 3 credits minimum registration is required during the term of comprehensive exams, defense of thesis, and graduation.
• Continuous enrollment (minimum of 3 credits) becomes mandatory once all coursework on the Program of Study is completed or any portion of the comprehensive exam has been taken.

Graded Coursework Section:
• A minimum of 30 credits is required to earn a master’s degree.
- For “Plan A” students, 10 thesis credits and 20 coursework credits (9 of which can be at the 4XX level) are required.
- For “Plan B” students, a minimum of 21 credits must be at the 5xx level.
• Please list in this section only graded courses used to fulfill degree requirements completed or to be completed at MSU as a degree seeking student at Montana State University.
• Designate how many credits you plan to take for each course in the appropriate semester box you plan to take it.
• Pass/Fail courses, seminars, independent study 592’s (570), practicum, and internship credits should be listed in this section.

Transfer/ Non-Degree/Reserved Credits:
Please list in this section all graduate credits taken as a Non-Degree Graduate at MSU or at another accredited institution that you wish to apply to your degree program.
You may transfer up to 9 graduate level credits taken at an accredited institution as a graduate student.
A maximum of 9 non-degree credits may be applied towards your degree requirements.
A maximum of 9 reserved credits may be applied towards your degree requirements.
PLEASE NOTE: The combination of transfer credits, reserved credits, & non-degree credits may not exceed more than 1/3 of your program and must be a grade of “B” or better.

Research Credits:
• List all research credits here. 10 thesis credits (590) may be included on a Plan “A” program, and a maximum of 6 professional paper/project credits (575) may be included on a Plan “B” program.
When listing research credits, you do not need to lay out each semester you intend to take them unless your Committee requires it.

Departmental Requirements:
• Departments may require additional coursework towards your degree that is not part of your Program of Study (i.e. 3xx courses, additional seminars or 592’s (570), etc.). List all such coursework here.
This is to confirm that the research study or professional paper _______________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

Proposed by ___________________________________, a graduate student at the College of Nursing, has been **APPROVED**. Permission is granted to conduct the study after the approval by the appropriate Human Subjects Review Boards and with the following changes:

---

**GRADUATE FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAIR:</th>
<th>PRINTED NAME</th>
<th>SIGNATURE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>MEMBER:</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEMBER:</td>
<td>PRINTED NAME</td>
<td>SIGNATURE</td>
<td>DATE</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

DONNA A. WILLIAMS, PHD  SIGNATURE  DATE
Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education
Application for Advanced Degree

Application Deadline: Completed Applications for Advanced Degree are due to The Graduate School on or before Sept. 20th for Fall Semester, Feb 5th for Spring Semester, and June 10th for Summer Semester. A $20.00 audit fee will be assessed to the student’s account each semester an application is submitted (this fee must be paid through the Student Accounts Office). A one time $30.00 commencement fee will be charged to your account the first time you apply to graduate. The commencement fee is for degree seeking students only.

Diploma Information: Diplomas will be issued under the name listed on the student’s permanent record. Please verify your name and diploma mailing address with the Office of the Registrar. Diploma mailing dates vary with each semester; please contact the Office of the Registrar to find out when to expect your diploma in the mail. Certificate students do not receive a diploma.

Commencement Ceremony: Please contact the Office of the Registrar for information on Spring Commencement. (degree seeking students only)

FOR CANDIDATE

Full Legal Name ___________________________________________ Student ID# ______________________

E-mail Address _____________________________________________

Mailing Address _____________________________________________
Street P.O. Box __________ City ________ State ________ Zip ________

Phone Number _____________________________________________

☐ Check here if you are utilizing the One Credit Extension

I hereby apply for the degree of _____________________________ in _____________________________
to be awarded in:

☐ August 20
☐ Dec. 20
☐ May 20

__________________________________________________________ ______________________
Candidate's Signature Date

FOR MAJOR PROFESSOR (Approval)

The student's graduate Program of Study and related requirements are completed or in progress. I have reviewed and completed the checklist on the reverse of this form with the above stated student.

__________________________________________________________ ______________________
Major Professor's Signature Date

FOR DIVISION OF GRADUATE EDUCATION OFFICE (Approval)

__________________________________________________________ ______________________
The Graduate School Date
**Advanced Degree Audit Checklist**

This section of the form is **optional**. These are the items The Graduate School will review before approving your application for an advanced degree.

Using a copy of your approved Program of Study and a current transcript (available through myinfo) please use the following checklist to review graduation requirements. Please submit any necessary Program of Study changes with this paperwork. Remember that coursework listed on the Program of Study may not be removed once the course has been taken.

### Master's Degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master's Degree</th>
<th>Doctoral Degree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative GPA — Total GPA of all course work taken as a graduate student.</td>
<td>GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total GPA of only the courses in your Program of Study.</td>
<td>GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All courses listed on Program have been completed or student is currently registered for remaining courses.</td>
<td>□ yes □ no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass/Fail — max of 3 credits allowed (excluding thesis).</td>
<td>credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer/Non-Degree/Reserved credit — max of 9 credits allowed.</td>
<td>credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum of 20 credits of course work beyond 10 required thesis credits. (Thesis plans only.)**</td>
<td>total credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All &quot;I&quot; grades received during graduate career have been resolved.</td>
<td>□ yes □ no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades on Program below a &quot;C-&quot; have been repeated, resulting in an acceptable grade.</td>
<td>□ yes □ no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course work must not be more than six (6) years old at time of graduation.</td>
<td>year of oldest course on program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) minimum credits required during: a. term of comprehensive exam</td>
<td>□ yes □ no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. term of defense of thesis (if applicable)</td>
<td>□ yes □ no</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. term of graduation</td>
<td>□ yes □ no</td>
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</table>

**Requirements for each degree may vary.**
**Masters Students Only**

This report certifies that on

completed the following:

- Comprehensive Exam Passed ☐ Failed ☐
- Defense of Thesis Passed ☐ Failed ☐

as prescribed and required for the degree of:

***The Graduate School recommends that all comments regarding the exam be *made in writing* to the student. This document is meant solely to inform The Graduate School of the pass or fail on the event noted. This form is *not* to be submitted by the student.***

---

**Examining Committee Signatures**

**Approvals:**

Chair

__________________________

__________________________

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**Dissenters:**

__________________________

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Department Head Date The Graduate School Date
Certificate of Approval Form for Theses and Dissertations

This form serves as the official record of thesis/dissertation submission to The Graduate School. This form is not included in the thesis or dissertation.

The information provided below should **INCLUDE THE SAME INFORMATION** approved on the title page of your thesis/dissertation. **TYPE** this information for legibility.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Semester &amp; Year of Graduation</th>
<th>Document Type</th>
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<tr>
<th>Author’s First Name</th>
<th>Author’s Middle Name</th>
<th>Author’s Last Name</th>
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<th>Name of Department</th>
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<tr>
<th>Keywords or Phrases concerning subject of thesis/dissertation</th>
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<td>(Separated by commas, 256 character max.)</td>
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**Student Agreement:**

1. I hereby certify that, if appropriate, I have obtained and attached hereto a written permission statement from the owner(s) of each third party copyrighted matter to be included in my thesis, dissertation, or project, allowing distribution as specified below.

2. I certify that the version I submitted is the same as the final copy approved by my advisory committee.

3. I hereby grant to MSU and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive and make accessible my thesis, dissertation, or project in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis, dissertation, or project. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of the thesis, dissertation, or project.

**Student and Committee Agreement** *(select one of the following)*:

1. Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide.

2. Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of one year. At the end of the one year secure period, the work will be handled under option 1 above.

**Review and Acceptance:**

The aforementioned document has been reviewed and approved to meet the thesis, dissertation, or project requirement by the student’s supervisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above, and confirm that this Approval Form serves as the Certificate of Approval for the thesis, dissertation or project including any abstract enclosed within.

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<th>Student (please print)</th>
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APPROVAL

of a [thesis/dissertation] submitted by

[your full name, first, middle, last]

This [thesis/dissertation] has been read by each member of the [thesis/dissertation] committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citation, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to The Graduate School.

[type name of chair of committee]

Signature  Date

Approved for the College of Nursing

[type name of department head]

Signature  Date

Approved for The Graduate School

Dr. Carl A. Fox

Signature  Date
Appendix C

NRSG 590 THESIS (PLAN A)

Purpose
The thesis is a formal document that provides a means for students to demonstrate mastery of graduate level competencies through application of course content. Its sole purpose is to demonstrate that the student has made an original, meaningful, and useful or practical contribution to knowledge in the discipline of nursing. A thesis must include two important components:

- Identification of a worthwhile problem or question that has not been studied previously, and
- Solution of the problem or answer to the question.

The final document is a reflection of the student, the Chairperson and Committee, the College of Nursing, and MSU.

Objectives
The student will:
1. Conceptualize a researchable nursing problem.
2. Design a researchable study.
3. Conduct the research study.
4. Produce a scholarly report of the problem studied.

Definition and refinement of the research problem may be developed in NRSG 505 Evidence Based Practice or NRSG 521 Theory and Research in Nursing. The student continues work on the thesis in subsequent semesters. This work is reflected by NRSG 590 credits earned.

Proposal
The student should prepare a thesis proposal with the help and guidance of the thesis committee. The chairperson is informed by the student regarding all aspects of thesis work and maintains supervisory responsibility. The thesis proposal (Chapters 1, 2, and 3) must be typewritten and must be approved by the chairperson. Following the chairperson's approval, approval of the entire committee and Institutional Review Board (IRB) must be obtained before the study is conducted. Committee approval is documented by the Thesis and Professional Paper or Project Proposal Approval Form (Form 2, Appendix B). The signed form is forwarded to and signed by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education.

Human Subjects Review
Montana State University and the College of Nursing students and employees are committed to the responsible conduct of research. Data collection on human subjects does not begin until the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approves the students’ study. See http://www2.montana.edu/irb/index.html for instructions.
Components of the Thesis
Components for a thesis can be found on the Graduate School website under Thesis and Dissertation Guide at http://www.montana.edu/etd/.

Chapter I -- Introduction
A. Statement of Problem/Research Questions
B. The Purpose
C. Background and Significance of Study
D. Conceptual/Theoretical Framework (if applicable)
E. Hypotheses (if applicable)
F. Definitions
G. Assumptions (if applicable)
H. Limitations

Chapter II -- Review of Literature
The written review of the literature is guided by the research questions and/or hypotheses and the conceptual/ theoretical framework of the student's study. The review should include discussion and critique of selected theory and all relevant research in the area.

Chapter III -- Methods
A. Population and sample (for example, type of sample, size, sampling procedures, setting)
B. Discussion of Rights of Human Subjects and Consent Process. Note: include a copy of the consent form in the Appendix
C. Design (variables and their measurement; methodological approach – when applicable)
D. Procedures for data collection (for example, methods and procedures planned, time framework)
E. Instrumentation (for example, in-depth discussion of the instrument(s) including reliability and validity) or Data Collection Methods (for example, type of interview, interview schedules, observational types and procedures, archival data retrieval, field notes, memos). Note: include a copy of the instrument(s) in the Appendix
F. Statistical analysis or Analysis

Chapter IV -- Results
A. Report of results (for example, narrative, tabled figures, or thematic with de-identified data as examples of themes)
B. Statistics are reported in this section if applicable

Chapter V -- Discussion
A. Evaluation of results
B. Study limitations
C. Implications

References

Appendices
Thesis Format
Students preparing a master’s thesis will be guided by two sources with respect to issues of format. They are:

- the Graduate School’s *ETD Style and Composition Guide* and
- the *Publication Manual of the APA*, 6th edition, selected by the College of Nursing to be followed in matters of editorial style.

The *Publication Manual of the APA*, 6th edition is available for purchase at the MSU Bookstore. A reference copy is available on each campus (reference only - cannot be borrowed). The MSU Writing Center (994-5315) or the Graduate School (994-4145) can provide names of qualified private tutors if assistance is desired.

If exceptions to the format requirements outlined in the governing documents are anticipated, the Graduate School should be contacted well ahead of the deadline. If the exceptions are appropriate, they will be considered for approval at that time. This will facilitate final approval by the Graduate School. Failing to obtain approval could delay graduation and cause unnecessary expense. Students can be directed to the Graduate School or the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education for advice if their Chairperson deems appropriate.

The *Publication Manual of the APA*, 6th edition, is written to guide the preparation of manuscripts, but the thesis document is not a manuscript. The resulting confusion has sometimes led to frustration, delay, and/or added expense for students. The student should remember that theses submitted electronically are final documents as are books or articles in published journals. Because the thesis is a final document, its format will differ in some ways from the manuscript format described in the *Publication Manual of the APA*, 6th edition. The exceptions from manuscript style are stated here to provide a point of reference for all concerned in the preparation and approval of master’s theses.

The title page should say “... submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Nursing” (not a Master of Science in Nursing or Master in Nursing). Do not include the option (CNL, FNP, or FPMHNP) on the title page. The general format and editorial style of the body of the thesis will follow the *Publication Manual of the APA*, 6th edition. General format means the document will contain Introduction, Review of Literature, Methods, Results, Discussion, and Reference sections as do APA journal articles. Editorial style for the thesis is described in the *Publication Manual of the APA*, 6th edition. The mechanics of preparing a manuscript also are contained in the *Publication Manual of the APA*, 6th edition but the student is advised to ignore these chapters, except as specifically noted below. [Note: Students should refer to *ETD Style and Composition Guide* before preparing the final drafts of their thesis (see [http://www.montana.edu/etd](http://www.montana.edu/etd)). The *ETD Style and Composition Guide* spells out the mechanics of publishing the thesis/paper document, for example, font, margins, spacing, specific types of pages, and required order of assembly]. In terms of general appearance, the main body of the document will resemble a published journal more closely than a manuscript. The sequence of material at the end of the document
should be as follows: reference notes come before the reference section. Use of footnotes should be avoided if at all possible. All appendices are placed at the very end of the document. The Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition instructions should be followed for paragraphs and indentation, spacing with punctuation, and quotations.

**Headings (per the ETD Style and Composition Guide)**

Major section labels (Introduction, Methods, etc.) should be typed in all caps and centered between the margins. INTRODUCTION as a heading must be placed at the introduction section. The title is not to appear on the first page of the thesis text. Each chapter of the document begins on a new page. The correct levels (i.e., main, side, paragraph) of headings are to be used in the document. Normally, Introduction, Methods, Results, etc., are main headings and as such are in ALL CAPS and centered. Subjects, procedures, apparatus, etc., in the Methods Section are side or second order headings.

**Figures and Tables**

Directions on how to construct and label figures, graphs, or illustrations, are referred to in the Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition and in the ETD Style and Composition Guide. Figures, tables, and/or illustrations prepared for the thesis should be of professional quality. Those who are not graphic artists are advised to have any needed art work done by a professional.

The thesis typist is to be made aware of the departures from Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition requirements. Questions about format issues are to be referred to the committee Chairperson.
Appendix D

NRSG 575 PROFESSIONAL PAPER OR PROJECT (PLAN B)

Purpose
The professional paper or project provides a means for students to demonstrate mastery of graduate level competencies through application of course content. A professional paper or project in nursing addresses a relevant health care issue and makes a meaningful or substantive contribution to nursing practice. The student plans, organizes, implements, and evaluates the methods used as well as the outcome(s) for the selected topic/activity.

The final document is a reflection of the student, the Chairperson and Committee, the College of Nursing and MSU.

Topic Selections for a Professional Paper
The student develops a professional paper or project based on the following possible activities:
1. Clinical Project
2. Teaching Project
3. Integrative Literature Review of an Important Nursing or Health Care Topic
4. Other scholarly activity.

Objectives
The student will:
1. Plan and organize activities for the professional paper or project.
2. Analyze and synthesize appropriate information and/or data.
3. Describe the significance of the professional paper or project to nursing.
4. Evaluate method(s) in relation to the outcome(s).
5. Generate ideas for nursing practice, education, or research based on the project outcome(s).

The chairperson and committee must approve the topic and procedures proposed before the activities are performed. Committee approval is documented by the Thesis and Professional Paper or Project Proposal Approval Form (Form 2, Appendix B). The signed form is forwarded to and signed by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education.

Human Subjects Review
Montana State University and the College of Nursing students and employees are committed to the responsible conduct of research. Data collection on human subjects does not begin until the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approves the students’ study. See http://www2.montana.edu/irb/index.html for instructions.

Components of the Professional Paper or Project
Components can be found on the Graduate School website at http://www.montana.edu/etd/.
1. Clinical Project

A clinical project is an in-depth analysis of a clinical nursing problem and may focus on policies and procedures, systems of care, or nursing practice. It directly influences patient care or the health care delivery system. The clinical project commonly includes a needs assessment and statement of how the project will improve health care.

Examples of a clinical project include:
- Develop an informational brochure or pamphlet
- Develop an evidence-based nursing practice policy
- Present to professionals about an area of clinical practice
- Develop a specialty clinic (for example, congestive heart failure, diabetes, pain management)

2. Teaching Project

A teaching project reflects mastery of graduate level competencies as well as knowledge of current, best evidence in teaching and learning. It may focus on clients or professional colleagues and includes an evaluation component. The target audience may be a specific nurse population, patient population, or an individual patient/family with very complex teaching needs. A graduate level teaching project will be developed in greater breadth (comprehensive, broad audience) or depth (focus, complexity, longitudinal) than an undergraduate level teaching project. The Committee Chairperson determines whether a proposed teaching project has sufficient depth and breadth. The project may or may not include a needs assessment. The student is expected to articulate the rationale for all aspects of the project in the professional paper describing the project.

Examples of teaching projects include:
- Create an online or written self-instruction module
- Plan, fund, and coordinate a workshop (may or may not teach part of the workshop)
- Conduct monthly continuing education programs for staff development
- Address teaching needs for a complicated patient or family situation

Essential components for a professional teaching project include:
- A teaching plan for a specified audience
- Rationale and evidence for the teaching plan including the mode of delivery, selected content, and method of evaluation
- Implementation of the teaching plan
- Evaluation of learning
- Evaluation of the project overall

3. Integrative Literature Review of an Important Nursing or Health Care Topic

An integrative literature review is a specific method that summarizes past empirical and theoretical literature. Although there are many types of literature reviews that contribute to nursing science (for example, meta-analyses, systematic reviews, qualitative reviews),
integrative reviews use the broadest types of literature allowing simultaneous inclusion of experimental and non-experimental research.

Integrative reviews can have a wide range of purposes including:
- defining concepts
- reviewing theories
- reviewing evidence
- analyzing research methods


Professional Paper Format
Students preparing a master’s professional paper will be guided by two sources with respect to issues of format. They are:
- the Graduate School’s ETD Style and Composition Guide and
- the Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition, selected by the College of Nursing to be followed in matters of editorial style.

The Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition is available for purchase at the MSU Bookstore. A reference copy is available on each campus (reference only - cannot be borrowed). The MSU Writing Center (994-5315) or the Graduate School (994-4145) can provide names of qualified private tutors if assistance is desired.

If exceptions to the format requirements outlined in the governing documents are anticipated, the Graduate School should be contacted well ahead of the deadline. If the exceptions are appropriate, they will be considered for approval at that time. This will facilitate final approval by the Graduate School. Failing to obtain approval could delay graduation and cause unnecessary expense. Students can be directed to the Graduate School or the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education for advice if their Chairperson deems appropriate.

The Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition, is written to guide the preparation of manuscripts, but the professional paper document is not a manuscript. The resulting confusion has sometimes led to frustration, delay, and/or added expense for students. The student should remember that papers submitted electronically are final documents as are books or articles in published journals. Because the professional paper is a final document, its format will differ in some ways from the manuscript format described in the Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition. The exceptions from manuscript style are stated here to provide a point of reference for all concerned in the preparation and approval of professional papers.

The title page should say “... submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Nursing” (not a Master of Science in Nursing or Master in Nursing). Do
not include the option (CNL, FNP, or FPMHNP) on the title page. The general format and editorial style of the body of the professional paper will follow the Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition. General format means the document will contain Introduction, Review of Literature, etc. as do APA journal articles. Editorial style for the professional paper is described in the Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition. The mechanics of preparing a manuscript also are contained in the Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition, but the student is advised to ignore these chapters, except as specifically noted below. Students should refer to ETD Style and Composition Guide before preparing the final drafts of their professional paper (http://www.montana.edu/etd). The ETD Style and Composition Guide spells out the mechanics of publishing the professional paper/paper document, for example, font, margins, spacing, specific types of pages, and required order of assembly.

In terms of general appearance, the main body of the document will resemble a published journal more closely than a manuscript. The sequence of material at the end of the document should be as follows: reference notes come before the reference section. Footnotes should be avoided if at all possible. All appendices are placed at the very end of the document.

The Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition instructions should be followed for paragraphs and indentation, spacing with punctuation, and quotations.

**Headings (per the ETD Style and Composition Guide)**

Major section labels (Introduction, Methods, etc.) should be typed in all caps and centered between the margins. INTRODUCTION as a heading must be placed at the introduction section. The title is not to appear on the first page of the text. Each Chapter of the document begins on a new page. The correct levels (i.e., main, side, paragraph) of headings are to be used in the document. Normally, Introduction, Review of Literature, etc., are main headings and as such are in ALL CAPS and centered. Subjects, procedures, etc. in the Methods Section are side or second order headings.

**Figures and Tables**

Directions on how to construct and label figures, graphs, or illustrations, are referred to in the Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition and in the ETD Style and Composition Guide. Figures, tables, and/or illustrations prepared for the professional paper should be of professional quality. Those who are not graphic artists are advised to have any needed art work done by a professional.

The professional paper typist is to be made aware of the departures from Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition requirements. Questions about format issues are to be referred to the committee Chairperson.