Armstrong State University
School of Nursing

Graduate Program in Nursing
Student Handbook

Accreditation Disclosure Statement for Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs

"The (baccalaureate degree in nursing/master's degree in nursing/Doctor of Nursing Practice and/or postgraduate APRN certificate) at Armstrong State University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036, 202-887-6791."

Revised Fall 2016
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INTRODUCTION

This handbook was prepared by the faculty of the Graduate Program in Nursing and is designed to provide you with information and other materials necessary to your success and progression in the graduate nursing program. Use your handbook in conjunction with the Armstrong State University Graduate Catalog. Keep it in a place where you can refer to it regularly while you are a student in the program. Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns that you may have. I wish you every success in your graduate nursing studies!

Linda J. Tuck, DNP, ANP-BC
Interim Graduate Nursing Program Coordinator

Frequently Used Telephone Numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email address</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Catherine Gilbert</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Catherine.gilbert@armstrong.edu">Catherine.gilbert@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-3145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly Peterson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Molly.peterson@armstrong.edu">Molly.peterson@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-2553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Program Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Ms. Kelly Bouthillet</td>
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<td>(912) 344-2575</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Jill Beckworth</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jill.Beckworth@armstrong.edu">Jill.Beckworth@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-2902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gina Crabb</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Gina.Crabb@armstrong.edu">Gina.Crabb@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-3507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Katrina Embrey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Katrina.Embyre@armstrong.edu">Katrina.Embyre@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 322-3385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Catherine Gilbert</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Catherine.gilbert@armstrong.edu">Catherine.gilbert@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-3145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Debra Hagerty</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Debra.Hagerty@armstrong.edu">Debra.Hagerty@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-3257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ann Hallock</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Ann.Hallock@armstrong.edu">Ann.Hallock@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-2659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Pam Mahan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Pamela.Mahan@armstrong.edu">Pamela.Mahan@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-2816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Carole Massey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Carole.Massey@armstrong.edu">Carole.Massey@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-3103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Danielle Peacock</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Danielle.Peacock@armstrong.edu">Danielle.Peacock@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-3283</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Helen Taggart</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Helen.Taggart@armstrong.edu">Helen.Taggart@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-2667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Linda Tuck</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Linda.Tuck@armstrong.edu">Linda.Tuck@armstrong.edu</a></td>
<td>(912) 344-2886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Platt, Interim Registrar</td>
<td></td>
<td>(912) 344-3099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. David Ward, Dean, COHP</td>
<td></td>
<td>(912) 344-2508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td></td>
<td>(912) 344-3026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td></td>
<td>(912) 344-2506</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. ACADEMIC POLICIES & INFORMATION

Armstrong HONOR CODE:

The Armstrong State University Honor Code protects the integrity of the grading system, making each grade that you receive, and your degree itself, a valuable achievement. Each student is required to abide by the rules of the Honor Code. Please refer to the current Graduate Catalog for specific information:


GRADING:

The following grading scale has been adopted by the Graduate Nursing Program:

- 90-100  A
- 80-89  B
- 70-79  C
- 60-69  D
- below 60  F

GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURE:

A student who contests a grade has the right to a grade appeal. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for specific information and appropriate time lines. It is the sole responsibility of the student to follow the correct procedure to appeal a grade.

GRADUATION:

Application for graduation must be completed two semesters BEFORE graduation. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for specific information and appropriate time lines. Students are required to pay graduation fees as determined by Armstrong.

PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS:

Students must complete the graduate nursing program within seven consecutive years from the date of their initial admission to the nursing program. Students who do not complete the program within this limit must apply for re-admission, meet current criteria for admission, and have their previous credits evaluated. Students who are granted re-admission after two years or more must meet course requirements in effect at the time of evaluation.
REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

In compliance with the Armstrong State University Graduate Program policies, the Master of Science in Nursing Program must be completed in 7 years. If a student’s progression is interrupted for any reason, it is the student’s responsibility to complete a Request for Leave of Absence, located on the School of Nursing website, as well as to meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator. Because of limited space in the advanced clinical courses, any alteration in progression may lengthen the student’s program. Students may be readmitted on a space available basis. Following an approved leave of absence, the student in good standing (GPA ≥3.0) may submit a request for re-admission to the Graduate Nursing Program Admissions Committee with the understanding that selected courses, determined by the Committee, may need to be repeated.
ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY
School of Nursing

FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Name______________________________________  Student ID Number___________

Address_________________________________________________________________

E-Mail Address___________________________________________________________

Daytime Phone___________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Graduate Program</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term Leave to Begin</th>
<th>Anticipated Return from Leave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall__  Spring__ Summer__</td>
<td>Year_____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“In compliance with the Armstrong Atlantic State University Graduate Program policies, the Master of Science in Nursing Program must be completed in 7 years. If a student’s progression is interrupted for any reason, it is the student’s responsibility to complete a Request for Leave of Absence, located on the School of Nursing Web site, and meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator. Because of limited space in the advanced clinical courses, any alteration in progression may lengthen the student’s program. Following an approved leave of absence, the student in good standing (GPA ≥3.0 or greater) may submit a request for readmission to the Graduate Nursing Program Admissions Committee with the understanding that selected courses, determined by the committee, may need to be repeated.”

Please attach 1) a written explanation detailing the circumstances surrounding your request for a leave of absence AND 2) A current plan of study.

___________________________________________  _______________________________
Student Signature                          Date

Graduate Nursing Program Coordinator

_________Approved             _______Denied

Student must return to program by    Fall_____  Spring_____ Summer_____  Year_______

Comments____________________________________________________________________

Signature___________________________________________________________ DATE____________________

MSN Student Handbook, page 6
ACADEMIC PROBATION/PROGRAM DISMISSAL:

Every student admitted to Armstrong with graduate student status must maintain a record of academic success in graduate coursework. A student may earn one C grade or below without being academically dismissed. If a student earns a second C or below the student will be dismissed regardless of overall GPA. After being academically dismissed, the student must wait one semester before reapplying for admission. Readmission is not guaranteed. For the purposes of this policy, the summer session is considered a semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you are academically dismissed after the…</th>
<th>You may apply for readmission in…</th>
<th>If readmitted you could be back in school as soon as…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall semester</td>
<td>Summer session</td>
<td>Fall semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring semester</td>
<td>Fall semester</td>
<td>Spring semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer session</td>
<td>Spring semester</td>
<td>Summer session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This policy took effect in the Fall 2010 semester. Retaking a course and earning a grade above the C level does not change the implementation of this policy. For the purposes of the graduate studies probation and dismissal policy, the following grades are included in the definition of C or below: C, D, F, WF, and U.

RE-ADMISSION PROCEDURES:

Student records will be maintained in the Graduate Nursing Program Office for two consecutive semesters. Following this period of time files become inactive; students must apply for readmission to Armstrong on the Application for Admission form provided by Graduate Studies. Please refer to the Armstrong Graduate Catalog for specific procedures.

REGISTRATION HOLD:

Students are responsible for submitting all documents required for program admission and progression in the Graduate Nursing Program. This includes all annual updates including but not limited to health insurance/waiver, liability insurance, CPR certification, health/physical with TB screening, and HIPPA statements. Students will have a HOLD placed on their registration status and will not be permitted to register until the necessary documents are provided to the Graduate Nursing Program Office. Students may also be administratively withdrawn during the semester in the event expired items are not updated.

COMPLAINT POLICY

**Definition:** A complaint is defined as any student concern related to a departmental or program policy, faculty member, clinical instructor, class activity, clinical site or anything that affects the teaching/learning environment.

**Purpose:** The student complaint process has as its aim the resolution of concerns via a professional problem solving approach. The outcome of the process will be directed toward the on-going improvement of the teaching/learning environment.

**Formal Complaint Process:**
1. It is expected that prior to initiation of a complaint that the student has attempted to resolve the problem with the appropriate faculty member and/or Department Head.

2. In the event that the complaint is not resolved, the student should initiate in writing the formal student complaint form located in the School of Nursing office.

3. The form is submitted with appropriate sections completed by the Head of the School of Nursing.

4. The student will participate in meetings to be scheduled by the Head of the School of Nursing as needed to include both student and faculty until satisfactory resolution has occurred.

5. The student may choose to withdraw the complaint at any time during the resolution process.

6. The Student Complaint Form, Complaint Summary Form, and Resolution will be kept in a secure file in the School of Nursing for five years.

7. Formal complaints with reports of resolution will be reviewed as part of ongoing program improvement.

**NP TRACK ADMISSION POLICIES:**

Applicants to NP tracks:

a. Must be an MSN student in good standing.

b. Apply to the intended track the Spring semester before NP clinical courses begin in Summer.

c. Must submit a letter of intent with a work history form.

d. Must have a minimum of 1 year of critical care experience as an RN within the last 3 years for selection into the Adult-Gero Acute Care NP track.

e. Advanced Pharmacology course must be no older than 5 years.

f. Students who are not admitted to the preferred NP track will be given the option to enter other tracks for which they are eligible on a space available basis or move to a waiting/preference list for the following Spring application cycle.

NP track admission decisions will be guided by scores on the Track Admission Rubric.

With regard to Post-Masters Certificate applicants, the following stipulations apply:

g. All applicants will have a gap analysis to determine needed coursework and clinical hours.

h. APRN applicants must be currently certified and actively practicing as an advanced practice nurse.

i. Applicants who are not APRNs will be required to successfully complete courses identified in the gap analysis.
j. Advanced Pharmacology course must be no older than 5 years.

STANDARDS OF PROGRESSION:

Students are responsible for meeting all Standards of Progression and Graduation as outlined in the Armstrong Graduate Catalog.

WITHDRAWALS/INCOMPLETES:

Students who are unable to complete a semester’s work due to non-academic extenuating circumstances should refer to the Armstrong Graduate Catalog for specific policies and procedures.

II. ACCREDITATION STATEMENT

The Armstrong School of Nursing is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Accreditation is an indication of public approbation, attesting to the quality of the educational program and the continued commitment of the sponsoring institution to support the program. For further information about the accreditation of the program, please contact the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education at the following address:

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 877-6791

III. ANNUAL UPDATES

The following information must be updated annually:

1. Physical examination, PPD or Chest X-Ray with statement indicating when next X-Ray is due
2. CPR Certification
3. Liability Insurance
4. Current unrestricted GA license as well as other states in which clinical practice occurs
5. Proof of Health Insurance (Armstrong mandatory Health Insurance or Waiver)
6. HIPPA/Confidentiality Statement
7. Proof of flu vaccination
8. Others as required by clinical facilities including background checks and drug screenings

It is the student’s responsibility to provide a hard copy of the above information to the Graduate Administrative Assistant to be stored in the student’s file.
IV. SCHOOL of NURSING OFFICE INFORMATION

School of Nursing Office is located in Ashmore Hall Room 216.
Graduate Nursing Office is located in Ashmore Hall Room 265.
Office hours: Monday - Friday 8:15 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Office Phone #s:  
Graduate Admin Asst: Molly Peterson  (912) 344-2553  
Undergraduate Admin Asst: Christy O’Neal  (912) 344-2585  
Undergraduate Admin Asst: Lynn Stadelman  (912) 344-2575  
Administrative Admin Asst: Kristy Gose  (912) 344-2554

Additional evening and weekend hours may be arranged through faculty.

V. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM

Upon completion of the master’s degree, the graduate will be able to function as a nurse specialist. The following are Graduate Program objectives:

1. Integrate scientific findings from nursing, and other disciplines as the basis for advanced practice.
2. Utilize leadership and ethical decision making with inter-professional teams to improve quality and safety.
3. Apply evidence based knowledge to resolve problems and effect change.
4. Incorporate technology and informatics to deliver quality care.
5. Advocate to influence health policy development and improve healthcare systems.
6. Collaborate with inter-professional teams to improve patient and population health outcomes.
7. Integrate health promotion and disease prevention in planning the care of individuals, families, and communities.
8. Integrate advanced practice nursing interventions to influence outcomes for individuals, populations, and systems.

VI. OUTCOME MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION ANALYSIS

**Critical Thinking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking</strong>: A creative skill that is practiced and refined over time. It is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information that has been gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication with others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Thinking Assessment Tool**: This two part instrument measures a total of ten criteria.
which collectively define the cognitive process of critical thinking. The student's ability to think critically is measured by the assessment of written evidence.

The ten criteria are rated on a four-step (0 to 3) scale, with a possible range of 0-30. The standard score range is identified as 0-20. The Critical Indicator, representing an 85% achievement score, is 17.

**Congruence with Philosophy**

Professional nurses utilize critical thinking skills for self-directed judgments and act independently within the framework of their nurse practice act.

**Graduate Nursing Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Measure</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult-Gerontological Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Track</strong> and Family Nurse Practitioner Track: NURS 7044 (Primary Care III) Case Study</td>
<td>The Primary Care III case study allows students to demonstrate their ability to analyze and develop differential diagnoses for presenting client symptoms. Clinical decision-making in the management of complex symptomatology provides the student with the foundation for the selection of appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic interventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult-Gerontological Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Track:</strong> NURS 7844: Case Study</td>
<td>The case study for the Adult–Gerontological Acute Care Nurse Practitioner track stimulates development and analysis of differential diagnoses of symptoms in an acutely ill adult. Clinical decision-making in the management of complex symptomatology provides the student with the foundation for the selection of appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic interventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post Master’s Certificate Tracks:</strong> NURS 7044 or 7844</td>
<td>The case study in any of the tracks and courses above allows PMC students to synthesize and analyze relevant information, thus developing differential diagnoses that are fundamental to nursing interventions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Communication: Written and Oral**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication:</strong> A transactive process which effectively imparts, confers or transmits thoughts, feelings, or information through verbal and nonverbal gestures with another person or persons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congruence with Philosophy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional nurses utilize effective communication skills to develop partnerships with clients and the interdisciplinary health team for the design, implementation, and evaluation of health strategies for the individual, family, aggregate, or population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measurement Instruments

In developing procedures for measurement of communication skills, the School of Nursing elected to separate the measurement of oral and written communication. This decision resulted in the generation of two communication instruments: oral and written. Together, these two instruments present a complete assessment of the student's proficiency in communication.

**Oral Communication Assessment Tool:**
This instrument measures a total of five criteria, one of which has six parts. These ten criteria collectively define the behaviors and skills necessary for the performance of expected oral communication.

The ten criteria are rated on a four-step (0 to 3) scale, with a possible range of 0-30. The standard score range is identified as 0-20. The Critical Indicator, representing an 85% achievement score, is 17.

**Written Communication Assessment Tool:**
This instrument measures a total of six criteria. These six criteria collectively define the student's ability to communicate in writing.

The six criteria are rated on a four-step (0 to 3) scale, with a possible range of 0-18. The standard score range is identified as 0-12. The Critical Indicator, representing an 85% achievement score, is 10.

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**Graduate Nursing Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Measure</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All MSN Tracks:</strong> NURS 7897/7899: Project or Thesis</td>
<td>The thesis/project experiences allow the student to communicate verbally and in writing the integration and synthesis of the knowledge accumulated in the selected program of study. Evaluation of the student’s oral and written abilities provides clear evidence of his/her achievement of the expected levels of communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Master’s Certificates:</td>
<td>Post-Master’s Certificates are exempted as these students have demonstrated prior proficiency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Therapeutic Nursing Interventions:**

**Definition**

**Therapeutic nursing interventions:** Are based on an ethic of human care that is contextually, socially, culturally, and ethnically relevant to the recipient. At the graduate level, strategies that constructively and positively influence the quality of health of individuals, families, groups, communities, and health care systems are evaluated.

**Congruence with Philosophy**
Professional nursing practice focuses upon therapeutic nursing interventions to provide health promotion, health maintenance, illness prevention, and health restoration. Professional nursing roles include practice, leadership, educator, advocate, researcher, consultant, and change agent.

**Measurement Instruments**

*Therapeutic Nursing Interventions Tool:* This instrument measures a total of five criteria, two of which has multiple parts. A total of nine criteria collectively define the behaviors and skills which have been designated as measurement of therapeutic nursing interventions.

The ten criteria are rated on a four-step (0 to 3) scale, with a possible range of 0-27. The standard score range is identified as 0-18. The Critical Indicator, representing an 85% achievement score, is 15.

**Graduate Nursing Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Measure</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult-Gerontological Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Track and Family Nurse Practitioner Track:</strong> NURS 7044 Case Study</td>
<td>The Primary Care III case study demonstrates the student’s ability to select, employ and direct therapeutic interventions for clients with acute and chronic conditions. Students integrate understanding of diagnostic and therapeutic health interventions with an advanced perspective of nursing practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult-Gerontological Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Track:</strong> NURS 7844: Case Study</td>
<td>The case study for the Adult–Gerontological Acute Care Nurse Practitioner track demonstrates ability to select, employ and direct therapeutic interventions for acutely ill clients. A-G Acute Care NP students integrate understanding of diagnostic and therapeutic health interventions with an advanced perspective of nursing practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Master’s Certificates Track:</strong> NURS 7044 or 7844</td>
<td>The case study for the tracks and courses above demonstrates ability to select, employ and direct therapeutic interventions for acutely ill clients. Students integrate understanding of diagnostic and therapeutic health interventions with an advanced perspective of nursing practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Patterns of Employment**

**Patterns of Employment Data:**

The clinical roles and settings that graduates of Armstrong State University’s Graduate Nursing program occupy after successful completion of the program of study.

**Proficiency**

*MSN Student Handbook, page 13*
### Definition

Proficiency: The possession of the required skill, knowledge and capacity to practice as an RN and APRN.

### Congruence with Philosophy

The mission is met by development of competent graduate nurses according to professional standards of governance.

### Measurement Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement Instrument</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Certification exams: AG Primary &amp; AG Acute Care NP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Measure Tool</td>
<td>Pass Rate of national certification for APRN graduates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VII. NURSING FACULTY’S MISSION, VISION AND VALUES (2015)

**The School of Nursing Mission Statement:** To improve the health of culturally diverse communities by educating students to become team-oriented, evidence-focused, competent professional nurses.

**The School of Nursing Vision Statement:** The School of Nursing strives to be a center of excellence for professional nursing education that prepares leaders to positively impact the profession, and the health of diverse communities they serve.

**The School of Nursing Values:**
The nursing faculty embrace these core values:

**Education:** The faculty value:
- nursing education that builds upon a strong scientific, theoretical, and liberal arts base
- student centered education that is transformative and experiential, leading to competent caring professional nurses
- the teaching-learning process that prepares students to utilize information technology and evidence based practice in patient centered care
- nursing standards and values that promote knowledge and critical thinking in professional practice
- interprofessional communication and collaboration
- baccalaureate nursing education as the entry into professional practice, and the foundation for graduate nursing education.

**Environment:** The faculty value:
- a culturally diverse environment of mutual trust and collegiality that builds an inclusive community

**Health:** The faculty value:
- health as a state of well-being that is dynamic and interactive with the environment
Person: The faculty value:
- the uniqueness and diversity of individuals, families, and communities

Professional Nursing Practice: The faculty value:
- the knowledge and application of professional nursing standards
- development of skills, knowledge and competencies for nursing practice
- ethical behaviors and accountability that support a high standard of professional nursing practice

Scholarship: The faculty value:
- scientific discovery in the application of evidence based practice
- A broad definition of scholarship that includes discovery, practice and teaching

Service
The faculty value:
- opportunities to serve communities through leadership, professional practice, consultation and collaboration

VIII. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

ARMSTRONG FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

Graduate students seeking financial aid must contact the Armstrong Financial Aid Office directly at 912-344-3266 for guidelines.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS LOAN REPAYMENT

The Federally funded program provides support for eligible nurse practitioner graduates. Contact the Graduate Nursing Coordinator for program information.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

Graduate Assistantships are available. Students must be accepted to a graduate degree program at Armstrong State University, maintain at least an overall 3.0 GPA, be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credit hours and no more than 12 credit hours per semester, and make satisfactory progress toward a degree. Students enrolled on online graduate degree programs are not eligible. Non-degree seeking or transient students are not eligible. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credit hours. Contact Enrollment Services for specific information at (912) 344-2865.

IX. GENERAL STUDENT POLICIES

ARMSTRONG DISABILITY SERVICES: Students accepted to Armstrong State University who are requesting accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Services. The student must provide documentation of the disability from a qualified professional and the documentation must support the need for the accommodation being requested. The Board of
Regents has established criteria in regards to documentation of learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder. These criteria are available in the Office of Disability Services.

**ADVISEMENT:** Graduate nursing students are assigned a faculty advisor. Students are expected to schedule appointments with assigned advisors as needed. The program coordinator and graduate faculty are also available during posted office hours for consultation and assistance.

**BOOKS:** Required textbooks may be purchased through the Armstrong Bookstore.

**CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** Use of cell phones or communication devices during class or testing is prohibited. Any device must be turned off and out of sight. Failure to comply may result in the following actions:

1. During class – student will be dismissed and may not return to that class session.
2. During testing – the test will be forfeited. The test will be picked up and the student will receive a zero for the test (and could result in Honor Court proceedings). Refer to Armstrong Catalog Honor Code and Code of Conduct.

**CERTIFICATION:** Graduates of their respective track (Adult Gerontological Primary Care Practitioner, Adult Gerontological Acute Care Practitioner or Family Nurse Practitioner) are eligible to take national certification exams in their respective role and population focus (Adult Gerontological Primary Care Practitioner, Adult Gerontological Acute Care Practitioner or Family Nurse Practitioner).

**CHILDREN ON CAMPUS:** Armstrong policy prohibits the presence of children during class activities. Children may not be left unattended in any Armstrong building campus or on Armstrong grounds.

**CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE:** Class attendance is expected of every student. Students are responsible for content discussed or announced in class. Students are also responsible for completing assignments on time. See each specific course syllabus for individual course requirements.

**CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT:** Each student must annually review and sign the Confidentiality Statement, found under D2L, Graduate Nursing Students Forms, HIPAA.

**CLINICAL:** Students must complete the required clinical hours for the chosen track. Absences from clinical must be rescheduled. It is the student’s responsibility to reschedule clinical with faculty and/or the preceptor regarding missed clinical hours. In order to meet clinical objectives and achieve the program terminal objectives, students must be eligible and acceptable for clinical experiences in all selected clinical agencies. Clinical agencies have the right to refuse admittance of students based on previous clinical behaviors or performance. Students who may be ineligible to complete required clinical expectations will be unable to satisfactorily complete course requirements.
Clinical work must be graded as “satisfactory” in each clinical course for progression. Clinical preceptors provide evaluative input, however the final clinical grade is the responsibility of the supervising faculty.

Clinical sites are approved by the supervising faculty based on the ability of the site to provide the student with encounters sufficient in number and variety so as to meet the specific course requirements. Students may suggest sites and preceptors for faculty consideration. Students may not be employed by the site during the hours counted as meeting the clinical course requirements. In order to adequately address the broad scope of adult advanced practice, students should anticipate experiences in a variety of clinical settings. Highly specialized practice sites may be used to supplement experiences as deemed appropriate by faculty. Travel to clinical sites is the responsibility of each student and may occur within a 100 mile radius of campus.

All clinical preceptors must be approved by the faculty and must not be relatives or family members of the student. Clinical preceptors must be certified, masters prepared advanced practice nurses with a minimum of one year experience. Nurse Practitioner students may also have a precepted experience with a licensed physician with credentials appropriate to course objectives.

Specific requirements are listed in each course syllabus and students are responsible for adhering to course policy.

Students are required to subscribe and document clinical paperwork and hours in an electronic system.

**INSTITUTIONAL CLINICAL CLEARANCE:** Clinical agencies utilized by the School of Nursing may require criminal background checks and/or drug testing prior to a student’s acceptance into clinical work. Students who do not pass the criminal background check and/or drug test will be unable to attend clinical courses and therefore may be unable to complete their program of study. Any fee or cost associated with background checks and/or drug testing are the responsibility of the student. Be sure to work with your clinical supervisor and the graduate office as needed to ensure complete understanding of your clinical institution’s requirements and deadlines.

**DRESS CODE AND PERSONAL APPEARANCES:**

Dress Code: The department dress code is designed to promote professional appearance for students. Additionally, it aims to uphold safety standards appropriate to the workplace. Students are expected to adhere to Departmental standards for professional dress. The dress code includes:

- **Lab Coat:** White lab coat with Armstrong name tag. The lab coat should be clean and neatly pressed.
- **Hair:** Neat and presents a well-groomed appearance. Hair shoulder-length or longer must be pulled back or put up. Hair accessories must be limited and neutral in color. Hair must be kept out of the face regardless of the length. Hair that is dyed must be a naturally occurring hair color. No faddish hairstyles are allowed.
• **Personal grooming:**
  - Nails should be neatly trimmed and should not extend beyond ¼ inch from the fingertip. Neither nail polish nor artificial nails are allowed
  - Make-up should not be excessive
  - Perfume/cologne/aftershave is prohibited
  - Chewing gum is not allowed while in the clinical setting

• **Jewelry:**
  - Earrings: two pairs of small post earrings; no cartilage earrings are allowed
  - Body piercing in visible areas other than ears is not permitted. Tongue rings and studs are not permitted
  - Chains/necklaces: must not be visible
  - Arm and ankle bracelets: none
  - Rings: plain wedding bands only

• **Tattooing:**
  - Tattoos must be covered

• **Clothing:**
  - No scrubs or military uniforms may be worn
  - No capris or shorts may be worn
  - Be mindful of the “scoop” of your blouse or top; cleavage is not appropriate
  - Neither leggings nor tights may be worn as pants
  - Only closed-toed, professionally appearing shoes may be worn
  - No tennis shoes are allowed
  - Heel height must not exceed 2 inches

**DISMISSAL:** The Graduate Catalog outlines standard procedures for reporting and adjudication of honor and conduct offenses.

**EQUIPMENT:** It is expected that students will have equipment needed to provide client care in clinical settings. Clinical students must consult faculty advisor for required equipment prior to beginning clinical courses.

**HEALTH INSURANCE:** Students must show proof of personal health and hospital insurance by waiving the mandatory student health insurance each semester or by purchasing it and providing a copy of the card to the Graduate Nursing Office.

**LIABILITY INSURANCE:** All students must show proof of purchase of professional liability insurance. Students may choose to participate in an Armstrong student policy that may be purchased through the Bursar’s Office. This insurance policy may be purchased at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters of study. Information and sources of liability insurance may be obtained from the Graduate Nursing Program Office.

**NAME TAGS:** Name tags may be purchased from an approved vendor. See Graduate Nursing office for details.
NEW STUDENT ADVISEMENT: All students planning to enroll in a graduate nursing program must meet with the graduate program coordinator or assigned advisor. During this initial meeting the faculty and student will complete a Course Sequence Plan.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR:

- Students are expected to be prepared for all class and clinical assignments. They are expected to attend class and clinical on time.
- Students are adults and are responsible for their own behavior and learning. Faculty provide guidance and support for students having difficulty with nursing courses and for those students who seek assistance related to academic improvement.
- Students are expected to exhibit appropriate professional conduct in class, lab, and clinical situations.
- Civility in the classroom/laboratory will be maintained. Students causing disruption will be dismissed from the classroom/clinical environment.
- All students are expected to abide by the Armstrong State University Honor Code and Code of Conduct.
- Students are considered representatives of Armstrong when in classes conducted by guest lecturers or on field trips and, therefore, are expected to dress and behave with consideration for the image they project to the general community.
- Students must be qualified and acceptable to clinical agencies utilized in the program. Some clinical agencies require criminal background checks and random drug screening.
- Confidentiality of patient records and situations will be maintained at all times. No patient chart is to be copied by any technological process. Patient information is not to be removed from any health care agency. Students violating this code will be dismissed from the program.
- Students are responsible for maintaining patient privacy and dignity at all times. Professional decorum extends into many aspects of life. Courteous professional behavior toward faculty, peers, patient/client, staff and healthcare personnel is expected at all times. A first violation will cause the student to be reprimanded, reminded of the code of professional behavior, and the incident will be noted in the student’s record. The problem will be discussed with the student. Any further instances of unprofessional or unacceptable behavior will result in dismissal from the program.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Nursing students have an obligation to understand the nature, benefits, and consequences of participating in social networking of all types. Online content and behavior has the potential to either enhance or undermine not only the individual’s career, but also the nursing profession.

The following guidelines were adapted from ANA’s Principles for Social Networking*:

1. Nursing students must not transmit or place online individually identifiable patient information.
2. Nursing students must observe ethically prescribed professional patient – nurse boundaries.
3 Nursing student should understand that patients, colleagues, institutions, and employers may view postings.
4 Nursing students should take advantage of privacy settings and seek to separate personal and professional information online.
5 Nursing students should bring content that could harm a patient’s privacy, rights, or welfare to the attention of appropriate authorities.

Violation of the social media guidelines could result in dismissal from the nursing program.


**SUBSTANCE ABUSE:** The University policies on alcoholic beverages and drugs are described in the Student Conduct Code, which states in part, “The possession or use of drugs (without a valid medical prescription) controlled by the federal Government is prohibited.” In accordance with these policies, the School of Nursing has adopted the following policy for nursing students in clinical settings:

- If a student reports to clinical under the influence of drugs/alcohol, he/she will not be allowed to remain in the clinical setting that day and the matter will be referred to the Graduate Coordinator for further evaluation. If the student insists he/she is not impaired, he/she has the option of having a drug/alcohol screen done at his/her expense.
- The clinical instructor and the Graduate Coordinator will determine when the student can return to clinical if the student has been asked to leave the clinical setting due to being under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
- If deemed necessary by the Graduate Coordinator and the clinical instructor, the student will be referred for evaluation. Further action will depend on the recommendation of the counselor.
- If the counselor believes treatment is necessary, the student may have the option of returning to the nursing program upon completion of treatment. Drug/alcohol screening must be performed with negative results within one week of returning to clinical.
- If the student does not comply with the above recommendations, he/she will be referred to the Chair of the School of Nursing for further actions.
- Based on recommendations of the counselor, the student may need to attend an aftercare program. If such a treatment plan is prescribed, the student must provide the Graduate Coordinator with documentation of attendance.

Detailed documentation of the incident(s) will be written by the clinical instructor and signed by the student indicating the student has read it. The documentation will be placed in the student’s file.

**TOBACCO USE:** Armstrong is a Tobacco-Free Campus.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Students must arrange for their own transportation to and from clinical agencies, and other program-related travel. Students must not provide transportation for clients.

**UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS:** Hepatitis, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other infections are significant and growing risks in the United States. Health care workers are
especially at risk for developing these diseases due to exposure to needle sticks and splashed blood/body fluids. Hepatitis B and HIV+ status can be prevented through the consistent use of UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS. There is no known method to prevent the development of AIDS in HIV+ individuals. Therefore, it is mandatory that efforts be taken to prevent exposure to these diseases. Universal precautions must be followed by students and faculty in the clinical settings.

X. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION POLICY, PROCEDURE AND APPLICATION

Comprehensive examinations in the major field of study are required for all candidates for the MSN. This examination tests students’ ability to synthesize and apply knowledge of nursing theory, research, roles and health policy.

ELIGIBILITY
Students applying to take the comprehensive examination must be enrolled in the final semester of course work. Students are eligible to take the comprehensive examination when the following criteria have been met:
A  Current or previous enrollment in NURS 7897 or 7899.
B  Current or previous enrollment in all major support and core courses required on the program of study.
C  Recommendation from the academic advisor.
D  An approved Program of Study form filed in the School of Nursing.
E  A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
F  No outstanding grades of Incomplete (I) in major courses.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS
Examination questions will be developed by the faculty of the Graduate Program in Nursing. Students will be provided with faculty consultation to assist with preparation for the comprehensive examination.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION
Answers to questions are evaluated by the student’s mastery of the following:
1  Detailed scope of knowledge and comprehension of research, theory and policy related to advanced nursing practice concepts.
2  In-depth analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation of topic(s) of interest.
3  Logical, systematic progression of ideas.
4  Skilled expression/presentation of thoughts.

EXAMINATION RESULTS
Category 1: Satisfactory: Student successfully meets all required criteria.

Category 2: Remediation required: student is given a directed assignment that must be successfully completed by end of semester in order to meet progression requirements.
XI. ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY MISSION VISION AND VALUES

Our Mission
Armstrong is teaching-centered and student-focused, providing diverse learning experiences and professional programs grounded in the liberal arts.

Our Vision
Armstrong strives to be an academically selective institution of first choice, recognized nationally for undergraduate, graduate, and professional education.

Our Values
Armstrong embraces these core values:
- We value education that is student-focused, transformative, experiential and rigorous, leading to student success.
- We value balance among teaching, mentoring, and scholarship.
- We value an environment of mutual trust and collegiality that builds an inclusive community.
- We value transparency that fosters shared governance.
- We value and respect diversity.
- We value ethical behavior and accountability that support high standards of performance.
- We value civic engagement through outreach and service.
- We value our relationship with Savannah, its unique geographic location, rich history, and abundant opportunities.

XII. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Sigma Theta Tau
The purpose of the organization is to recognize and support leadership, scholarship and research in professional nursing. Students who meet eligibility requirements of no less than a 3.5 grade point average and have completed ¼ of their course work may be invited to join Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society for Nursing. For additional information visit the Sigma Theta Tau website at http://www.nursingsociety.org.

Georgia Nurses Association
The professional organization for Registered Nurses is the American Nurses' Association (ANA). The Georgia Nurses Association (GNA) is a unit of ANA. Registered Nurse students are encouraged to become members of ANA/GNA.

Specialty Organizations:
A number of advanced practice groups are available locally including the Coastal GA APRN group. Specialty track advisors post meeting notices and have contact information available. Graduate nursing students are welcome to attend meetings but should RSVP as requested for dinner events.
XIII. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STRUCTURE OF ACCEPTABLE PAPERS

SCHOLARLY WRITING:
The Graduate Program in Nursing requires the use of the APA Manual, current edition for reference and formal paper documentation and style. The manual may be purchased in the bookstore. Scholarly papers in all courses will use this rubric for grading:

### APA & GRAMMAR CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>Excellent 25 Points</th>
<th>Good 21 Points</th>
<th>Fair 17 Points</th>
<th>Poor 0 Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APA, Grammar, and Spelling</td>
<td>No grammatical or spelling errors. Correct use of APA 6th edition.</td>
<td>1-3 errors in spelling, grammar or APA.</td>
<td>4-6 errors in spelling, grammar or APA.</td>
<td>Greater than 6 errors in spelling, grammar or APA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following *Guidelines for Acceptable Papers* is intended to facilitate the development and formation of papers required in the graduate nursing courses. Graduate student papers must reflect an appropriate level and style of writing, in addition to format and appearance. It is expected that all papers will be word-processed. *Papers unacceptable in style will not be read or graded*. Students who may require additional assistance with style or writing format should consult with their course professor *early in the semester for referral to the Armstrong Writing Center*.

**STYLE:**

Grammar & Form:
- Correct sentence structure & punctuation (avoids comma splices, fused sentences, misused or omitted apostrophes & semicolons, split infinitives, etc.)
- Correct paragraph structure with clear organized ideas
- Transition sentences or linkages between thoughts
- Smooth flow
- Agreement of subject and verb
- Correct verb forms & verb endings
- Correct use of adverbs and adjectives
- Correct word spelling
- Pronouns are referenced correctly & agree

Documentation and Presentation:
- American Psychological Association, (current ed.), is required for all reference papers
- Adequate number of quality references
- Professional sources appropriate to subject and context
- Current publication appropriate to content; older references used as appropriate for historical or demonstrative purposes only
- Readable: Computer (word processor) generated with a minimum number of errors in style, format and typing
CONTENT:
- Clear and relevant introduction
- Clear and directed content focus
- Depth and breadth appropriate to topic
- Clearly identifies scope of paper
- Concise, clear, and cogent
- Conclusion or summary reflects important points of paper

TITLE PAGE:
The title page for all graduate student papers should utilize the current standard APA format.

XIV. STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

For the Graduate Program in Nursing, several sets of specialty standards were selected to serve as a basis and guide for advanced nursing practice knowledge and skill development.

- Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies (NONPF, 2012)
- Population-Focused NP Competencies (NONPF, 2013)
- Adult-Gerontological Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Competencies (AACN, 2012)
- Adult-Gerontological Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Competencies (AACN, 2010)
- Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice (ANA, 2015)
- Nursing’s Social Policy Statement: The Essence of the Profession (ANA 2015)

XV. UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Armstrong State University offers a variety of activities to foster personal and professional growth. Students are encouraged to become involved in areas of interest. Activities available include inter-collegiate sports, religious activities, student government, honorary societies, special interest groups, and professional organizations. Involvement in departmental, college and graduate committees is encouraged.

Graduate nursing students are encouraged to serve on University, School of Nursing Committees and the Graduate Nursing Program Committee. For appointment to Department Committees and/or the Graduate Nursing Program Committee, students should contact the Head of the School of Nursing, or the Graduate Nursing Coordinator.
Graduate nursing students are also represented on the Graduate Student Coordinating Council.