

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY



School of Nursing

MSN STUDENT HANDBOOK 2017-2018

The baccalaureate degree in nursing, master's degree in nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice at Western Kentucky University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036, 202-887-6791. (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation>).

Note: Policies stated within this document relate to any student enrolled in the MSN program in the 2017-2018 academic year.

Revised August 2017

GRADUATE EDUCATION

The faculty believes that the purpose of graduate education is to prepare the nurse for leadership roles and specialization in nursing. The program further develops expertise in advanced nursing practice that demands increased accountability, proficiency, and leadership. The MSN degree builds upon baccalaureate education, further developing intellectual skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and ethical decision-making. Students are engaged in the application of theory, research and evidenced-based nursing practice. The faculty believes there are diverse pathways toward achievement of the MSN degree; thus the SON offers three specialty concentrations for BSN prepared nurses: nurse administrators, nurse educators, and psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioners. Entry options for associate degree prepared nurses with a baccalaureate degree in a related field are available in the nurse administrator and nurse educator concentrations.

Nurse Administrators are prepared as advanced practice nurses for administrative positions as a nurse manager or nurse executive in a variety of health care settings. Nurses who hold nurse manager or nurse executive positions are responsible for activities such as:

- Management of nurses and allied health personnel.
- Proper allocation of available resources to provide efficient and effective nursing care.
- Organizational programming and input into executive level decisions.
- Assuming leadership roles in planning, organizing, implementing and controlling programs and activities that affect patient quality outcomes, staff development, and research.

Nurse Educators are prepared for entry-level faculty positions in academic setting such as universities, colleges and vocational settings. Students are also prepared for education positions within a variety of health care organizations. The program of study provides experiences related to the diverse content and roles:

- Teaching and learning theory and methodologies.
- Curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation.
- Development of the educator role in teaching, scholarship, and public service.
- Functioning as a change agent and leader in academic and professional settings.
- Education in a health care settings.

Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMHNP) are prepared at the graduate level to diagnose, prescribe, and treat psychiatric illnesses and mental health conditions across the lifespan. This concentration prepares the graduate to sit for the certification as a Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (across the lifespan). Students are educationally prepared to provide the full range of psychiatric services, including the delivery of primary mental healthcare services. Primary mental health care provided by the PMHNP involves the continuous and comprehensive services necessary for the promotion of optimal mental health, prevention and treatment of psychiatric disorders and health maintenance. This includes the assessment, diagnosis, and management of mental health problems and psychiatric disorders including:

- Diagnosing and managing acute and chronic episodes of illnesses.
- Providing services related to health promotion and disease management, and promoting the health of patients.
- Ordering, conducting, supervising and interpreting diagnostic and laboratory tests.
- Prescribing pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies within their scope of practice as defined by regulatory and professional organizations.
- Educating and counseling patients.

- Advocating for quality patient care and professional roles through involvement in politics and health policy.

Graduate education provides the nurse with a variety of economic, career, and professional opportunities. Specialization at the master's level prepares the nurse for leadership and advanced practice necessary for evolving roles in nursing that promote health for a global community.

MSN PROGRAM OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate proficiency in the utilization of research and quality improvement, including problem identification, awareness of outcomes, evaluation and dissemination of research.
2. Analyze emerging organizational, financial, political, and technological issues confronting nursing and society as a basis for enacting change.
3. Practice from an ethical perspective that acknowledges conflicting values and rights.
4. Assume and develop practice and professional roles to meet societal needs to promote high quality, safe, patient care.
5. Integrate theory and research from nursing and related disciplines as a foundation for advanced practice.
6. Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of human diversity.
7. Integrate theoretical knowledge of health promotion and maintenance and illness/disease prevention to achieve optimal health.

ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK

The BSN and Graduate curricula are based on the philosophical beliefs of faculty regarding client, health, environment, and professional nursing.

The baccalaureate nursing curricula integrates knowledge from the biological, behavioral, and social sciences and liberal arts to provide a foundation for professional nursing practice. Learning experiences occur in a variety of health care settings and progress from basic to complex activities. The curricula content is based on *The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2008), *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretation Statements* (American Nurses Association [ANA], 2015), *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (ANA, 2010), *Nursing's Social Policy Statement: The Essence of the Profession* (ANA, 2010), and *Quality and Safety Education for Nurses* (QSEN) (AACN, 2011).

Building upon the foundation of baccalaureate education, the MSN program prepares the professional nurse for specialty and advanced nursing practice roles. The core curriculum is based on *The Essentials of Master's Education for Advanced Practice Nursing* (AACN, 2011). In addition, the program uses the following sets of specialty standards and competencies:

- *ANA Nursing Administration: Scope and Standards of Practice* (2016).
- *National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education (NTF) 2012 Criteria for the Evaluation of Nursing Practitioner Programs.*
- National League for Nursing (NLN) *Nurse Educator Competencies* (2013).

The purposes of the MSN program in Nursing at WKU are to:

1. Prepare nurse administrators, nurse educators, and PMHP who can provide high quality, safe nursing care.

2. Prepare graduates who can apply and communicate knowledge for the advancement of nursing.
3. Provide the knowledge base for doctoral study in nursing.

MSN education is a process that provides opportunities to expand and extend knowledge for continued growth and competency of the individual and the profession. It requires *intensive study* and *lifelong professional development* and draws on multiple disciplines and involves organized learning experiences that augment basic nursing knowledge and skills in preparation for advanced practice nursing roles. Nursing education is a *collegial* process which fosters creativity, and *independent and critical thinking*. We value self-directed learners, continual learning, and active engagement in a teaching/learning partnership. The educational process supports personal, social and intellectual development while assisting students to attain academic and professional goals. Through the provision of meaningful learning experiences, nursing education seeks to assist the learner to formulate and structure nursing knowledge, while distinguishing relevant from non-relevant information and developing safe and effective nursing practice. The educational program seeks to evoke honesty, excitement of discovery, encourage self-expression while *requiring demonstration of competencies, knowledge (synthesis/analysis), oral and written communication*.

The Graduate SON faculty believes that students are active, self-directed adult learners who are committed to and are accountable for integrity of academic accomplishments, professional practice and self-assessment. Learning is a personal responsibility.

POST-MSN CERTIFICATE OPTIONS

Post-MSN Certificate in Family Nurse Practitioner:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree course of study that leads to eligibility to apply for a national FNP certification examination.

The course of study is individualized based upon a review of the student's previously earned credits. The courses are evaluated based upon NONPF standards for FNP graduates. All courses transferred in must adhere to the Graduate School's Transfer Credits policy. All applicants will complete as a minimum 17 credit hours of graduate nursing courses comprised of NURS 508 Advanced Issues, NURS 509 Practice Management, NURS 546 Primary Care of Infants and Children, NURS 547 Primary Care of Infants and Children Clinical, NURS 548 Primary Care of Adults, NURS 549 Primary Care of Adults Clinical, and NURS 554 Primary Care Internship. Additional courses may be required including: NURS 500 Advanced Patho, NURS 515 Advanced Pharm, and NURS 503/505 Advanced Health Assessment/Advanced Health Assessment Clinical. Previous MSN course work is evaluated to determine transfer, currently of content and alignment with the WKU FNP curriculum.

Post-MSN Certificate Nurse Administrator:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree educational preparation to enhance skills as a nurse leader and manager.

All courses transferred in must adhere to the Graduate School's Transfer Credits policy. All applicants will complete 19 credit hours of graduate courses comprised of a Business Management/Finance Support Course; an Organizational Theory/Health Care System Support Course; a Human Resource Management Support Course; a Health Care Ethics/Law Support Course;

NURS 508 Advanced Professional Issues; NURS 528 Leadership & Management in Nursing Administration; and NURS 530 Nursing Administration Internship.

Post-MSN Certificate in Nursing Education:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree educational preparation to teach in schools of Nursing in university and community college settings and assume education positions within a variety of health care organizations. The required courses focus on theories and strategies that guide instructional process, teaching and evaluation strategies, and educator role development.

All courses transferred in must adhere to the Graduate School's Transfer Credits policy. All applicants will complete 15-16 credit hours of graduate nursing courses comprised of NURS 531 Clinical Teaching, NURS 532 Roles and Issues, NURS 560 Curriculum, NURS 561 Technology, NURS 563 Hospital Education, NURS 565 Teaching Strategies, NURS 591 Special Topics in Nursing, and NURS 662 Assessment and Evaluation.

Post-MSN Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree course of study that leads to eligibility to apply for ANCC PMHNP certification examination.

The course of study is individualized based upon a review of the student's previously earned credits. The courses are evaluated based upon NONPF standards for PMHNP graduates. All courses transferred in must adhere to the Graduate School's Transfer Credits policy. All applicants will complete as a minimum 17 credit hours of graduate nursing courses comprised of NURS 507 Adv. Psych NP Assessment, NURS 523 Adv. Psych NP I, NURS 524 Adv. Psych NP I Clinical, NURS 525 Adv. Psych NP II, NURS 526 Adv. Psych NP II Clinical, NURS 527 Adv. Psych NP III Internship, and NURS 511 Adv. Psych NP III Seminar. Additional courses may be required including: NURS 500 Advanced Patho, NURS 515 Advanced Pharm, and NURS 503/505 Advanced Health Assessment/Advanced Health Assessment Clinical. Previous MSN course work is evaluated to determine transfer, currency of content and alignment with the WKU PMHNP curriculum.

Post-MSN Certificate Emergency Nurse Practitioner:

This option is for students who have completed a master's degree in Nursing and desire to pursue a non-degree educational preparation to enhance skills as a nurse leader and manager.

This certificate is intended for family, adult, and pediatric nurse practitioners currently practicing in emergency departments, critical access hospitals, and urgent care settings. It provides nursing professionals the opportunity to develop skills and competencies identified by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty (NONPF) as essential in these practice settings. The curriculum is built upon the NONFP competencies and the American Nurses Credentialing Commission (ANCC) requirements for advanced specialty certification.

All courses transferred in must adhere to the Graduate School's Transfer Credits policy. All applicants will complete 12 credit hours of graduate nursing courses comprised of NURS 515 Advanced Pharm, NURS 650 Emergency/Urgent Care I, NURS 651 Emergency/Urgent Care Clinical I, NURS 652 Emergency/Urgent Care II, and NURS 653 Emergency/Urgent Care Clinical II.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION

Minimum admission requirements:

1. Earned BSN degree from nationally accredited nursing program
2. Hold unencumbered RN licensure at the time of application, and must be licensed in the state where clinical experiences will be completed
3. Cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 on 4.0 scale
4. Applicants with a cumulative GPA between 2.75-2.99 in the BSN degree, will be considered for admission provided they have at least a 3.0 GPA in the last 60 hours of the BSN degree; and have a satisfactory review of additional required admission materials (goal statement, resume, references); plus a positive interview. Admission if approved will be on a probationary status requiring that the student earn a minimum grade of B in each course in the first 12 hours of the program.
5. Psychiatric NP applicants must document at least one year of RN experience in a psychiatric mental health nursing before the start of clinical course in the program. Post-MSN FNP Certificate applicants must document a minimum of one year of RN experience prior to acceptance.

Additional Required Application Materials:

6. A written goal statement (500-700 words in length, 12 pt. font, in Microsoft Word or RTF) describing your personal and professional career goals; your academic strengths and weaknesses; life modifications you will make to help you be successful in the program; and, your understanding of online or independent learning.
7. Three professional references (on form provided) to include nurse manager or nurse administrator and nursing faculty if a recent (<3 yrs.) BSN graduate.
8. Professional resume
9. All program admission materials must be received prior to the due date noted on the program web page. An interview may be offered following a review of admission materials. Completion of an interview and acceptance by the Graduate School does not assure acceptance into the MSN program. Incomplete applications will not be considered for admission. Applicants must reapply to be considered for the next admission cycle by updating the Graduate School application, and submitting all required program materials.

*The Graduate Faculty may schedule a personal interview after all required forms have been received.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Copy of current policy (face sheet) must be submitted for file and updated annually. All students in the School of Nursing must purchase the appropriate Individual Nursing Student Professional Liability Insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000. The policy must be in effect the first day of class in a clinical nursing course and must be kept current throughout the program of study. FNP & PMHNP students should contact their insurance companies to ensure coverage as a nurse practitioner student; this coverage documentation (on the face sheet or by separate letter) must also to be submitted for file and updated annually.

PRECEPTOR QUALIFICATIONS, EVALUATION, AND ORIENTATION

Preceptor Qualifications:

Nurse Administrator Preceptors:

Primary preceptors for the MSN and post-MSN administration students must meet the RN licensing and/or certification requirements in the state in which they are practicing and be:

1. Master's prepared in appropriate administration field. OR
2. Certified as Nurse Administrator. OR
3. In individual cases, exception may be made in consultation with faculty.

Nurse Educator Preceptors:

Primary Preceptors for the MSN and post-MSN education students must meet the RN licensing and/or certification requirements in the state in which they are practicing and be:

1. Must have at least two years' experience in the faculty role.
2. Nursing faculty, tenured or working towards tenure, with Assistant Professorship rank or above. OR
3. MSN prepared clinical Nurse Educator with a minimum of 1-year experience. OR
4. In individual cases, exception may be made in consultation with faculty.

Nurse Practitioner (FNP and PMHNP) Preceptors:

Preceptor qualifications are assessed by program faculty including preceptors' clinical experience, licensure validation (FNP and/or PMHNP), and clinical faculty experience. Preceptors must meet the following qualifications:

1. The preceptor who is an APRN shall have at least one year of clinical experience in the role and population focus for which the student is preparing.
2. A physician or PA who serves as a preceptor shall have at least one year of clinical experience and shall practice in the same or similar population focus for which the student is preparing.
3. A psychologist, LCSW, LMFT, LPCC who serves as a PMHNP preceptor shall have at least one year of clinical experience and shall practice in the same or similar population focus for which the student is preparing.
4. A preceptor shall not precept more than two students at a time.

Selection of preceptors is a collaboration among faculty, preceptor, and student; faculty endeavor to place students with appropriate and qualified preceptors in or near their county of residence. Documentation of clinical faculty review of preceptor qualifications is completed through the Medatrax Clinical Tracking System with the approval of a preceptor request.

Preceptor Evaluation

Preceptors formally evaluate the student at midterm and at the end of the semester/clinical experience. Informal evaluation of the student is maintained through direct communication between preceptor and the clinical course faculty. Preceptors in NURS 505, Advanced Health Assessment only complete an end of semester evaluation as the clinical experience only requires 60 hours. Course faculty complete an evaluation of the student during their onsite visit to the clinical site. During each clinical experience (for FNP and/or PMHNP) the preceptor and clinical site are evaluated by the student through Medatrax in each clinical course.

Preceptor Orientation

Faculty meet with preceptors and assure orientation is completed.

PRECEPTOR GUIDELINES

Accountability and Responsibility: Preceptors facilitate the integration of nursing students into their role responsibilities in the practice setting. The purpose for utilization of a preceptor is to guide and enhance the practice activities and learning experiences for students.

Ultimate responsibility and accountability for nursing education rest with Western Kentucky University's School of Nursing and its faculty. Faculty is responsible for the application, integration and enhancement of the theoretical constructs of each program's curriculum as it relates to the student's clinical experiences. Faculty is responsible and accountable for the control, direction, delegation, supervision and evaluation of these experiences.

Role expectations of faculty:

1. Contact appropriate administrator and solicit name(s) of recommended preceptor(s).
2. Provide written confirmation of selected preceptor(s) prior to beginning clinical.
3. Provide an orientation for preceptors, including course and clinical objectives, clinical experiences, and student evaluation criteria.
4. Be available to preceptors and students via telephone, e-mail and/or paper.
5. Make on-site visits to coordinate, supervise, and evaluate student performance and learning experience.
6. Make on-site visits within 24-48 hours if warranted.

Role expectations of preceptors:

1. Provide a copy of resume including documentation of current licensure/certification.
2. Be willing to serve as a preceptor, recognizing the time commitment required.
3. Participate in an orientation to the preceptor role.
4. Collaborate with Nursing faculty on student learning experiences.
5. Orient student to the clinical agency or institution and its policies and procedures.
6. Provide guidance for student achievement of learning objectives.
7. Supervise student performance as it relates to learning objectives.
8. Provide ongoing evaluation of student's progress and performance.
9. Meet with faculty to provide feedback regarding student performance and progress.
10. Inform faculty of unacceptable or problematic student behavior in a timely manner after behavior.
11. Complete and discuss with the student an evaluation at the end of the rotation.

Role expectations of students:

1. Meet with preceptors to share expectations, learning needs, and plan dates and time for clinical experiences.
2. Be prepared/punctual for clinical and schedule make-up with preceptors.
3. Seek-feedback regarding clinical performance from preceptors and faculty.
4. Coordinate site visits with faculty and preceptors, including date and time.
5. Conduct themselves in a professional manner and dress appropriately (business professional attire unless otherwise directed).
6. Document achievement of clinical objectives by keeping a log or journal.
7. Evaluate effectiveness of preceptor at the end of the clinical experiences.
8. Adhere to the policies of the WKU SON and the clinical agency.

Web-based Resources for Nurse Practitioner (NP) preceptors:

NONPF has developed vignettes to assist in NP preceptor orientation and giving feedback to NP students. These vignettes are filmed in the acute care setting, but are situations common to precepting students in any setting. The following vignettes are accessible at

http://www.nonpf.org/?page=Preceptor_Vignettes

- Precepting the Primary Care NP Student
- Working with the Overly Confident NP Student
- Working with the Overly Sensitive NP Student

USE OF LIST SERVE

All students are required to subscribe to the MSN program's list serve, primary-care. The primary-care list serve is used extensively to facilitate communication among faculty, staff, and graduate students. Announcements related to scholarships, grants and seminars are examples of announcements regularly posted on the primary-care list serve. It is the student's responsibility to check TopperMail (WKU's student e-mail) frequently and notify appropriate persons if the student is not receiving primary-care list serve information. To subscribe to the list serve the student must send an email from TopperMail account to primary-care-subscribe@lists.wku.edu

If a student changes the company from whom they obtain e-mail services, the student MUST unsubscribe to the list serve from the previous company and re-subscribe using the new e-mail address. Otherwise an error message is received for each message sent. (Graduates may also wish to have their name deleted from the list and should follow the procedure outlined below.) To unsubscribe go to <http://www.wku.edu/it/mailling-lists/utilities/my-lists.php> and follow the directions.

LIST SERVE NETIQUETTE

This list serve should be used for communicating with a group of people (faculty; students as a group or enrolled in a particular course). The list serve should not be used for personal communication. If you have a message for one person use their personal e-mail address.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid such as traineeships, scholarships and/or graduate assistantships for tuition and other expenses may be available depending upon a student's needs and the specifications of the funding agency. Information about WKU's scholarship website, TopDollar, can be found at <https://wku.academicworks.com/>

PERSONAL REFERENCES

When requesting faculty to write a letter of reference or complete a recommendation form, the student must send an email to the faculty member providing written permission.

COMPUTER-RELATED INFORMATION – NetID

Your NetID identifies you as a member of the WKU community, allowing you to access services on the WKU Information Technology (IT) network. Following admission to the Graduate School you may access many essential services requiring a NetID and associated password:

- **TopperMail** - the university's email system
- **WKU Libraries** and related system
- **Blackboard (Bb)** - web-based course management system that allows instructors to post course-related information for students online in a secure environment.
- **mywku.edu** - a single sign on website to access WKU online systems/services.
- **TopNet** allows students to access personal academic record information and course registration online.
- **Help Desk** - The IT Helpdesk serves as the initial point of contact for technology support and provides the first level of response for technology related problems and questions. Assistance may be requested at <http://www.wku.edu/it/helpdesk/> or by calling 270-745-7000.

You may access IT services through the Information Technology web page <http://www.wku.edu/it/>

REQUIRED COURSEWORK

Suggested course curriculum plans for the nurse administrator, nurse educator, and PMHNP programs for can be found at <http://wku.edu/nursing/msn.php>. Recommended part-time plans are available from your advisor.

Note: If a student requests and receives an incomplete grade in a course, the student must complete the requirements and have the incomplete grade removed and changed to a required letter grade in order to progress in the MSN program.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS – MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

The MSN program follows progression policies and degree requirements as published in the *Graduate Catalog* at <http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/>. Additionally the following admission and progression policies apply to all students officially accepted in the MSN program in the SON.

1. **Research Tool:** NURS 510 is the designated research tool. If the student earns a grade less than a B they must retake NURS 510 understanding that this will delay their progress in the program. NURS 510 may only be repeated one time. A second failure in this course will result in dismissal from the program. Students repeating NURS 510 may not progress to a clinical course until a satisfactory grade of at least a B is earned.
2. **Writing/Research Proficiency:** It is the expectation that all students completing the MSN program will demonstrate proficiency and scholarship in writing and research. To facilitate students in accomplishing this competency selected courses include a written paper that includes an aspect of integration/application of research and nursing theory. Writing and evaluation criteria will be provided for the assignment specific of the course requirements.
3. **Required Grade in Specialty Courses:** A grade of at least a B (80%) is required in each specialty course. Specialty courses require that the student earn a minimum grade of 80% on tests and quizzes prior to adding any additional points earned on papers, projects, SOAP notes, etc. to the final grade. Review the course syllabus for specific course requirements related to student grades and evaluation criteria. A minimum of a B must be earned in a specialty course to progress to the next course in the sequence or another clinical or specialty course. **A student who receives less than a “B” in two specialty courses will be dismissed from the program.**

The following courses are considered specialty courses for each specialty concentration:

NURSE ADMINISTRATOR: NURS 508, 528, 530

NURSE EDUCATOR: NURS 503, 505, 513, 519, 522, 531, 532, 560, 561, 662, 563, 564, 565, 605, 606

PMHNP: NURS 500, 503, 505, 507, 508, 511, 515, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527

Reenrollment in the class, to be repeated, is not automatic but is dependent upon available space. If the earned grade results in the student's overall GPA dropping below a 3.0 the student will be placed on academic probation. Please refer to the *Graduate Catalog* for policies related to graduate students and academic probation.

Dismissal from the Program:

Students will be dismissed from the program due to the following circumstances:

1. Failure to earn a grade of B on a second attempt of a specialty course (identified above).
2. Failure to earn a B on a second specialty course after successful completion of a repeated specialty course.
3. A student may only repeat one course one time. A second incidence of a failure to earn the required grade of a "B" will result in dismissal from the program.
4. Failure to earn a "B" on a second attempt in NURS 510.
5. A second occurrence of academic probation.
6. Failure to remove a grade of incomplete in the agreed upon time.
7. Failure to meet professional standards and SON policies such as the following but not all inclusive:
 - a. Academic dishonesty
 - b. Incivility to patients, preceptors, staff, peers, or faculty
 - c. Violation of agency policies
 - d. Failure to follow HIPAA policies, etc.
 - e. Failure to follow professional Scope and Standards
 - f. Any violation of the social media policy (see SON Handbook)
 - g. Failure to notify faculty of actual or potential legal actions that could result in actions on their license

Transfer from one Specialty Concentration to another

Occasionally students find that the specialty concentration they enter does not meet their individual career and/or personal goals. Transfer from one concentration to another is may be allowed if:

1. The student is in good academic standing in the concentration in which he/she is currently enrolled.
2. A formal letter requesting the change is made to the SON Graduate Committee explaining the request.

Students are encouraged to request this change early in the curriculum to prevent loss of credit hours. Talk to your academic advisor about the change to discuss how this will impact your time in the program and curriculum path. The change is not automatic. You will be considered with the next group of applicants in the following admission cycle. A transfer **will not** be considered if the request is due to dismissal from a concentration due to academic or any other reason. The student will be notified of the committee's decision. If approved, the student will be notified to meet with the program advisor and to complete a new Graduate School Program of Study form. As per the Graduate School policy, a transfer to a different concentration requires submission of a new application. Also, students should provide an updated CV/resume, goal statement, and one work reference to the SON Graduate

Program. A transfer from the new concentration back to the original course of study will not be considered.

- 4. MSN Comprehensive Examination/Capstone Policy:** The MSN program requires completion of an evidence-based project during the capstone course for each specialty. These courses are NURS 530 for the Nurse Administrator specialty, NURS 522 for the Nurse Educator specialty, and NURS 527 for the PMHNP specialty. Specific requirements for the project are provided in writing in the specialty capstone clinical course. Prior to completion of the course the faculty will notify the MSN Coordinator of successful completion of the project and a Comprehensive Exam/Capstone Completion form will be submitted to the Graduate School via TopNet. Failure to pass the evidence-based project and paper will result in a delay in graduation from the program and/or dismissal from the program. One rewrite attempt is allowed with faculty permission. Failure may occur due to violation of the program's writing policy and/or failure to demonstrate proficiency in the program outcomes through completion of the project/paper.

AWARDS AND GRADUATION

SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION FOR POST-MSN CERTIFICATES

Nurse Administrator Certification: Certification for nurse administrators is available at two levels through the ANCC. At this time, no advanced nursing licensure requirement has been established for nurse administrators that require attainment of national certification.

Nurse Educator Certification: A national certification, through the NLN, is available for nurse educators. At this time, no advanced nursing licensure requirement has been established for nurse educators that require attainment of national certification. Eligibility requirements and general information are available on the NLN website at

(<http://www.nln.org/professional-development-programs/Certification-for-Nurse-Educators/faqs>).

Family Nurse Practitioner/Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certifications: Students are responsible for contacting the State Board of Nursing in the state in which they plan to practice to determine requirements for APRN practice. Information regarding certification can be obtained by either calling the ANCC (1-800-284-CERT) or the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program, Capital Station, PO Box 12926, Austin, TX 78711 (1-512-442-4262).

Note: *PMHNP students can only sit for ANCC.*

Emergency Nurse Practitioner Certificate:

Requirements are available at <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/emergencynp-eligibility>. Currently candidates must have practiced the equivalent of 2 years full time as a nurse practitioner in the past 3 years, have a minimum of 2,000 hours of advanced practice in the specialty area of emergency care in the past 3 years (up to 50% (or 1,000) practice hours may be advanced practice clinical hours from an emergency care fellowship/residency program) and have completed 30 hours of continuing education in advanced emergency care in the past 3 years.

AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT IN GRADUATE STUDIES

The outstanding Graduate Student Awards program is held each year during the spring semester. The aim of the program is to recognize outstanding graduate students in each of the degree programs offered at WKU. Nursing faculty in the MSN program shall identify the recipient (previous August, December, or May graduates) of the award based on the following criteria:

1. Excellence in coursework, reflected in an outstanding grade point average.
2. Excellence in commitment to degree work beyond participation in coursework that might be reflected in original research for papers, thesis, etc.
3. Creative products, projects, papers or theses; participation in professional activities having to do with the student's commitment to the area of the degree or the teaching in the discipline; and/or papers presented or awards earned during the time of the degree program.
4. Other areas of excellence as deemed appropriate.
5. Potential for accomplishment in the profession.

GRADUATION

The WKU Graduate Commencement Ceremony recognizes the accomplishments of each graduate student. There is a special ceremony each fall and spring semester for all students completing graduate degrees. Each student is recognized individually by the WKU President. The gown, hat and hood is provided to each student submitting a graduation application at no charge. The MSN Pin is Available from WKU bookstore (purchase optional).