



Nursing

FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE

# Nursing Student Handbook

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Ann Blanton Edwards  
School of Nursing & Health Sciences

Master of Science in Nursing &  
Certificate Programs

**2025-2026**

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## Welcome to the Master's of Science in Nursing & Certificate Programs

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The faculty and staff of the Ann Blanton Edwards School of Nursing and Health Sciences at Florida Southern College welcome you to our Master of Science in Nursing and Certificate program. I know you will find your educational experience both challenging and rewarding, and that you will experience the caring that is the focus of our nursing program. Faculty have adopted *Caring, The Human Mode of Being* by Sister Simone Roach as a guiding theory across all programs (BSN, MSN, PMC, and DNP). “While nursing is rooted in knowledge and evidence-based practice, it’s equally rooted in caring for the whole person, not just the illness.”

This *MSN & Certificate Programs Student Handbook* is designed as a resource to the academic policies and procedures of Florida Southern College specific to students enrolled in the Master of Science in Nursing and Certificate programs. The information presented throughout the handbook will be helpful to you as you progress through the Master’s or Certificate program. Our expectation is you will use the handbook as your first point of reference when you have questions concerning your program of study, course scheduling and academic policies.

It is important that you check the electronic version of this handbook, which is available through the MSN Student Communication page in the learning management system. You will receive emails when changes are made. **Students will be held accountable for these changes.**

Sincerely,

Laly Joseph, DVM, DNP, CNE, RN-C, MSN, ARNP, ANP-BC, FNAP  
Dean, Ann Blanton Edwards School of Nursing and Health Sciences

## Preface

The *Master of Science in Nursing & Certificate Programs Student Handbook* provides information on program expectations, requirements, and procedures. Students are responsible for information contained within this handbook and should review it at the time of program entry and at least annually thereafter. The handbook is updated at least annually to reflect the most current information. Students are responsible to be cognizant of and to comply with all SNHS requirements and FSC policies delineated in the *Florida Southern College Academic Catalog* and the *Florida Southern College Student Handbook*. Students should review information in the FSC Academic Catalog and in the FSC Student Handbook at the time of program entry and at least annually thereafter.

The *Florida Southern College Academic Catalog* and the *Florida Southern College Student Handbook* are the official and authoritative sources of all College policies, academic requirements, and student expectations. The *Master of Science in Nursing and Certificate Programs Student Handbook* is provided for informational purposes to support student success and to supplement—but not replace—the information contained in these official documents. In the event of any discrepancy or conflict between the *Master of Science in Nursing and Certificate Programs Student Handbook* and either the *Florida Southern College Academic Catalog* or the *Florida Southern College Student Handbook*, the content of the FSC Academic Catalog and/or the FSC Student Handbook will supersede the Master of Science in Nursing and Certificate Programs Student Handbook.

### Florida Southern College Resources

#### Ann Blanton Edwards School of Nursing & Health Sciences

Telephone: (863) 680-3951; Fax: (863) 680-3860

Web page: <https://www.flsouthern.edu/about/leadership/schools-divisions/nursing-health-sciences/home.aspx>

#### FSC Student Handbook

Web page: <https://www.flsouthern.edu/campus-offices/offices-directory/office-of-community-living/forms-and-handbooks>

- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Accountability Process
- Policies and Procedures: Student Records
- Student Records Policy: FERPA
- Anti-Harassment: Statement of Policy

#### FSC Academic Catalog

Web page: <https://www.flsouthern.edu/academic-life/academic-catalog>

##### Financial Information

- Academic Policies including:
  - Academic Standing, Progress, Probation, Suspension, Expulsion
  - Academic Integrity
  - The Florida Southern College Honor Code
  - Grade Appeals

- Programs of Study Information
- Student Complaint Procedures: <https://www.flsouthern.edu/campus-offices/offices-directory/office-of-the-provost/student-complaint-procedures>

## I. General Information

### Nursing Program Directory

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#### Dean, Ann Blanton Edwards School of Nursing and Health Sciences

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Dean and Professor

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#### MSN Program Director

Vacant

#### FNP Track Coordinator

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#### PMHNP Track Coordinator

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#### Simulation Lab Manager

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#### Nursing Simulation Educator and

Instructor

Vacant

#### Simulation Lab Specialist

Kristy Hinkle, BSN, RN

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## **Ann Blanton Edwards School of Nursing and Health Sciences Mission Statement**

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Preparing health professionals to provide quality care for diverse populations.

## **Nursing Programs Mission Statement**

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The Florida Southern College nursing program is committed to educational excellence, providing opportunities that integrate caring, cultural competence, and ethics into nursing practice and fostering personal and professional growth for the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral level nursing student. A strong emphasis is placed on engaged learning, student-faculty collaboration, and academically based service to the community.

## **Nursing Programs Philosophy**

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The faculty of the Florida Southern College Ann Blanton Edwards School of Nursing & Health Sciences believes that the minimum educational preparation of the professional nurse is at the baccalaureate level and that a liberal arts education provides a foundation for learning and professional inquiry. A liberal education foundation stimulates the desire for lifelong learning and provides the professional nurse with the tools necessary to become an effective leader and to pursue advanced nursing degrees.

We believe that quality education provides the professional nurse with a framework for holistic care of culturally diverse individuals, families, aggregates, and communities. We facilitate learning experiences that emphasize bio-psycho-social-spiritual health care, and promotion, maintenance, and restoration of wellness. Each faculty member is dedicated to enabling the nursing student to master new skills, to critically evaluate research and theory, and to integrate the latest knowledge and skills into nursing practice.

Students are prepared in an atmosphere of compassionate caring to uphold professional standards and ethics, and to reflect Judeo-Christian values and ideals. We consider it essential that the nurse understands the impact of a changing health care delivery system on patient health and the profession of nursing. Toward this end, nursing students at Florida Southern College are prepared to communicate effectively as part of an interprofessional team and to provide compassionate patient-centered care.

## **Nursing Programs 6 Cs of Caring**

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The faculty has adopted Caring, *The Human Mode of Being* by Sister Simone Roach as a guiding framework across all the nursing programs. This conceptual model evolved in response to the question, 'What is a nurse doing when she or he is caring?' Specific manifestations of caring as represented by such behaviors as taking the time to be with, checking factual information, identifying and using relevant knowledge, performing technical procedures, showing respect, maintaining trusting relationships, keeping a commitment and comportment in dress and language were generalized into the Six Cs. The Six Cs are compassion, competence, confidence, conscience, commitment, and comportment (Roach, 2012).

## **Master's of Science in Nursing & Certificate Programs Description**

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The Master of Science in Nursing for the Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist track is not accepting admissions currently.

The MSN Program includes five tracks: Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPCNP), Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP), Nursing Administrative Leadership (NAL), and Nurse Educator (NE). Each track in the MSN Program allows the student to build on the foundation of their BSN and focus on a specific area of advanced nursing practice. More specifically, the AGPCNP, FNP, and PMHNP tracks are designed to prepare graduates for advanced nursing practice in a population-focused area. The NAL track is designed to provide the nurse manager and clinical nurse leader with the skills and knowledge to guide daily operations in a variety of healthcare settings. Finally, the NE track prepares the graduates to employ advanced teaching strategies and learning principles in an academic or healthcare setting.

The post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Nursing Administrative Leadership (PBC-NAL) is designed to provide the nurse manager and clinical nurse leader with the skills and knowledge to guide daily operations in a variety of healthcare settings.

The Post-Master's Certificate (PMC) Program includes four tracks: Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (PMC-AGPCNP), Family Nurse Practitioner (PMC-FNP), Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMC-PMHNP) and Nurse Educator (PMC-NE). Just as the MSN AGPCNP, FNP, and PMHNP, the PMC Program tracks prepare the graduates for advanced practice nursing in the specific population-focused area. The PMC-NE track prepares the graduate to employ advanced teaching strategies and learning principles in an academic or healthcare setting.

For nurse practitioner students (MSN, PMC AGPCNP, and FNP), classes are typically held one day per week on campus in the classroom. For the PMHNP (MSN and PMC) students, classes are held one day per week during the first two semesters. Then, the PMHNP students will attend in-person class one day per month. However, this schedule may be modified as necessary. The NAL (both MSN and PBC) and the NE (both MSN and PMC) classes are delivered 100% online via the FSC LMS system.

### **Technical Standards for Nursing Students**

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Florida Southern College Ann Blanton Edwards School of Nursing and Health Sciences has a responsibility to educate competent nurses to care for patients with clinical judgment, broadly based knowledge, and polished technical skills. The FSC nursing programs have academic as well as technical standards that must be met by students to successfully progress in and graduate from its programs.

FSC nursing programs provide the following description of technical standards to inform prospective and enrolled students of the technical standard requirements for completing the nursing programs. These standards are not requirements for admission to the program, and the examples provided are not all-inclusive. Students and prospective students should review these standards and assess their own ability to be successful in completing the program. Key areas for

technical standards in nursing include having abilities and skills in the following areas: 1) observation, 2) communication, 3) motor, 4) cognitive, and 5) behavioral/social.

Technological compensation can be made for some disabilities in certain of these areas, but a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner and exercise independent judgment.

Observation: The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and participate in didactic courses and simulated learning opportunities. A candidate must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation requires the use of common sense, as well as the functional use of the senses of vision, audition, olfaction, and palpation.

Communication: Candidates must communicate effectively using English in clinical and classroom settings. A candidate must be able to elicit information from patients, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech but reading and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with all members of the health care team in both immediate and recorded modes.

Motor: Candidates should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other assessment techniques. A candidate should be able to perform nursing skills requiring the use of gross and fine motor skills (e.g. IV insertion, venous blood draw, urinary catheter insertion). A candidate should be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide nursing care and emergency response to patients. Examples of emergency responses reasonably required of nurses are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, medication administration, and application of pressure to stop bleeding. Candidates must perform actions that require the use of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch and vision. Candidates should also be able to assist and/or participate in various lifting activities.

Conceptual-Integrative: These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, synthesis, and retention of complex information. Critical thinking requires all these intellectual abilities to provide optimal nursing care. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures.

Behavioral-Social: Candidates must possess the emotional health required for the full use of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and function effectively under stress in the classroom and clinical area.

They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical environment. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admissions and educational process.

Reasonable accommodations will be considered on a case-by-case basis for individuals who meet eligibility under applicable statutes. Any person expecting to need accommodations should request them before beginning the program, as some accommodations may impact an

applicant's ability to complete all components of the program.

### **The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (AACN, 2021)**

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**AACN Domains for Nursing.** The MSN and PMC students are expected to meet advanced nursing competencies organized in 10 domains:

1. Knowledge for Nursing Practice
2. Person-Centered Care
3. Population Health
4. Scholarship for Nursing Practice
5. Quality and Safety
6. Interprofessional Partnerships
7. Systems-Based Practice
8. Informatics and Healthcare Technologies
9. Professionalism
10. Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development

The MSN and PMC curricula also integrates eight featured *concepts* associated with professional nursing practice as defined by the AACN (2021):

- Clinical Judgment
- Communication
- Compassionate Care
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Ethics
- Evidence-Based Practice
- Health Policy
- Social Determinants of Health

### **MSN & APRN Post-Graduate Certificate Program Goals**

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1. Prepare students for success in certification, licensure, and advanced nursing practice.
2. Foster the development of nurse leaders with the knowledge and skills required to advance nursing's influence in health care.

### **MSN & APRN Post-Graduate Certificate Program Outcomes**

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Upon completion of the MSN/Post-Graduate Certificate Program, students will be able to:

1. Integrate advanced nursing knowledge and clinical judgment to deliver evidence-based, person-centered care for diverse individuals, families, and populations.
2. Apply systems thinking and quality improvement principles to enhance patient safety and outcomes.
3. Employ interprofessional collaboration within and across health systems to optimize care.
4. Utilize informatics and healthcare technologies to support decision-making and evaluate outcomes.
5. Exhibit leadership, professionalism, and accountability in the advanced nursing role.

## **Nursing Program Accreditation**

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The Master of Science Degree in Nursing and the Post-Graduate APRN Certificate programs at Florida Southern College are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791.

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## II. Academic Information

### Academic Advising

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Students' initial advising for MSN and PMC students comes through the Adult and Graduate student admissions office. The admissions office advisor will instruct students to register for classes as outlined in the program's suggested progression plan for the appropriate track for the MSN degree-seeking students. Each student will receive an individualized course of study plan during orientation. Any student wishing to make a change to their course of study plan must discuss it with their advisor.

Initial advising for the nurse practitioner PMC students is from the MSN Program Director in consultation with the nurse practitioner faculty. For the PMC nurse practitioner students, a gap analysis is completed by the MSN Program Director. The final program plan and course requirements for each student admitted to a graduate certificate program is based on a gap analysis consistent with National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties' Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs standards (<https://www.nonpf.org/page/15>) to ensure the student's eligibility to sit for national certification in the selected population focus upon program completion. The gap analysis includes, at a minimum, a review of previous transcripts and course syllabi for which transfer or equivalent credits are requested. Additional documentation may be required to complete the gap analysis. Students who have not successfully completed three separate courses —advanced pathophysiology, pharmacology, and assessment equivalent —are required to complete these courses as part of their course plan before starting their clinical courses.

Each semester, the MSN Program track coordinators provide advising for students in their respective tracks. MSN and PMC students participate in one or more group (cohort) advising sessions around mid-term each semester. The focus of these sessions is on providing students with the information needed for the following semester and throughout the remainder of the program relative to current progression. All students are offered individual sessions as needed to discuss their individualized course plan.

### Attendance

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Students are expected to attend all classroom and clinical sessions and to be in place when class begins. Any absence should be due to unavoidable documented reasons. It is the student's responsibility to inform the professor of any anticipated absences and to request approval to complete any missed work.

Individual faculty may have more specific criteria and may, per the FSC Student Handbook, remove a student from a course for non-attendance. Be sure to read each class syllabus for specifics.

## **Grading Scale for the MSN & Certificate Program Courses**

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A = 92-100  
B = 84-91  
C = 76-83  
F = below 76

## **Scholarly Writing Statement**

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Students are expected to use proper current APA formatting for all written assignments when indicated or appropriate. Please be sure to review how to complete citations, references, headings, pagination, and overall formatting.

Effective oral and written communication skills are imperative to your success in this class. Students are expected to compile and synthesize a large volume of information and to effectively organize and create documents that meet professional standards for a Master 's-prepared nurse.

Faculty will provide coaching and assistance to support the advancement of writing skills and success on written assignments. This includes providing feedback on the sufficiency of content, organization, and coherence of writing (i.e., maintaining a chain of logic that is evident throughout the paper), writing mechanics (including spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, syntax, and sentence structure), and application of current APA guidelines. The role of faculty in graduate-level courses does not include editing student papers or remediation of writing skills. Students who do not possess the writing skills necessary for success in the course will be directed to online and other resources for self-directed practice and remediation under the direction of the course faculty.

## **Generative AI Course Policy**

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Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, can be valuable resources for brainstorming, editing, and preparing assignments, enhancing learning through personalized support, improved efficiency, and critical thinking development. While these tools can save time and offer creative solutions, students should be aware of their limitations, including potential inaccuracies, outdated information, embedded biases, and the risk of depersonalized writing. Students are required to use AI ethically and transparently to complement their learning rather than replace independent and original thought.

All AI-generated content or edits must be identified in submissions, with a disclosure statement included to maintain academic integrity. Failure to disclose the use of AI in developing, drafting, formatting, editing, and/or summarizing information submitted in student assignment violates program and FSC academic integrity guidelines and policies. Detailed guidance on using Generative AI effectively and ethically is available in the Course Resources module in the Canvas LMS for each course, and students should consult specific course syllabi for course directions. Students are encouraged to reach out with any questions or uncertainties about AI use.

## **Nursing Program Progression**

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Please refer to the *FSC Student Handbook* and *FSC Academic Catalog* for College rules and regulations regarding academic probation, suspension, expulsion, grade grievance, academic integrity, and the Florida Southern College Honor Code. The Master of Science Degree in Nursing Program all post-master's certificate programs follow Florida Southern College policies regarding *Academic Standing, Probation, and Dismissal from Graduate or Doctorate Study* as described and defined in the FSC Academic Catalog.

MSN and certificate program students are strongly encouraged to meet with their academic advisor at least annually or on an "as needed" basis in the event of circumstances that necessitate program plan modification. Students are strongly advised to follow the program plan established surrounding admission. Any deviation from the sequence developed should only be made after approval from the faculty advisor. Deviation from the established program plan could result in an extension of the time to graduation. Faculty advisor information may be found in the FSC Portal>Students tab>Advising Information.

Students enrolled in nurse practitioner tracks are required to take and pass a series of predictor exams beginning in the second semester. These exams are used to gauge students' readiness to progress to clinical courses and to predict the likelihood of success on national certification exams following program completion.

Students in clinical courses must successfully demonstrate patient proficiency with standards of care when accessing and treating patients in a clinical setting. Refer to the *MSN and Post-Master's Certificate Programs Clinical Guidelines* handbook. The faculty and program directors will review actual or suspected violations of these guidelines and standards. Violations may result in a grade penalty, course failure, or dismissal from the program.

## **Ethical and Professional Standards**

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All students enrolled in the Nursing Program are expected to follow the Florida Southern College Honor Code outlined in the FSC Academic Catalog and FSC Student Handbook. Students are expected to adhere to the Drug-Free Campus rules and regulations.

Additionally, students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner directed by conscience. Conscience motivates one to increase the knowledge and skills needed to respond appropriately to moral, ethical, and legal issues faced by oneself and others. Professional and ethical behavior is at the core of providing patient care and is

integrated throughout the history of nursing practice. Each nurse is legally accountable and responsible for professional conduct and ethics. Professional nurses are held to the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics for Nursing. Nursing students enrolled in any nursing program are expected to adhere to this same code. Additionally, professional nurses must possess knowledge, skills, and attitudes to deliver safe, effective care as outlined in the Quality and Safety Education in Nursing (QSEN) project.

Professional nurses and pre-licensure nursing students are expected to comply with all State and Federal laws and statutes governing patient care. These include, but are not limited to:

- Florida Nurse Practice Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration
  - Personal Protective Equipment
  - Blood Borne Pathogens
- Centers for Disease Control
  - Hand hygiene
- Healthcare Information Portability and Accountability Act
- Child and Adult Protection regulations
- Infection Control regulations

Nursing students are required to adhere to all the rules and regulations set by the clinical site during clinical site rotations and experiences. Comportment is always expected when students interact with peers, faculty, clients, families, visitors, and staff. Comportment is a nurse's professional behavior demonstrated through words, actions, and presence. Any student may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from the nursing program if comportment is not demonstrated and/or rules, regulations, and guidelines are not followed.

Civility is always expected when students interact with peers, faculty, patients, families, visitors, and staff. Any student, licensed or pre-licensed, may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from the nursing program if these rules, regulations, and guidelines are not followed.

Professional etiquette refers to acceptable behavior in all classroom discussions, online and in-person, email, and all other forms of communication within the course. Professional etiquette is an expectation and is required of all students. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Address all faculty using appropriate prefixes (for example, Dr. Jones or Mr./Ms. Smith). This applies to both written and oral communication.
- Avoid using all capital letters in written communication (this is considered yelling).
- Fonts such as bold, italics, and underlining should be used sparingly.
- Absolutely no name calling or offensive language.
- Initial email communication should include a salutation at the beginning and the sender's name at the end.
- Craft all written communications in a professional manner; remember this is not a text message.
- Respond politely and appreciate differences of opinion in classroom discussions, group work, and other communications.

### *Change in Health Status*

Students who experience a change in health status that could potentially affect their ability to meet course, laboratory, and/or clinical requirements will be required to submit clearance from a qualified health provider (M.D., D.O., Nurse Practitioner, or Physician Assistant). The clearance form must specifically indicate that it is safe for the student to resume or continue participation in course, laboratory, and/or clinical experiences. The form must also define any limitations of the student relative to resuming or continuing participation. Copies of the clearance form must be submitted to the Course Lead Faculty and Program Director. Continuation or resumption of participation in clinical experiences will be in accordance with student and/or employee policies of the respective affiliated clinical agencies. If the student is unable to meet the requirements for participation in class, laboratory, and/or clinical experiences, the student may be required to withdraw from the course. Examples of health status changes that must be reported may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Injury
- Pregnancy / Delivery
- Major illness: i.e., physical or mental
- Communicable disease(s)
- Splint / Brace / Cast / Sling
- Surgery

Any student with a health status change that results in disability will be referred to the Florida Southern College Student Disability Services.

### *Late Work Policy*

Assignments submitted after the due date without prior approval by the faculty may incur the following point deduction according to guidelines listed in each course syllabus as determined by course faculty.

- Up to a 10% deduction for assignment(s) submitted within one week after the due date
- Up to a 20% deduction for assignment(s) submitted more than one week but within two weeks after the due date.
- Graded assignments submitted more than two weeks after the due date may not be accepted. Pass/Fail or Complete/Incomplete assignments may also not be accepted if submitted more than two weeks after the due date.

The faculty will evaluate extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis. If a student anticipates being late with any assignment, the student must contact the faculty members before the due date.

### *Voluntary Withdrawal*

Any student who voluntarily withdraws from a course, and with approval from the instructor, will be considered for re-entry to the program, subject to course and program availability. There is no guarantee of returning to the program at the previous point of progression; voluntary withdrawal from courses will extend the timeline for program completion. The faculty advisor will work with the student for a revised plan of study.

### *Involuntary Withdrawal from a Course*

A student may be removed from courses at the discretion of the faculty or Dean. This action may result in an involuntary withdrawal from the respective course for the following reasons:

- Unexcused absence on the first day of class.
- Repeated number of unexcused absences.
- Inappropriate behavior as specified in the ANA Code of Ethics, as well as any other behavior that is specified in this student nurse handbook, the FSC Student Handbook, and the *FSC Catalog*.

A student who has been involuntarily withdrawn from a course must request, in writing, and be granted permission, if eligible, to re-take the course by the dean at the next offering.

### *Removal from the Nursing Program for Other Reasons*

A student may be removed from the Nursing Program for the following reasons:

- Student who demonstrates an inability to competently and safely perform patient care. This includes the inability to provide safe and competent care due to chemical impairment.
- Any student who fails to maintain Ethical and Professional standards.
- Students who commit violations of the HIPAA law.
- Student who commits any act or omission that is so egregious that it results in compromised patient care, or criminal or overt malpractice activities, or acting outside the scope of practice for a nursing student.
- Student who engages in any act or behavior that is disruptive, unprofessional, or uncivil.
- Student who fails to meet academic standards for graduate degree programs as outlined in the *Academic Standing, Probation, and Dismissal from Graduate or Doctorate Study* section of the Florida Southern College Academic Catalog.

A student who is removed from the nursing program is no longer eligible to receive the MSN degree from Florida Southern College.

## Graduation Requirements

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Graduation requirements are listed in the *FSC Academic Catalog*. In addition, the student must meet all program-specific requirements, including grades, clinical performance, documented professionalism, and completion of all courses and program outcomes.

The Master of Science in Nursing for the Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist track, Master of Science in Nursing: Nursing Administrative Leadership, and Master of Science in Nursing: Nurse Educator are not currently accepting admissions.

When students are admitted and matriculate, they shall be required to complete all degree program requirements within 5 years.

### Preparation for Graduation and Commencement

Students can access the official FSC Commencement Handbook online at <https://www.flsouthern.edu/commencement-handbook>

This handbook includes information on graduation requirements and commencement procedures.

Students planning to graduate must complete an *Application for Graduation* form with the Registrar's office the semester before the term of projected graduation. When the application is processed and a graduation check is completed, the graduate's name is placed on the graduation list, and the student will receive all communications regarding commencement. Caps, hoods, and gowns are purchased directly through the campus bookstore or as instructed by the FSC Registrar or the Provost's office.

**Refer to the official Florida Southern College Academic Catalog for a summary of degree and/or program requirements.**

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### III. Clinical Information

#### Student Dress Code

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Students are expected to dress in business casual when attending class. Scrubs, shorts, halter tops, flip-flops, torn clothing, hoodies, sweatpants, tee-shirts, and clothing with offensive language are not acceptable when in the Ann Blanton Nursing Building and the Graduate Nursing Building. Specific guidelines and directions are to be followed when in clinical and laboratory settings as per the agency protocol. Any student with inappropriate attire may be dismissed from class at the discretion of the faculty.

The clinical dress code policy for students is established by the FSC Ann Blanton Edwards School of Nursing and Health Sciences faculty and reflects the area agency employee requirements. All students must adhere to the dress code policy and specific clinical agency requirements when in the clinical setting. Personal appearance must demonstrate neatness, cleanliness, and good hygiene. Extremes in appearance or accessory attire that potentially interfere with patient care or perception are not acceptable. Anyone in violation of this policy will be required to leave the clinical site.

All students reporting for clinical and/or course-specific Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) must adhere to the following:

1. *Uniform:* Each student must wear a white lab coat. The lab coat should be worn over business casual clothing in the clinical setting. Lab coats need to be stain-free and wrinkle-free. They are required for AGPCNP, FNP, and PMHNP students during advanced health assessment. When providing patient care in a clinical environment, professional business casual or facility-specific attire must be worn. This also applies to class and program oral and poster presentations.  
When working in clinical areas where faculty prefer that red FSC shirts are more appropriate attire, these can be worn.
2. *Hair:* Hair must be neat and appropriately groomed. Male students may have beards and/or mustaches, provided they are well-groomed and trimmed conservatively.
3. *Shoes:* Footwear should be clean, appropriate for clothing, protective, and fit securely. Shoes should be comfortable with closed toes.
4. *Student Identification:* For all clinical sites, students must wear their Florida Southern College Student ID. Additional facility required ID badges should be worn while in the clinical area, identifying themselves as students.
5. *Piercings:* For all clinical sites, earrings will be limited to two, not more than one inch in length, while in the clinical setting. For pediatric clinical sites, earrings will be limited to two, posts only, no dangling or hoops allowed. All earlobe plugs must be capped with a plastic cap.

6. *Tattoos*: Visible tattoos must be covered.
7. *Nails*: Artificial/Acrylic Nails are not allowed. Clear or neutral nail polish is permissible.
8. All students are expected to be in a proper state of hygiene for the clinical area.

### **MSN and PMC Clinical Guidelines**

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To enroll in any clinical nursing courses, students must meet program and clinical agency requirements. The Nursing Program contracts with CastleBranch tracking system for the management and tracking of health requirements. Students who have not met the program compliance requirements as documented in CastleBranch tracking system by the established due date will be removed from the clinical course. Students who remain out of compliance by the start of the semester may be removed from the nursing course immediately. Students may be eligible to re-enroll in the course in a subsequent semester. Dropping a course will increase the time to graduation.

Specific clinical requirements are outlined in the *MSN and Post-Master's Certificate Programs Clinical Guidelines for Adult-Gerontology Primary Care, Family Nurse Practitioner, and Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner*, and in the *MSN and Post-Master's Certificate Programs Clinical/Practicum Guidelines for Nursing Administrative Leadership & Nurse Educator* documents available via the MSN Student Communication site in the Canvas LMS. All students are expected to read and adhere to the guidelines as outlined in the document.

Students are expected to be physically, mentally, emotionally, and cognitively prepared to fulfill clinical assignments safely. Students who are unable to meet these expectations and/or are deemed unsafe to themselves or others in the clinical setting will be asked to leave the unit/agency. A follow-up assessment with the appropriate personnel must be completed prior to return to the clinical setting. Patient safety and welfare are paramount. Any student who places a patient in an actual or potentially hazardous or unsafe situation due to insufficient judgment or clinical preparation/competence may receive an unsatisfactory grade for clinical performance and may be dismissed from the program regardless of academic standing in other classes.

Students who are suspected of being chemically impaired due to alcohol or drug use will be removed from the clinical setting and may be required to submit for testing and/or evaluation and to provide written verification of fitness to return to the clinical arena prior to resuming practicum hours. The Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences is the final authority relative to progression in these situations.

Transportation to and from clinical sites is the responsibility of the student. FSC does not cover travel liability for transportation to and from clinical sites, including partnering

agencies, home visits, or visits to community sites. Students are expected to follow all traffic and parking rules.

### **MSN and Certificate Programs Health Requirements**

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The following information provides an overview of the requirements of all students prior to entering the FSC Nursing Program. Students may not begin clinical experiences until all program requirements have been submitted and approved. Individual health care organizations may have separate and/or additional screening requirements. Students seeking placement in these organizations must fulfill these requirements to complete clinical hours at these sites.

The student is responsible for the cost of the service and all related costs for screenings/immunization/certifications. Some health requirements require a YEARLY update, and it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the tests are completed and the report is submitted to the CastleBranch tracking system.

- 1. Criminal Background Screening.** Each MSN and certificate student is required to complete a criminal background screening, including fingerprinting, prior to starting the program. **NOTE:** Any student with a prior arrest or conviction history may be denied entry into the MSN or certificate program due to our agency contract agreements or may be denied licensure as an advanced practice registered nurse per Florida Statue 464 (Nurse Practice Act). Students who apply to the MSN program with a prior criminal record must be further screened by the program director and approved by the dean prior to acceptance into the program. Failure to disclose prior criminal history on the application or report any subsequent criminal arrest after enrollment at Florida Southern College to the dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences may disqualify the student from the nursing program. All information obtained through FDLE and other background checks is kept confidential unless there is a legal reporting requirement for licensed nurses.
- 2. Urine Drug Screen (see page 28).** Each nursing student is required to complete a ten-panel drug screen prior to starting the program. Any student may be requested to repeat the urine drug screen as required by any clinical site or as part of a drug testing program. The cost of the background check and drug screenings is the responsibility of the student. After students purchase their CastleBranch account, the required documents to obtain the mandatory drug screen will be available through CastleBranch. No other previous drug screen results will be accepted. **Note:** Students who have a positive drug test may be denied acceptance into the program or be unenrolled from the program.
- 3. Clinical Screening Documentation.** Each nursing student is required to purchase a clinical documentation package, upload and maintain documents prior to the deadlines provided by the program director (prior to entering the program).
- 4. Basic Life Support Certification (see page 28).** All students must have a current adult and pediatric BLS certification with AED and maintain certification through the end of the program of study.
- 5. Immunizations.** The student is responsible for all related costs for immunization. No student will be allowed to begin clinical experiences until all clinical requirements have been submitted by the designated date prior to entering the program. Students who have positive antibodies for Hepatitis C or HIV or other chronic infective diseases that may compromise

patient safety, must be further screened and counseled. Because students will have direct contact with patients during the course of their clinical assignments in hospitals and other care settings, specific safeguards or other restrictions to practice may be imposed on the student to protect patients and themselves. The clinical agencies will have final say whether infected students can practice or attend clinical assignments.

- a. **Tuberculosis testing:** A negative 2-step TB skin test (administered 1-3 weeks apart) OR Negative TB blood test (lab report required)
  - b. **Measles/Mumps/Rubella** (MMR) immunization or positive titer
  - c. **Hepatitis B** immunization or positive titer
  - d. **Hepatitis C** (HCV) titer negative; if positive, see below
  - e. **Varicella** immunization or positive titer
  - f. **Pertussis** (Tdap) immunization
  - g. **Tetanus** booster every 10 years
  - h. **Annual flu** vaccine
  - i. **COVID-19** vaccinations are required as defined by clinical agencies
6. **Students who have positive antibodies for Hepatitis C or HIV**, or other chronic infectious diseases that may compromise patient safety, must be further screened or counseled. Because students will have direct contact with patients during their clinical assignments in hospitals and other care settings, specific safeguards or other restrictions to practice may be imposed on the student to protect patients and themselves. The clinical agencies will have the final say on whether infected students can practice or attend clinical assignments.
7. **Health Care Provider Statement.** SNHS Exam form completed by a health care provider stating the student may participate in clinical experience assignments. Any restrictions must be outlined and include a reasonable plan for accommodation.
8. **Affidavit of Good Moral Character** (notarized)
9. **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) & Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Training.** Students are required to complete online OSHA and HIPAA training modules prior to entering the program.
10. **Liability Insurance Policy.** A blanket student nursing liability insurance policy will cover all nursing students for the time they are providing patient care as part of a supervised clinical education experience. The cost will be included in the nursing fee charged each semester.
11. **Confidentiality of Records (see page 28)**
12. **Additional Health Requirements.** Clinical sites may have additional requirements, such as repeat drug screens, health insurance, or other screening requirements. The student is responsible for all costs associated with these additional clinical requirements.

## **Mandatory Drug Screening**

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All students enrolled in a clinical course are required to provide a sample for a urine drug screen. This is a requirement among agencies that accept our students for clinical experience. Students will have a drug screen before they begin their initial clinical experience and, if needed, any additional drug screening for just cause. Students who have not completed a drug screen will not be permitted in any clinical setting. Students will be responsible for the cost of subsequent screening for just cause.

## **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Requirement**

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Students are required to complete a course in CPR before beginning their clinical rotation. A CPR course must include adult, child, infant, and AED training. Nursing students will upload a copy of their valid CPR card into CastleBranch. The student is required to provide the front and back sides of their SIGNED CPR card. Students are responsible for ensuring current CPR documentation is always available in CastleBranch.

## **HIPAA Training**

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All students in the Nursing Program are required to complete training regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) prior to participation in clinical courses. These computer-based learning (CBL) modules are purchased through CastleBranch. Failure to complete the CBL modules will prohibit a student's clearance to begin their clinical rotations.

## **HIPAA Violations**

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The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) requires health care providers to abide by the regulations for privacy and confidentiality of protected health information and covers all individually identifiable health information whether the information is electronic, paper or spoken. All students are provided HIPAA training for conduct regarding protection of patient/client information prior to entrance into clinical courses and are responsible for implementing HIPAA standards and procedures in each clinical setting in which students are placed. Violation of HIPAA may result in dismissal from the nursing program.

## **Incident Policy**

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### *On Campus*

In the event of a life-threatening emergency call 911

In the event of a student accident (that does not require 911 assistance) **call FSC Campus Safety at 863-680-4305**. Campus Safety will file an incident report and take the student back to their room (if living on campus). Campus Safety will also notify the Office of Student Life at 863-680-3952 who will decide if the student's emergency contact person should be notified.

Beyond providing emergency measures or routine first aid, faculty and staff should not attempt to diagnose or treat students who are ill or injured.

The Incident Management and Reporting form should be submitted to the Ann Blanton Edwards School of Nursing and Health Sciences Dean's Executive Assistant within 72 hours of the incident. Copies will be retained in the student's academic file and the ABESNHS incident tracking file.

**Off Campus**

In the event of a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

If a student has an incident at an off-campus location during their clinical, contact the assigned MSN Clinical Faculty/Graduate Faculty of Record or Program Director immediately.

The Incident Management and Reporting form should be submitted to the Ann Blanton Edwards School of Nursing and Health Sciences Dean's Executive Assistant within 72 hours of the incident. Copies will be retained in the student's academic file and the ABESNHS incident tracking file.

**Professional liability insurance**

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Students are covered for general and malpractice insurance by the FSC Nursing Program's blanket nursing liability policy during program-required student activities. An annual fee is assessed to the student account for this insurance.

## IV. Student Life

### Communication

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Nursing students have the opportunity to participate in decisions affecting the nursing programs through appointed student representatives to nursing program committees. Each year, student representatives are selected from the BSN, MSN, and DNP programs.

Representation also occurs through selected students invited for membership on the ABESNHS Dean's Student Advisory Committee; this committee meets twice each semester and provides an opportunity for all student groups within the school to interact and advise the dean.

The Dean and Program Directors meet as needed with student groups to address issues such as program event planning, suggestions for program improvements, nominations for awards and services to the program, and continued communications with students and with alumni.

### MSN Student Communication Site

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MSN nursing students are enrolled in the *MSN Student Communication Site* (found in the FSC Canvas LMS), which contains the Nursing Student Handbook, MSN & PMC Clinical Guidelines document, course, clinical, advising, and testing information. This site also contains program Announcements.

### FSC Social Media Policy

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The College's students are required to comply with the guidelines and requirements in this policy when conducting social networking activities. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Even if social networking or social media activities take place off campus, what is said can have an adverse effect on the College's legitimate business interests and its students' ability to live and learn in an academic environment free from hostility, harassment, discrimination, and defamation. Further details on this policy are located on the FSC *Office of Student Conduct* site: <https://www.flsouthern.edu/campus-offices/offices-directory/office-of-student-conduct>

### FSC Student Email Accounts

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The official FSC email account is the only email that can be authenticated. Students in the MSN and certificate programs are required to use their FSC email account during the program. Contact Rinker Technology Center for assistance in setting up your official FSC e-mail account <https://www.flsouthern.edu/campus-offices/offices-directory/office-of-technology-services>

## **SIGMA**

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SIGMA is the National Honor Society of Nursing. FSC's chapter is Upsilon Omega. The organization recognizes superior achievement and the development of leadership qualities, fosters high professional standards, encourages creative work and strengthens commitment to ideals of the profession. Membership is by invitation only. Invitations will be sent to candidates selected by the faculty who have leadership and research abilities, who have completed the required portion of the nursing programs, and who have the required cumulative grade point average. <https://www.sigmanursing.org/>

## V. Appendix

### FSC Infectious Disease Policy

Living and learning in a small community can expose students, employees, and guests to various infectious diseases. For this reason, all student members of the Florida Southern College community are required to have proper documentation regarding required vaccinations on file with the Student Health Center. Students may seek exemption from meeting the immunization requirement only for medical or religious purposes with completion of the *Immunization Exemption Release and Indemnity Agreement* form available from the Student Health Center and online at <https://www.flsouthern.edu/campus-offices/student-health-center/home.aspx> .

When the College suspects there is a threat of an infectious disease we can take action to inform our community to help keep them safe. Among the most serious diseases are:

- Bacterial Meningitis (meningococcal disease)
- Diseases of the gut causing vomiting & diarrhea (related to food & water)
- Influenza and upper respiratory viral infections such as COVID-19 or other coronaviruses.
- Tuberculosis
- Chickenpox and other vaccine preventable diseases (e.g., measles, whooping cough)
- MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*)
- Infections caused by mosquitoes and ticks (e.g., mosquito borne such as West Nile Virus)
- Streptococcal infections (scarlet fever, strep throat, rheumatic fever)
- Variola viruses (e.g. smallpox, monkeypox)
- Newly emerging infectious diseases
- Less serious but common: Sexually transmitted diseases; mononucleosis

#### Campus Reporting

Reporting of cases of infectious diseases and related conditions has been, and remains, a vital step in controlling and preventing the spread of communicable diseases. Any person who has been diagnosed with an infectious disease or who has knowledge of infectious disease(s) or a cluster of unexplained illness on campus, infectious or non-infectious, must promptly report the information to Campus Safety at (863) 680-4125.

Advise the person who is ill to seek medical care. If the person is a student, advise the student to seek medical care at the Student Health Center. If college personnel, the employee should seek medical care at their primary care physician's office. If the above medical facilities are closed, some additional options include:

- Lakeland Regional Health – Walk-In Clinics, Monday – Friday, 8 am – 8 pm; Saturday – Sunday, 8 am – 5 pm; (863) 284-5000
  - Lake Miriam Campus, 4710 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33813
  - Gateway Walk-In Campus, 2815 Lakeland Hills Blvd, Lakeland, FL 33805
- Lakeland Regional Medical Center, 1324 Lakeland Hills Blvd. 33804, (863) 687-1100, 24 hours/day, 7 days/week
- Night Owl Urgent Care, 3242 South Florida Avenue 33803, (863) 644-7337, 10 a.m. – 10 p.m., 7 days/week
- Watson Clinic Urgent Care at Main, 1600 Lakeland Hills Blvd. 33805, (863) 680-7271
- Watson Clinic Express Care at Lakeland Highlands, 2300 E. County Road 540A, 33813, (863) 393-9472

## Infectious Disease Response Plan

The Student Health Center works in collaboration with the Vice President of Student Development to coordinate campus responses to potential infectious disease outbreaks.

Generally, the response plan is as follows:

1. Reports of student potential illness should be made to the Student Health Center at (863) 680-4292. Operating hours are Monday – Friday, 8am to 5pm. Reporting sources include: The Student Health Center (SHC); Florida Department of Health; student, staff, faculty; or other individual or entity.
  - After-Hours: when the SHC is closed, reports should be made to Campus Safety at (863) 680-4125
    - Reports of employee potential illness should be made to the office of Human Resources at [HR@flsouthern.edu](mailto:HR@flsouthern.edu) or (863)680-5079.
2. The SHC (when after-hours, the Vice President of Student Development, along with Safety) quickly gathers information about the ill individual (while respecting the privacy of medical information) and any others who were in close contact.
3. The SHC notifies the Vice President of Student Development and, if applicable, the Florida Department of Health in Polk County. (Epidemiology Unit at (863) 519-8300 or (863) 413-2620 for the nurse on call during nights, weekends, and holidays).
4. The Vice President contacts the Campus Safety Director, the College’s President, and others needing to know. Drafting a campus-wide notification alert may be necessary and can be done in conjunction with the Florida Department of Health in Polk County. General goals include transparency, protection of privacy, alerting people to protective actions, and reassurance to those not at high risk. Most notifications will bring media attention that can further assist with messaging. There might also be campus-wide notification, including reassurance to those who are not at high-risk of infection.
5. The Student Health Center, working in partnership with the Florida Department of Health in Polk County, identifies those at high-risk of infection (typically those in prolonged close, versus casual, contact) and notifies them of “next steps” to be taken.
6. When a student tests positive for an infectious, communicable disease (such as COVID-19 or monkeypox) the student will need to isolate away from campus for the period of time as designated by College administration. For residential students, this means the student must go home, go to a friend's home, hotel or other location not on College property. Students should have a plan in place before arriving on campus to start the semester. Naturally, employees isolate at home.
7. Using appropriate protective practices, properly trained custodians of the Facilities Maintenance department conduct a thorough cleaning and disinfection of residence halls, classrooms, offices, and the examination room of the Student Health Center.

To view student responsibilities under the College’s **MRSA Policy**, please visit Appendix C of the Student Handbook found here: <https://www.flsouthern.edu/campus-offices/offices-directory/office-of-student-conduct>

Note, the Student Health Center is operated by Lakeland Regional Health (LRH) personnel. LRH will make proper notification to the Florida Department of Health when infection is confirmed and when there is a State reporting requirement.

