

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA



GRADUATE, POST-MASTER'S CERTIFICATE, AND DOCTORAL PROGRAMS
ANDERSON COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS
STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

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I. General Information

The ACONHP offers a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree with four options for registered nurses. The four options are built upon a core curriculum of 15 hours. The full curriculum can be viewed in the [Graduate Catalog](#). The three options are described below:

1.

health care for individuals across the lifespan. This option prepares students to sit for national certification as a family nurse practitioner. This option has two mandatory on campus intensives. Failure to attend the mandatory on campus intensives could result in program progression delay. This option requires 41 hours for program completion and a minimum of 600 practicum hours.

2. **Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Option:** Students in this option will receive educational preparation that will enable them to assess, diagnose, and treat the mental health needs of patients. This h 84.1 (003 Tw)6.1 (i)4 (v)7 16 ((h)10 (e)3 (s)6 (i)4 (e)3 (n6 (ul)14
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The post-graduate certificate pathway is designed for registered nurses currently possessing a master's degree in nursing who seek academic preparation in a new specialty or subspecialty area of advanced practice nursing. Post-graduate students can select from the family nurse practitioner option, leadership option, or teaching-learning option. Each certificate pathway is designed to follow national certification requirements, when applicable. The post-master's certificate family nurse practitioner option includes two **mandatory** on-campus intensives. Failure to attend the mandatory on-campus intensives could result in program progression delay. The post-master's certificate program curriculum can be viewed in the [Graduate Catalog](#). Students in the post-master's certificate program are **not** eligible to walk at graduation, but are encouraged to attend the ACONHP pinning ceremony where they will be awarded their respective certificate. At this time, the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner option is not available as a post-master's certificate

G. Doctoral Program

The ACONHP offers a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree with three options. The options are built upon a core

Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions (ACONHP) Goals

1. Provide high quality, innovative student-centered nursing and health related programs built upon scientific disciplines.
2. Graduate nurses and health professionals who are prepared to practice person-centered care in diverse local, regional, and global healthcare environments.
3. Promote scholarship, scholarly activities, teaching, service, and practice that advances quality, safety, and knowledge in healthcare.
4. Develop professional partnerships across professions to enhance healthcare within complex systems.
5. Optimize the use of information processes and technologies in healthcare practices.
6. Foster the development of professional excellence and resilience amongst a diverse population.

8. Generate strategies that promote improved health outcomes for all populations. (Essential VII; Domain 3)
9. Relate nursing knowledge to practice for the promotion of the profession. (Essential VIII; Domain 10)

I. Accommodation Assistance for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ACONHP endorses the university commitment to students with

K. Diversity Statement

"The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual."

L. Sexual Harassment

University policy prohibits sexual harassment. It is the responsibility of all students and employees to assure that our community is free from sexual harassment. Accordingly, all members of the university community must avoid any conduct that is or has the appearance of being sexual harassment. The University Ombudsman and the Office of Student Affairs have information about the University's sexual harassment policy.

The ACONHP graduate program has adopted the legal definition of sexual harassment as follows:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that t(e)-6 (i)10 nde((e)8.1 (r)-1 (t)-9 (r()JTJ (que)-6t)-4 (

courses **MUST** submit all health-related documentation and practicum documentation at least eight (8) weeks prior to enrolling in a practicum course.

Once admitted to the DNP program, students may enroll in non-practicum courses as scheduled. However, students must meet the pre-requisite requirements before enrolling in practicum courses. Pre-requisite requirements for each course can be found in the University [Graduate Catalog](#). Students in practicum courses **MUST** submit all health-related documentation and practicum documentation at least eight (8) weeks prior to enrolling in a practicum course.

A. Student Health Document Requirements and Documentation Instructions

* **IF YOU ARE A STUDENT ADMITTED IN OR AFTER FALL 2022: YOU WILL BE USING A VIEWPOINT SCREENING ACCOUNT IN PLACE OF A SEPARATE SCREENING ACCOUNT AND IMMUNITRAX ACCOUNT.**

- VIEWPOINT Instructions, including a direct link to UNA's viewpoint account, are provided within the MSN/PMC orientation course.
 1. **Physical Examination** Must have been completed in the previous 12 months. The physical examination must be completed by a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. The **Health Form** can be found in student's Immunitrax or Viewpoint accounts and must be uploaded to the student's account for approval. **The Health Form must be updated annually**
 2. **Tuberculosis Testing** Must have an annual TB skin test, or QuantiFERON test, Tspot test, or chest x-ray if positive history exists. Under no circumstances will a student with a positive TB skin test be allowed to attend clinical rotations until documentation of clearance is received from the health department and/or the student's private healthcare provider.
 3. **Hepatitis B** All students are strongly encouraged to become vaccinated against the Hepatitis B virus. Students who do not wish to take the vaccine must sign a waiver form & upload it to their Viewpoint or Immunitrax accounts in place of the Hep B vaccine documentation.
 4. **MMR:** Students will submit proof of the dates of their MMR vaccination into either Immunitrax or Viewpoint for approval. Proof of the vaccination is required. A titer is considered proof of immunization.
 5. **Seasonal Flu Vaccination** Students will submit dates of the flu vaccination into their Immunitrax or Viewpoint accounts. Proof of the vaccination is also needed. Clinical sites may require annual flu vaccinations and could result in refusal of continued practicum hours by the clinical site. A declination form is available, if needed. Declination of the flu vaccination requires UNA students to wear a mask during all practicum experiences.

6. **TDAP** Students will submit dates of TDAP within the past 10 (ten) years into their **Immunitrax** or **Viewpoint** accounts. Proof of the vaccination is required.
7. **Varicella** Students will submit dates of the varicella vaccination into their **Immunitrax** or **Viewpoint** accounts. Proof of the vaccination is also needed. If the student had previous chicken pox, a titer must be submitted as proof of history of disease in place of the vaccinations.
8. **COVID19**: Vaccination status may be requested by the practicum site.
9. **CPR** Students must have and maintain current CPR certification while enrolled in the ACONHP. American Heart Association or American Red Cross is accepted. Dates of completion are entered into **Immunitrax** or **Viewpoint** accounts. Proof of certification is also required.
10. **Registered Nurse License**: All students must have and maintain an active, unrestricted, and unencumbered nursing license while enrolled in the ACONHP. Licensure must be active for the state in which the student will participate in practicums.
11. **Health Insurance** Complete and submit the health insurance waiver form under the forms tab in **Immunitrax**. The waiver releases the University and all of its contracted clinical agencies of any and/or all responsibility for medical expenses which may be incurred during the course of clinical rotations required for the nursing degree program. It is recommended that each student obtain health insurance coverage. Students that have **Viewpoint** accounts may submit proof of their health insurance to meet this

The cost of drug and alcohol testing conducted for reasonable suspicion shall be the responsibility of the student. Drug screenings may require review by a Medical Review Officer, which will result in an additional fee to the student. A student's failure to submit to a required drug screen, or attempting to tamper with, contaminate, or switch a sample will result in the student not being allowed to meet objectives for the course; therefore, progression in the program will not be permitted and will result in permanent dismissal from the program.

A nursing student who refuses to submit to drug/alcohol testing based on reasonable suspicion or a nursing student who has a positive drug/alcohol test result will be reported to the appropriate licensing board and will permanently be dismissed from the ACONHP.

All drug/alcohol testing results will be confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties, unless disclosure is required by law or the student has consented in writing to release this information. The drug/alcohol screening will only be administered within the given time frame allotted at the designated testing facility at the expense of the student.

The ACONHP Drug/Alcohol policy, including its standards and procedures, may be amended at any time, with or without notice, at the sole discretion of the ACONHP.

C. Confidentiality

Students may be required by clinical agencies and the ACONHP to sign confidentiality and affidavit forms. Any information obtained regarding patients in the clinical/practicum setting must be maintained in the strictest of confidence. Information such as a patient's name, diagnosis, or physician must not be discussed in public, verbally, or electronically. For the purpose of classwork, information should not include the patients full name, birthdate, phone number, address, etc. Patient initials may be used. Failure to maintain confidentiality is subject to a clinical practicum unsatisfactory grade and course failure.

Failure to maintain patient confidentiality is subject to a clinical failure and/or dismissal from the nursing program.

A. Student Health Requirements

The following information will provide the student with answers to questions they may have as they progress on the journey to graduation.

Students must keep health records up-to-date in order to progress through the program. It is the student's responsibility to update health documents annually and as changes occur. Students will receive updates and reminders from ViewPoint Screening. Please make sure to check your email on a regular basis.

B. Course/Clinical Progression

To be enrolled in required practicum courses (NU 680, NU 681, NU 682, NU 683, NU 641, NU 642, NU 643, NU 644, NU 645, NU 651, NU 652, NU 653, NU 654, and NU 655) students must complete pre-requisite courses as noted in the [UNA Graduate Catalog](#). Course sequence will be individualized for part-time graduate students.

To progress in nursing courses, students must possess a functional level of competence to perform the skills of a professional nurse. Skills include, but are not limited to:

- Hearing ability: must be able to discern various health assessment sounds and communicate with patient/client, family members, and co-workers
- Visual ability: must be able to read small print, medications, and health records
- Communication ability: must be able to communicate effectively with patient to elicit a complete health history, discuss chief complaint
- Fine and gross motor skills: must be able to walk, must be able to complete physical assessment on patient
- Physical strength and endurance: must possess physical stamina to perform full range of required client care activities for the duration of the work role
- Emotional stability: must be able to assume responsibility and accountability for own actions
- Competency: must be competent in basic registered (be)391 ((i))-10 (a)4 (l)4k(e)3 0 (be)3 (c)8 (o)12 (-

Students are expected to be honorable and observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. Additionally, students are expected to behave in an ethical manner.

A grade of "B" or better is required for NU 508, NU 607, NU 614, NU 641, NU 642, NU 643, NU 644, NU 645, NU 651, NU 652, NU 653, NU 654, NU 655, NU 680, NU 681, NU 682, and NU 683. A student making "C" or below in the above-mentioned courses must repeat that course. A grade of "B" or better must be earned at the time of repeating the course. A MSN/PMC student may make a grade of "C" or below in no more than six (6) semester hours in courses not requiring a grade of "B" or better (for NU 508, NU 607, NU 614, NU 641, NU 642, NU 643, NU 644, NU 645, NU 651, NU 652, NU 653, NU 654, NU 655, NU 680, NU 681, NU 682, and NU 683) within the MSN/PMC programs. A student whose has earned (a) grade (a-1 d4 (")-1

Students eligible to return to a graduate nursing course after withdrawal or course failure in a required nursing course will be readmitted to the course on a “space available” basis. Students who desire reinstatement to the program must write a letter of petition to the ACONHP. The letter is sent to the Chair of the Graduate program and must include any extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to the student being unsuccessful in the previous attempt. The letter must also include a plan for successful completion of the program, including specific strategies to ensure success.

After the graduate faculty reviews the request for readmission, recommendations are made to the Chair of the Graduate Program and ACONHP Dean. Students will then receive notification regarding readmission decisions from the Office of the Dean of the ACONHP. Readmitted students must follow any recommendations or stipulations proposed by the Dean and faculty for readmission.

H. Clinical Attendance

Attendance is expected at all practicum experiences. If illness occurs or tardiness is anticipated, the student should notify the clinical supervisor and the preceptor before the expected time of arrival. Many clinical facilities do not allow individuals with contagious diseases, colds, fever, draining wounds, or gastrointestinal disturbances to be near patients/clients. If these conditions occur, the student should contact the preceptor for directions and notify the course faculty. Disciplinary action will be taken if a student is absent without appropriate excuse, has failed to notify the clinical supervisor and/or professor of absence, or accrues excessive absences. Tardiness is considered unprofessional behavior. Tardiness is considered an unexcused absence and will be documented as such.

I. Medical/Illness/Injury

Wounds are to be covered at all times.

Should a student become injured at any time or ill during the clinical day and seek emergency room care, the student is responsible for all charges.

To ensure a safe practice and educational environment, a medical release form must be completed by the healthcare provider and submitted to the Dean’s office for the following medical situations:

- Any change in health status, including new prescriptions for potentially mood or behavior altering effects
- Post hospitalization
- Post injury
- Prolonged illness

This list is not comprehensive of the list of conditions requiring a medical release. Please consult your department chair if you have questions or concerns.

J. Mental Health Emergency

If you suspect that an individual is suicidal or homicidal, CALL 911.

K. Advisement

Students accepted into the MSN/PMC program are initially provided a plan of study, based on their enrollment status of part-time or full-time, but the graduate enrollment specialists and graduate program academic advisor. This will be received via email, to the student's UNA email address. Additionally, students are assigned a faculty advisor. Student's may reach out to the assigned faculty advisor with advisement questions.

L. Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society

Student nurses may be eligible for membership in Upsilon Omicron chapter of the Honor Society of Nursing, SIGMA. Students who have demonstrated superior academic achievement, academic integrity, and professional leadership potential may be invited to join during their academic journey. Academic achievement is defined as a GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and have completed a minimum of ¼ of the curriculum.

M. Student Representation on ACONHP Committees

Student representatives are encouraged to participate in the committees of the ACONHP. Student representatives on ACONHP committees include the Faculty Organizational Committee, Graduate Program Committee, Student Guidelines and Resources Committee, and Program effectiveness and Curriculum Committee. Students are voting members and may submit agenda items for consideration while serving on these committees. Graduate students are also eligible for membership on UNA committees, including the Graduate Council Committee. Notify your professor if interested in becoming a member of these committees.

N. Faculty Evaluation

Student evaluations of faculty and courses are performed annually. The evaluation process is designed to provide feedback to faculty and the program. The evaluation process is confidential and anonymous. The evaluation process is designed to provide feedback to faculty and the program. The evaluation process is confidential and anonymous. The evaluation process is designed to provide feedback to faculty and the program. The evaluation process is confidential and anonymous.

- o Acknowledgement form regarding the agency's drug and alcohol policy o Release statement form allowing agency to make independent investigation of student's background, which may include but are not limited to:
 - f* Professional and personal references
 - f* Past and current employment
 - f* Criminal and police records
 - f* Credit history
 - f* Motor vehicle records
 - f* Professional credentials
 - f* Public records
 - f* Education
 - f* Urine or blood tests to determine drug or alcohol use

V. Disciplinary Policies

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 hours EBP plus 80 PCE hours = 90 total hours• Teaching/learning track: select a preceptor with a MSN or higher degree in an academic setting• Nurse leadership track: select a preceptor with a MSN or RN with MBA that is a mid-level manager		
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NU 681 or NU 683 Practicum II

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NU 641 – NU 645 Family Nurse
Practitioner

120 hours each course

- 120 hours minimum in each of the five practicum courses for a total of 600 minimum hours
- NU 641-NU 643 clinical focus should be primary care, across the lifespan
- NU 644 clinical focus should be women's health

The MSN/PMC program includes 180-600 practice experience hours to “provide learning experiences that foster interprofessional team practice and the opportunity to provide care to those from different genders, ages, cultures, religions, and backgrounds. (The Essentials, 2021). Practice experiences are integrated into the following courses:

- NU 508-Advanced Health Assessment
- NU 641, NU 642, NU 643, NU 644, and NU 645: Family Nurse Practitioner Courses
- NU 651, NU 652, NU 653, NU 654, and NU 655: Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Courses
- NU 680, NU 681, NU 682, NU 683-Evidence-based Practice and Practicum Courses

21. Failure to meet moral and ethical standards
22. Failure to protect self from contact with body fluids of others
23. Failure to protect others from contact with own body fluids
24. Chewing gum, smoking, and/or eating/drinking in undesignated areas
25. Failure to utilize feedback from preceptor/clinical supervisor/faculty
26. Emotional instability to function effectively under stress or to adapt to changing situations
27. Performing procedures or activities without adequate foreknowledge or supervision
28. Inappropriate use of social media
29. Asking preceptor for personal prescriptions
30. Blatant medication errors
31. Any situation where a patient/client is put in danger
32. Failure to meet outcomes
33. Failure to submit required documentation

C. [Disciplinary/Grievance Policies](#)

Disciplinary policies and processes of the ACONHP will be identical to those found in the [UNA Student Handbook](#) regarding general student behavior and as designated in specific graduate course syllabi.

University grievance procedures are found in the [UNA Student Handbook](#). The University grievance procedure is intended to ensure that each student has available to him/her clear instruction on how to bring complaints (informal and formal) to the attention of faculty members and administrators. Since most grievances are resolved at the level where the problem arose, the student is urged to initiate resolution at that level.

As set forth in the [UNA Student Handbook](#) and the [Office of Student Conduct](#), the student shall proceed through the following channels until such time as the grievance is resolved, or the student chooses to terminate the process:

1. The faculty member is immediately involved
2. Graduate Program Director
3. Graduate Program Chair
- 4.

VI. Entering the Profession

A. Graduation Preparation

The [UNA Graduate Catalog](#) describes the minimum hours of study required to be taken at UNA, the number of courses at the 600-level required, the application for graduation procedure, and commencement routines. Students who have questions about graduation can contact their assigned advisor, current professors, or the Graduate Academic Specialists and Enrollment Coordinator.

At least two full semesters before the anticipated graduation, students must formally apply for graduation through the [UNA Portal](#).

VII. Appendix

A. Appendix A: Admission/Progression of Persons with Disabilities to the Graduate Program UNA Anderson College of Nursing & Health Professions

Admission/Progression of Persons with Disabilities to the Graduate Program

Students with disabilities are considered for acceptance to the Graduate Program of the Anderson College of Nursing & Health Professions (ACONHP) on the basis of their ability to meet the objectives of the program and to perform required activities.

ACONHP ADA Awareness Statement

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ACONHP endorses the university commitment to students with disabilities. ACONHP will provide reasonable accommodations for student(s) with eligible documented learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities.

Nursing is a practice discipline with cognitive, sensory, affective, and psychomotor performance requirements. Qualified individuals are those who satisfy admission requirements and who can perform essential functions of a nursing program with or without reasonable accommodation or modification.

Essential Performance Standards		
Issue	Standard	Examples of Necessary Activities (Not all inclusive)
Critical Thinking	Critical thinking ability sufficient for safe clinical judgement	Identify cause/effect relationships in clinical situations, develop appropriate patient plans of care, ability to make safe judgements when planning and implementing all

Motor Skills	Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care	Calibrate and properly use necessary medical equipment, ability to lift up to 50 pounds, assist patient/client with positioning, movement, ambulation, lifting, and transferring, obtain and process medical specimens, use a computer, twist of squeeze with fingers, stand and maintain balance, reach and bend, move within confined spaces
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Tactile	Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment	Perform palpation, fulfill functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic interventions, assess pulse, assess skin temperature
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NOTE It is important for nursing students to have a realistic view of the demanding curriculum before deciding to pursue the degree. Students are encouraged to contact the Anderson College of Nursing & Health Professions if there are questions about his/her abilities to function in the clinical setting(s).

I meet all Essential Performance Standards required by the Graduate Program of the University of North Alabama Anderson College of Nursing & Health Professions.

I do not/ am not sure that I meet all the Essential Performance Standards required by the Graduate Program of the University of North Alabama Anderson College of Nursing & Health Professions. I understand that I must meet with the Graduate Department Chair and the Anderson College of Nursing & Health Professions Dean to discuss/clarify concerns before I am allowed am

Reviewed 1/2022

B. [Appendix B: Student Needle Stick/Body Fluid Exposure Protocol](#)

2) Immediately report the incident to the practicum instructor and the UNA clinical supervisor.

3)

2. Mode of exposure:

- needle stick intact skin non intact skin eye(s) mouth nose human bite
- other, please describe: _____

3. Was personal protective equipment (PPE) worn at the time of exposure? Yes no

If yes, please specify: _____

4. What device or item caused the injury? _____

5. How long was the blood or body fluid in contact with the skin or mucus? _____

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SOURCE PATIENT:

1. Is the source patient known? Yes no

If yes, what is social and medical history of patient? _____

2. Is Hepatitis B Surface antigen status known on the patient? Yes no

If yes, what is status? _____

3. Is Hepatitis C Ab status known on the patient? Yes no

If yes, what is status? _____

4. Is HIV status known on the patient?

D. [Appendix D: Declination of HIV/Hepatitis Serology Testing](#)

**UNA ANDERSON COLLEGE OF NURSING & HEALTH PROFESSIONS
Declination of HIV/Hepatitis Serology Testing Blood/Body Fluid Exposure
Report**

Student Name: _____

Student ID Number: _____

I understand that, due to the nursing occupational exposure, I may be at increased risk of acquiring HIV & Hepatitis. I have been given the opportunity to be tested at my expense for HIV & Hepatitis. After reviewing this information, I choose to decline the testing. I may change my mind and be tested later at my own expense. I understand that if the patient is a known source of HIV or Hepatitis, I have limited amount of time to take post-exposure medications. I have read and fully understand all the information on this declination form.

By signing below, I am freely declining testing for HIV and Hepatitis exposure to blood and/or body fluids.

Student's Signature: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Revised 3/2017, 10/2018

Reviewed 3/2017, 3/2018, 11/2019, 1/2022

E. [Appendix E: Tuberculosis Exposure Protocol](#)

UNA ANDERSON COLLEGE OF NURSING & HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Tuberculosis Exposure Protocol

The following procedure is for students exposed to tuberculosis during a clinical experience. Students who are exposed to patients who subsequently are shown to have tuberculosis, should:

- 1.) Complete appropriate UNA (Appendix K) and clinical facility incident reports.

2.) Exposed students who have never had a positive tuberculin skin test will be given the PPD skin test immediately and then again in 10- a.) Pa11e11su hi hhu f h st00194 f ti4e11s4 (r)-0

Treatment:

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