

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES**  
**School of Nursing**  
**Graduate Student**  
**Handbook**



**Compiled by the Faculty of the School of Nursing**  
**2008**

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## **SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Purpose of the Master of Science Degree in Nursing**

The master's program provides the opportunity to learn, evaluate, extend, and apply advanced theoretical and empirical knowledge in a selected area of nursing and to gain advanced expertise in clinical practice. In addition, the program offers the opportunity for continued self-growth and development in the areas of critical thinking, creativity, accountability, collaboration and research skills. Characteristic of advanced practice, it establishes a foundation for doctoral study. The Master of Science degree in Nursing is accredited by the National League for Nursing and the nurse practitioner options are approved by the California Board of Registered Nurses.

The master's degree program in nursing prepares professional nurses for careers as a nurse practitioner (NP), psychiatric-mental health clinical nurse specialist, nurse administrator, nurse educator, or nurse case manager: adult care. Descriptions of each specialty area follow this introduction.

The program has six nurse practitioner specialties: primary care adult nurse practitioner, primary care pediatric nurse practitioner, acute care nurse practitioner in adult care, acute care pediatric nurse practitioner, family nurse practitioner and psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner. In addition to the master's degree programs, the School of Nursing has post-master's certificate programs in nurse practitioner specialties, nurse case manager, and nurse education. These are described in the subsequent section

Another post-baccalaureate program offered by the School of Nursing is the School Nurse Credential. Cal State L.A.'s Nursing Program has been authorized by the State of California to offer a credential program for School Nurse preparation. This program fulfills the requirements mandated by the licensing law (the Ryan Act) for registered nurses to practice as school nurses in public schools. At this time, the School Health Services Credential Program may be taken prior to, concurrent with, or after the master's program. Admission requirements to this special program include RN licensure in CA, BS in Nursing or a related field, 2.5 GPA (A = 4.0), and two letters of professional recommendation from supervisors. Students are advised to call the Nursing Advisement Office to request an appointment with the School Nurse Adviser to carefully coordinate the credential and nursing master's course work.

## **Abridged Philosophy of the School of Nursing**

The faculty of the School of Nursing espouses beliefs about the person, health, nursing, society, learner, and the teaching-learning process. The faculty believe that the recipient of health care and focus of nursing is the patient/client who may be an individual, group, family or community. Persons experience varying degrees of health and/or illness. Health is conceptualized as a dynamic state of being in which self-care and dependent-care capabilities, actions, and role responsibilities are realized to the fullest extent possible. For adults, the maintenance of health is an individual's own responsibility. Opportunity for growth and change is every person's right regardless of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of the health problem.

The faculty believe that nursing is a health care profession that systematically assists patients/clients to achieve health or health-related goals through the development and maintenance of self-care practices and the diagnosis and treatment of self-care deficits. Nursing focuses on the patient's/client's responses to actual or potential health problems within a health-oriented system of care. As an applied science, nursing utilizes theories from its own discipline, as well as other sciences, to explain phenomena encountered in patient/client care, as well as to guide nursing practice. The integration of theory and research with clinical practice are essential components for the advancement of professional nursing.

Nursing is practiced by both generalists and specialists. Both types of practitioners are accountable for actions taken in the course of practice. The specialist has completed a graduate program that includes an in-depth study of theories and research relevant to a particular area of specialization and has developed expert functional (role) and/or clinical competence. The emergent role of the nurse in practice is one of serving as a patient/client advocate, independent practitioner, and collaborator with other health care professionals. Through these roles, nurses engage in clinical decision-making, formulation of policy, and design of plans to improve health care services.

Nurses provide professional expertise and skills that are needed and desired by society. In its provision of services to society, nursing must evidence accountability and the ability to regulate its practice. Students are endowed with the capacity for self-direction and are responsible for their own learning and self-development. Critical thinking is developed in clinical practice through the application of problem-solving methods and the weighing of alternatives to determine the best course of action. Commitment to lifelong learning is the mark of a truly professional person. To maintain clinical competence and enhance professional

practice, nurses must stay abreast of new developments occurring in the profession and in their area of specialization.

### **Program Objectives**

The master's program objectives were derived from the philosophy and purposes and professional organization standards. Upon completing the program, the student will be able to:

1. Evaluate theoretical and empirical knowledge from nursing as well as from non-nursing fields, i.e., the sciences, business, ethics, and the humanities, to advanced nursing practice and role development.
2. Demonstrate advanced competence in a specialized area of functional and/or clinical nursing practice.
3. Evaluate research studies, applying selected findings to nursing practice, education or administration.
4. Demonstrate research knowledge and skills essential for conducting investigative studies and refining nursing practice.
5. Examine and analyze current health care issues and communicate with health professionals to effect health care changes at institutional, local, regional, and/or national levels.
6. Implement leadership roles and participate in expanded professional nursing roles that are responsive to health needs of society.
7. Demonstrate critical thinking, creativity, accountability, and commitment to lifelong learning that characterizes a professional person.
8. Serve as an advocate for clients and families including the enhancement of access to and coordination of health care services.
9. Demonstrate competency in serving a culturally and ethnically diverse society.
10. Acquire knowledge and skills foundational to doctoral studies.

There are also more specific program objectives for the nurse practitioner programs, which are located in Section V of the student handbook.

## Master's in Nursing Curriculum

The master's degree program in Nursing provides advanced study in selected areas. A total of 45 - 73.5 units in nursing is required depending on the option chosen. Students must select one of the following options.

- ◆ Nursing Administration (45 units)
- ◆ Nursing Education (45 units)
- ◆ Nurse Case Manager: Adult Care (54 units)
- ◆ Clinical Nurse Specialization: Psychiatric Mental Health (54 units)
- ◆ Nurse Practitioner: Adult option (69 units)
- ◆ Acute Care Nurse Practitioner: Adult Option (66 units)
- ◆ Nurse Practitioner: Pediatrics Option (65 units)
- ◆ Acute Care Nurse Practitioner: Pediatric Option (73.5 units)
- ◆ Family Nurse Practitioner (79 units)
- ◆ Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (86 units)

All students are required to take four graduate **Core** courses (14 units), 7-24 units of **Advanced Nursing Practice** courses (units depend on option chosen) and one **Option** (specialty area). The program consists of five components:

### I. Required Core (14 units)

- NURS 500 Research Utilization in Nursing Practice (2)
- NURS 502 Role Development of the Advanced Practice Nurse (3)
- NURS 592 Theoretical Basis of Nursing Research and Practice (2)
- NURS 594 Decision Making in Nursing and Health Care Policy (3)
- NURS 590 Nursing Research Methods (4)

### II. Advanced Nursing Practice Area (7-24 units, depending on option):

Advanced nursing practice core courses that are appropriate for each specialty are listed following the description of each specialty or functional area.

### III. Electives (0-17 units):

Selection of the appropriate number and types of electives with advisor approval depends on the specialty area and choice of thesis vs. comprehensive exam. The number of electives depends on option and whether student selects to take the comprehensive examination or write a thesis.

#### **IV. Options (Specialty Areas) (7-21 units)**

For coursework requirements within each of the above options, please refer to the University General Catalog or the program option flyers.

#### **V. Comprehensive Examination or Thesis or Project**

Students obtaining a master's degree chose to complete a comprehensive examination, a thesis, or a project as a culminating experience in their program.

##### **Comprehensive Examination (0 units)**

NURS 596 Comprehensive Examination (0). Register for NURS 596 the quarter that you plan to take the comprehensive examination. Orientation session times and other details are posted on the graduate bulletin board. This information may be sent to you once you are registered. Comprehensive examinations are offered during Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters.

##### **Thesis or Project (5 units)**

NURS 597 Graduate Research (1 unit x2) and NURS 599 Thesis or Project Research (1 unit x3). It is important that students have a thesis/project chair before registering for the NURS 597 or NURS 599. The chair must be sought out at least one quarter before registration for these classes. Give a copy of your proposal to a faculty member whom you would like to work with and who has methodological vs. content expertise in the area of the study. Faculty who are interested in serving as chairs and members of these committees are listed on the Graduate Bulletin Board. (See appendix C & D for further information.)

##### **Eligibility Criteria for thesis and project students:**

See appendix C & D for specific criteria

## **Master of Science in Nursing: Admission Requirements**

The Master of Science degree in Nursing (MSN) has the following admission requirements:

- ◆ Equivalent of requirements for Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from an NLN or CCNE accredited program in effect at the time of admission as a graduate;
- ◆ Minimum *B* (3.0) grade point average in upper division nursing courses or permission of the school graduate studies committee;
- ◆ 2.75 grade point average in the last 90 quarter units attempted;
- ◆ Completion of a statistics course (four quarter units or more which included inferential statistical content);
- ◆ [NURS 490](#) or equivalent;
- ◆ Recent physical assessment course for Nursing Case Management and Nurse Practitioner students;
- ◆ Current licensure to practice nursing in California.

### **Traditional Pathway (Nurses with a BS in Nursing)**

- ◆ Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing (NLN-accredited program).
- ◆ Minimum B (3.0) grade point average in upper division nursing courses or permission of Nursing Graduate Studies Committee.
- ◆ Satisfactory completion of statistics courses that includes inferential statistics and nursing research course.
- ◆ Minimum 2.75 grade point average in last 90-quarter units attempted.

### **Accelerated Pathways**

#### Nurses with an ADN or diploma and non-nursing bachelor's degree:

- ◆ Non-nursing bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- ◆ Associate degree (ADN) from an accredited college or diploma from a NLN-accredited program.
- ◆ Completion of current BSN course prerequisites.
- ◆ Minimum 2.75 grade point average in last 90 units attempted.
- ◆ Current California RN license.

#### Nurses with ADN or diploma and no bachelor's degree:

- ◆ ADN (as indicated above)
- ◆ Completion of BSN course prerequisites.
- ◆ Minimum of 2.75 grade point average in associate degree program.
- ◆ Current California RN license.

While progressing within either of the accelerated pathways, students must maintain a B (3.0) grade point average and must complete required

baccalaureate level nursing courses before beginning graduate level nursing course work (500-level courses).

Additional N.P. requirements:

Physical assessment course within the last 3 years (students may challenge this requirement)

Completion of N.P. application packet

## **Post-Master's Certificate Programs**

Credit certificate programs are also offered for nurses who have a master's degree in nursing. Post-master's certificate programs are available in the following areas:

- ◆ Acute Care Nurse Practitioner: Adult
- ◆ Acute Care Nurse Practitioner: Pediatrics
- ◆ Nurse Case Manager: Adult Care
- ◆ Nurse Practitioner: Adult
- ◆ Nurse Practitioner: Pediatrics
- ◆ Family Nurse Practitioner
- ◆ Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- ◆ Nursing Education

### **Admission Requirements:**

The general admission requirements for these postmasters programs are:

1. Current California Registered Nurse License
  2. Master's degree in Nursing (MSN or MN)
  3. Physical assessment course (for NP options) within the last 3 years (students may challenge this requirement).
  4. One year of clinical practice (setting varies with program chosen)
- Additional admission criteria specific to each program are found in the University Catalog and School of Nursing flyers. For the nurse practitioner post-master's certificate programs, please see Section V of the student handbook.

### **Required Courses for Certificate Programs**

Students must complete the same program coursework as the Masters of Science students, with the exception of graduate core courses (14 units), electives (0-7 units), and comprehensive examination/thesis/project.

### **Graduation Information**

At the successful completion of a post-master's certificate program, students are awarded a certificate. Student transcripts also provide evidence of coursework and hours of study/clinical practice. Those students completing the nurse practitioner post-master's certificate programs qualify to apply to the BRN to gain approval to function as a nurse practitioner within the state of California. They will also be eligible to sit for one of the national certification examinations.

## **Section II: SPECIFICS OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM AT CSULA**

### **The Quarter System: How it Works**

The University's four quarter, year-round operation provides flexibility for working students. For example, the Summer Quarter begins in mid June, the Fall Quarter in late September, the Winter Quarter in early January, and the Spring Quarter in late March.

Students generally enroll in courses year round to complete degree requirements. The nurse practitioner options are fairly structured and require that students begin their coursework by a certain quarter and take the advanced practice core and specialty courses in sequence. The other options with respect to course sequencing are more flexible and students can more easily take quarters off. For example, students may choose not to enroll in courses up to two quarters out of every four. These absent quarters can be consecutive if the student was enrolled in course work the previous two quarters. Students who need to take a leave of absence should consult the *Schedule of Classes* "Continuing Student Status" for detailed information about filing a Leave of Absence Request with the Registrar. Students are advised to see a graduate adviser to replan their program, when they skip quarters, to ensure course availability and timely program completion.

When planning your course schedule, consult the *Schedule of Classes*. It contains a section entitled "Future Course Offerings" which indicates projected plans for course offerings. It should be noted, however, that the projected plans for course offerings are affected by fiscal constraints, course enrollment, appropriate clinical experiences and faculty availability. Course schedule changes are posted on the Nursing Advisement and Graduate Studies bulletin boards. Prerequisites are another factor to consider when setting up your projected course plans. Be sure to check the *General Catalog* for prerequisites. For example, students must complete an upper division research course and a Statistics course that includes inferential statistics before beginning the 500-level nursing courses.

**Part-time study:** Students enrolled in the master's program often are employed and wish to enroll in graduate study on a part-time basis (e.g., one or two courses per quarter). Although most option specialty courses are offered during the day, most core courses are offered in the late afternoon/evening.

## **Thesis (or Project) versus Comprehensive Examinations**

The following information and **Appendix B** (comprehensive examination information) and **Appendix C** (thesis information) and **Appendix D** (project information) will assist students in deciding whether to write a thesis, project or take the comprehensive examinations after completing nursing course requirements.

### **The Thesis (or Project) versus Comprehensive Exam Decision**

Some factors that are important to consider when making the decision to write a thesis/project or complete comprehensive examinations include length of time available to the student, career choice following graduation, grade point average (GPA), and feelings concerning one's coping ability during stressful situations. An additional factor is fiscal feasibility. If length of time in the program is a factor, the comprehensive examination may be a better option, because it can be completed in one quarter. In comparison, completion of a thesis or project usually takes four to six quarters.

Career plans following graduation are other factors to consider. If you plan to work in education, a thesis may be the more valuable option. Research experience can enhance future teaching and advising ability and can serve as a foundation for possible future doctoral preparation, particularly if you have plans to teach in a four-year institution. Those pursuing the clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or nurse practitioner (NP) option also may find the thesis or project route advantageous because the researcher role is an important facet of either of these jobs.

Grades are also a consideration, for example thesis students must have a minimum 3.5 GPA following all required coursework, as well as A or B grades in research courses. The thesis student must achieve an A grade in one of the three graduate research courses. See **Appendix C** and **Appendix D** for requirements.

Another factor to consider is stress. Some faculty believe comprehensive examinations may be a better option if you function better with a high level of stress for a short time. If, however, you function better with a lower level of stress over a longer period of time, writing a thesis/project might be preferable.

Fiscal constraints may influence choice of the thesis/project option. Thesis duplication, instrument purchase (rare), and statistical consultation require some extra funds by students. To address this issue, the faculty asks students to secure thesis committee members after completing Nurs590 and before beginning extensive work on the proposal. The thesis or project chair and member should have an interest

and substantive or methodological expertise in the area that you plan to study.

### **Thesis/Project Option: Additional Suggestions for Students**

If you have chosen the thesis/project option, you should study a topic that you enjoy because you will be spending considerable time on it. In addition, you should incorporate some aspect of the potential area of study in graduate course papers and presentations because this will increase your familiarity with the topic, help with literature review, and assist with refining the idea. Study topics can come from early work in the program or from your nursing knowledge and expertise.

In preparing for the thesis/project process, it is important to review the thesis/project proposal guidelines in **Appendix C and Appendix D**. Additional copies are located in the main department office.

After receiving IRB approval for thesis, you may need to secure an outside facility's human subjects approval. You will then be ready to collect data and examine the results. Your thesis chair and/or thesis member will help you with statistics and/or refer you to someone with statistical expertise.

Students must enroll for a total of five units while conducting their thesis/project. Two units of NURS 597 (recommended one unit per quarter) are taken during thesis/project preparation followed by three units of NURS 599 (recommended one unit per quarter). Note that thesis students must have IRB approval prior to starting NURS 599. Students should enroll in a NURS 599 or NURS 900 (0 units) during the quarter they turn in the final copy of their thesis/project. Once students are enrolled in the first quarter of NURS 599, they may not switch to the comprehensive exam option. Students receive a report in progress (RP) grade until they complete the thesis. At that time, they receive a credit grade.

### **Suggestions Regarding Comprehensive Examinations**

The following are suggestions for those who plan to write the comprehensive examination. The guidelines and philosophy of the comprehensive examination are included in **Appendix B**. As the philosophy in the Comprehensive Exam Guidelines indicates, the intent of these examinations is to challenge the student above and beyond nursing course work taken in the program. This means that students need to consult additional references and prepare for the comprehensive examination questions. The School provides copies of the questions for each option during the quarter of the exam.

Orientation and preparatory sessions for students are provided by faculty during the second week of every quarter (usually Tuesdays) at prescheduled times that are mailed to students enrolled in NURS 596 and may be listed on the Graduate Bulletin Board (outside of the main School of Nursing office) by the tenth week of the preceding quarter. We suggest that you attend these sessions the previous quarter as well as the quarter in which you will be writing the exam(s). There are at least three possible questions for each exam, and you must prepare for one. Comprehensive examinations are due the Monday of the sixth week of every quarter.

Students must register for the examination (NURS 596, 0 units). There is a fee for registering for NURS 596. The examination is generally taken after completing all required courses on the student's classified program or during the final quarter of coursework providing the student is not enrolled in any research courses. The examination is graded on a Credit/No Credit basis. Once students have taken the comprehensive examination, they cannot switch to the thesis option.

## **SECTION III: THE ADVISEMENT PROCESS**

### **CSULA Publications Available to Students**

Information about admission requirements, registration, courses, student activities and government is available in several University publications. Students are urged to obtain a copy of each of the following publications:

#### **General Catalog**

The *General Catalog* contains official policies and regulations about admission, fees, refund policies, student services, policies, and procedures for graduation, and requirements for both the undergraduate and graduate programs. It may be purchased in the University Bookstore on campus or found on the web at [www.calstatela.edu/catalog](http://www.calstatela.edu/catalog).

#### **Schedule of Classes**

The *Schedule of Classes* is published each quarter and may be purchased at the University Student Union Bookstore 2-3 weeks before registration begins. It contains course offerings and the calendar of important dates for each upcoming quarter, new and modified course and program information, academic and other policy changes, comprehensive registration-related information, and general information not included in the catalog. The schedule is also available on the web at [www.calstatela.edu/schedule](http://www.calstatela.edu/schedule).

#### **University Thesis/Project Guidelines**

University Guidelines for theses available for purchase in the university bookstore. They describe general university thesis policies and procedures.

#### **Additional Sources of Class information**

Projected quarters for certain courses, such as the functional area classes, may be posted on the Graduate Bulletin Board. Please consult this regularly. The General Nursing Advisement Bulletin Board (across from Simpson Tower F415) also contains information about upcoming classes, as changes often are made since the *Schedule of Classes* was published e.g., changes in the assigned classroom, day-of-the-week, time of day, and/or faculty member scheduled to teach the course.

# Procedures and Regulations in Graduate Programs in Nursing

## Admission Procedures

1. Students are admitted to the University and College of Health and Human Services before they are admitted to a graduate nursing program. Because there are additional admission requirements associated with graduate nursing programs, admission into the University and the College of Health and Human Services does not guarantee admission into these programs. You may obtain an appointment with a graduate adviser before applying to obtain an overview of the program and to discuss qualifications and interests. All programs require a supplemental application. **See the CSULA graduate admissions information** for specific admission requirements. The classified program cannot be written until you are formally accepted to the University and the College of Health and Human Services as a graduate student. Students who do not meet the GPA requirements for admission will need to take qualifying courses. For a GPA of 2.9-2.99, 1 course is required, a GPA of 2.8-2.89, 2 courses are required, and a GPA of 2.75-2.79, 4 courses are required.
2. Students need to complete the standard CSU Application form for admission available online at <http://www.csumentor.com/> Applications are accepted, within specific application periods every quarter, which is listed in the *Schedule of Classes*.
3. As part of the University admissions procedure, two official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended need to be sent directly from these institutions to the Admissions Office (or hand-carried in a sealed envelope).
4. After receiving an acceptance letter from the University and College of Health and Human Services, new students make an initial advisement appointment with the Nursing Principal Graduate Adviser to discuss admission to the program and to complete a classified program of study.
5. In preparation for an initial nursing advisement appointment, bring a personal copy of all transcripts (post high school), RN license, a copy of your admission letters and a copy of paid University receipt for liability insurance. If you have completed graduate courses at another university and wish transfer credit, bring copies of these course descriptions and/or course syllabi to the advisement appointment. These will be used to evaluate the equivalency of these courses with the required courses.

6. At the initial advisement appointment, you will be given several forms to complete that require the information in #5. The adviser will discuss various specialty courses offered in the program and complete a classified program. A tentative schedule of classes on the Program Planning Sheet will be initiated. To complete this information, you may want to determine how many classes you can take each quarter. Although most option specialty courses are offered during the day, most core courses are offered in the late afternoon/evening. Clinical practice and advanced field study courses generally require time during the day. As students progress through the curriculum of their chosen specialty, more time will be required. Students should plan ahead for this.
7. At the initial advisement appointment students are given a copy of the *List of Advisory Instructions* to sign. This document contains important information about meeting program requirements.
8. If you do not meet admission requirements, you may petition to have admission requirements waived. The NLN or CCNE accreditation status of your baccalaureate institution is waived if you are a graduate of a foreign university. If your GPA in the last 90 units of coursework was between a 2.75 and a 2.50 you must first complete qualifying courses with grades of a B or better, before being admitted into the nursing program. If your GPA in upper division nursing was between a 2.75 and 3.00, you must also complete qualifying courses before being admitted into the graduate nursing program.

It should be noted that there is a maximum number of units of acceptable transfer courses that can be transferred from another institution to meet graduate program requirements (see University Catalog). These courses must have been completed within seven years from the date your master's degree is granted (your actual date of graduation from the CSULA Nursing Program). This seven-year limit also applies to all CSULA courses.

### **Advisement Requirements**

Graduate advisors are available to assist students in selecting a program of study, as well as setting up a program of study and clarifying coursework requirements and the availability of course offerings. It is the student's responsibility to seek academic advisement (initially and about once every two quarters after your classified program has been established), or more often as needed. Appointments should be made in the Advisement Office of the School of Nursing or by calling (323) 343-4730.

## **Important Milestones During the Graduate Program**

Once you have been admitted to the University and the College of Health and Human Services you must complete the following steps to be admitted and then complete the master's degree in Nursing:

1. See the Principal Graduate Adviser in the School of Nursing to plan your master's degree program. The adviser will request a copy of your California RN license, a copy of paid University receipt for liability insurance and an unofficial copy of your transcripts. You will sign the *List of Advisory instructions Form* and keep a copy of this form for your own records.
2. As part of your initial advisement appointment or shortly thereafter, sign a classified program plan the first quarter you register in the program or as soon as you complete all prerequisites. This information will then be forwarded to the Office of the Associate Dean in the College of Health and Human Services. A copy will be mailed to you after your program is approved at the college level.
3. A background check is required on all new entering graduate students. This is to be completed during the first quarter of coursework for all options. The Nursing Advisement Office has the information.
4. Any change in coursework must be approved in advance of course completion by a faculty adviser. A maximum study load for graduate students is 16 units per quarter. You must complete all course and other requirements for the degree within seven years. The School and the College Associate Dean must replace course work beyond this as required and approved.
5. Pass the Writing Proficiency Examination (WPE) during your first quarter at CSULA by registering for University 400, unless you have taken the exam previously at another California State University campus. See the University Catalog for other possible exemptions. Students seeking a degree or credential must pass this exam to fulfill the CSU writing skills requirement. Consult the *General Catalog* and *Schedule of Classes* for more information.
6. Complete 16 units of course work listed on your program with a B or better GPA and then apply for advancement to candidacy. At this time, you sign an advancement to candidacy form in the graduate adviser's office. You will receive a conformation letter from the College when you have been advanced to candidacy.

7. Complete all coursework on your program with a minimum B average (3.0 grade point average) and minimum C grades in all courses. (**A grade of C- is not considered passing**). See grading scales below.
8. Pass the comprehensive examination or write a thesis or complete a project.
9. Apply for graduation within the application period stated in the *Schedule of Classes* for the quarter you wish to graduate (about 1 and 1/2 quarters before you plan to graduate). Graduation application forms are available in the Nursing Advisement Office. You must take the Graduate Application form to the university cashier and pay the appropriate processing diploma fee. Then return the application form to the Nursing Advisement Office where a graduation check is performed and forwarded to the College and Graduation Office. Submit your graduation application form two weeks prior to the university deadline to assure adequate processing time.

## **Registration Procedure**

Students may register by on-line or phone each quarter after they are accepted into the University and as long as they maintain continuing student status. Details about the Student Telephone-Assisted Registration (STAR) and Golden Eagle Territory Web Registration (GET) are contained in the *Schedule of Classes*. It is very important that you register early. Courses may be cancelled before the first class meeting if too few students have registered. If you are unable to register for a course because the class is filled, you should sign the waiting list for the course (located in The School of Nursing office), as well as attend the first class session and attempt to be admitted by the course instructor.

## **Eligibility for Classes**

Faculty check eligibility for student class registration. Student who have not met prerequisites or have a waiver from the Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate Committee for a course may not enroll. In some instances, faculty may drop a student from the course if the student does not have the prerequisites.

## **Adding/Dropping Classes**

Students may add or drop a class through STAR or GET within the time period listed in the Schedule of Classes. After that time, the instructor's signature is required. Students who change enrollment in courses after these deadlines must obtain signatures from the School of Nursing Director and the Associate Dean of the College of Health and Human Services. Students should decide early if their schedule permits successful course completion. However, extenuating circumstances are always taken into account for late drops or withdrawals. Discuss your needs with the instructor before adding or dropping a course. Once you have been classified, adding or dropping a course from your program necessitates meeting with a graduate adviser to complete a course substitution process.

## **Grading Scales**

If the faculty member chooses the standard percent letter grade system, the following scale is used for School of Nursing courses:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>GPA</b>	<b>%</b>
A	4.00	90-100
B	3.00	80-89
C	2.00	71-79
D	1.00	60-70
F	0.00	59& below

If the faculty member chooses the +/- grading system, (this **must be** written in the course syllabus) the following scale will be used for School of Nursing courses.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>GPA</b>	<b>%</b>
A	4.00	93 -100
A-	3.7	90 -92.9
B+	3.3	87 -89.9
B	3.0	83 -86.9
B-	2.7	80 -82.9
C+	2.3	77 -79.9
C	2.0	71 -76.9
C-	1.7	70 -70.9
D+	1.3	68 -69.9
D	1.0	63 -67.9
D-	0.7	60 -62.9
F	0.0	59 & below

## **Incomplete Grade**

Students are requested to read information about incomplete grades in the *General Catalog*. Most of the course work must be successfully completed before an incomplete grade may be assigned. In addition, the reason for not fulfilling course requirements must be given to the instructor. The maximum time allowed by the University to make up an incomplete grade is one calendar year. If students do not remove the incomplete grade within the allotted time, the “I” will remain on the student’s transcript, but will be counted as an “F” in GPA calculations.

## **Petitions**

To petition for exceptions to coursework or other program requirements, the student must submit a formal written request with rationale to the Director of the School Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate Studies Committee. The Committee members review and act upon each student's petition.

## **Change of Option**

Students who wish to change their specialty option must submit a formal written request with rationale to the Director of the School Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate Studies Committee after obtaining advisement and signatures from the original option, the option the student wishes to change to, and the Principal Graduate Adviser. The Committee members review and act upon each student's petition on a case by case basis.

## **Course and Program Continuation After Course Failures**

Students who receive a C- or lower in a course for the second time will not be allowed to continue in the MSN program. Students receiving a C- or lower in two or more courses must petition the Graduate and Post Baccalaureate Committee to continue in the program.

## **FEES**

Some graduate nursing courses require additional fees (e.g. NURS 573A). Information regarding the additional costs may be found in the *Schedule of Classes* for the current quarter and by instructional faculty teaching the course.

## **SECTION IV: SCHOOL OF NURSING REQUIREMENTS**

### **Paper format**

The School of Nursing requires that students write papers according to the format of the American Psychological Association. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* can be purchased in the University Bookstore. Look in the reference section or the Nursing Book section (required textbook for some courses). Students must demonstrate that they have attended an APA workshop held by the Library by the end of N592.

### **Advanced Field Study and Clinical Courses**

It is mandatory that students contact the faculty member who is teaching the concurrent seminar with any of the advanced field experience courses by the second week of the quarter before the one in which they plan to take the course. The faculty member will help students find an agency and preceptor if enough time is allocated. In addition, some students may have a choice of preceptors, so this will allow time to make a good decision about the experience.

Sometimes preceptors are difficult to enlist because of other preceptored students or work-related demands, so begin this process early! We expect students to meet all of the placement facility requirements before the first day of the course. Most facilities will request a background check, copies of your RN license, malpractice insurance, TB skin test or chest X-ray results, and require evidence of a rubella titer (immune status), and a physical examination by a physician or nurse practitioner within the last year. Please schedule these early in the program so you have time to complete these requirements. See Appendix A for a list of required information.

### **Guidelines for Professional Image for Graduate Students**

*Name Pins:* Name tags are to be worn at all times when in the clinical setting. They are to be no larger than 2" X 4". Name tags are to be white with black lettering. Line 1 to be first and last name ONLY. Line 2 to say "Nursing Graduate Student". Line 3 to say "CSULA".

*Dress:* White lab coats (3/4 or full length ) are to be worn as required by the clinical facility. They must be clean and wrinkle free at all times. Appropriate professional attire is to be worn under the lab coat and should not be clinging, see-through or low-cut.

*Footwear:* Shoes should be clean with closed-toe.

*Hair:* Hair must be clean and neatly combed. Any extreme look or color is not permitted. Hair at shoulder length or below should be combed away from the face so that it will not fall forward over the face. Long hair must be tied back. Plain barrettes or combs are allowed. Neatly trimmed mustaches and beards are acceptable when the style is not extreme.

*Make-up:* Make-up should appear fresh and natural. Excessive make-up is not acceptable.

*Nails:* Nails should be kept clean and smooth. If polish is used, it should be colorless, natural finish. Nail polish should be unchipped and without adornment. Fingernail length should not exceed beyond the tip of the finger. Acrylic or other types of artificial nails are not permitted.

*Perfume:* The use of perfume and after-shave lotion is not appropriate.

*Sunglasses:* Sunglasses are not to be worn. Transition lenses or those with a transparent tint are acceptable.

*Jewelry:* Only one small ring, class ring, or wedding band/set is acceptable. A small ring is defined as the same size or smaller than a class ring. Necklaces and neck chains may be worn inside clothing. Very large or long dangling earrings are not appropriate. Watches and nursing school class pins may be worn.

*Hygiene:* Personal hygiene plays a major role in professional appearance. All students should pay particular attention to bathing regularly, ensuring absence of body and mouth odor and a neat and clean appearance. Gum chewing is not allowed.

*Body Piercing and Tattoos:* Students may have no more than two visible piercings and those must conform to the clinical agency's dress code. All visible tattoos must be covered.

*Medical Exception:* Any request for exception(s) to the appearance code for medical reasons must be signed by your personal physician or appropriate specialist. It is then given to the Director of the School of Nursing, and must be updated annually

## **Other Policies**

Cell phones and pagers must be turned off while in class. Children and other uninvited guests are not permitted in the classroom at any time. There are other School policies concerning student drug abuse, grievance procedures and lab fees. Please consult the School of Nursing for this information.

## **SECTION V: NURSE PRACTITIONER PROGRAMS**

### **Purposes**

The primary purposes of the nurse practitioner programs at CSULA are to:

1. prepare nurse practitioners as advanced practice nurses in the areas of adult and pediatric primary care, adult and pediatric acute care, family and psychiatric mental health nursing.
2. increase the availability of master's prepared nurse practitioners who are culturally competent and are committed to working with underserved and vulnerable clients and their families.
3. establish and maintain strong collaborative relationships and linkages with health professionals and health agencies providing primary and acute care health care services to clients and their families.

### **Philosophy of Nurse Practitioner Programs**

The faculty believe that clients are bio-psycho-sociocultural beings in constant interaction with a changing environment. Clients perceive and respond to actual or potential health problems in unique ways which are influenced by their age, gender, education, occupation, religion, health and cultural identity. Clients are members of a family unit and of a community and experience varying degrees of health and illness throughout life. They have the capability to initiate and perform self-care to maintain their own health and well-being. We believe that clients who actively participate in their health care management are more likely to reach an optimum level of health.

Nursing is a health care profession that assists clients to achieve and maintain health and health-related goals. The foundation for the practice of nursing is the scientific method of inquiry known as the nursing process which consists of the following steps: assessment, diagnose, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Using this foundation, the nurse practitioner functions independently and interdependently in an expanded nursing role after completing a study of relevant theories, research, and practice related to advanced nursing practice within the primary and/or acute health care context. Building upon theory and practice from nursing, medicine, and other related disciplines; nurse practitioners acquire clinical expertise in primary and acute care. The faculty believe that the role of the nurse practitioner is to assess from a holistic perspective the bio-

psychosociocultural status of clients, diagnose and manage health problems, promote wellness and disease prevention, and provide client education and counseling. Moreover, as an advanced practice nurse, the nurse practitioner role entails exercising leadership skills in promoting the health of vulnerable populations and advocating for continuity of care and greater access to health care services.

We believe that nurse practitioner students are adult learners. They are recognized as experienced nursing professionals who enter the program with unique characteristics and abilities. They are accountable and responsible for the health care they provide.

The role of the faculty is to assist students to acquire the competencies needed to function as a nurse practitioner. The faculty accomplish this by serving as role models, resource persons, and motivators. Faculty also assist students in moving toward their career potentials.

In order to maintain competence in theory and clinical practice, nurse practitioners must assume responsibility for staying abreast of new developments occurring in the profession and in their areas of clinical expertise through both formal and informal continuing education. We believe that a commitment to lifelong learning is the mark of a true professional.

### **Program Objectives\***

#### **Domain I: Management of Client\*\* Health/Illness State:**

1. Provides health promotion and disease prevention services, including anticipatory guidance and counseling, cognizant of client's age, development, risk, geographic location, and culture.
2. Utilizing critical thinking and diagnostic reasoning skills, develops and analyzes appropriate differential diagnoses for presenting client symptoms.
3. Diagnoses and manages acute and chronic diseases over time while attending to the illness experience.

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\* The Nurse Practitioner Program Objectives have been derived/adapted from the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties' (1995) Domains and Competencies of Nurse Practitioner Practice.

\*\* In this document the term client refers to individual clients and their families.

\*\*\*These objectives are appropriate for some specialties, especially the ACNP options

4. Evaluates results of intervention using accepted outcome criteria, revises the plan accordingly, and consults/refers when needed.
5. Schedules follow-up visits to appropriately monitor clients and evaluate health/illness care.
6. Employs appropriate diagnostic, therapeutic and educational interventions and regimens with attention to safety, cost, invasiveness, simplicity, acceptability and efficacy.
7. Recognizes and provides appropriate primary care services to clients with acute and chronic conditions.
8. Facilitates or provides interventions for the achievement and maintenance of optimal health of the acutely or chronically ill client including nutritional support, elimination, skin integrity, airway patency, comfort, exercise/mobility, sleep/rest, coping, and sexual/reproductive function. \*\*\*
9. Rapidly assesses client's unstable and complex health care problems through synthesis and prioritization of historically and immediately derived data.\*\*\*
10. Diagnoses unstable and complex health care problems utilizing collaboration and consultation with the multidisciplinary health care team as indicated by setting, specialty, and individual knowledge and experience.\*\*\*
11. Plans and implements diagnostic strategies and therapeutic interventions to help clients who have unstable and complex health care problems regain their stability and restore their health in collaboration with the client and multidisciplinary health care team.\*\*\*
12. Rapidly and continuously evaluates the client's changing condition and response to therapeutic interventions, and modifies the dynamic plan of care to optimize client outcomes.\*\*\*
13. Coordinates human and environmental resources necessary to manage rapidly changing situations. \*\*\*

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\*\*\*These objectives are appropriate for some specialties, especially the ACNP options

## **Domain II: The Nurse-Client Relationship**

1. Builds and maintains a supportive and caring attitude towards clients.
2. Creates a relationship which acknowledges the client's strengths and deficits.
3. Recognizes, detects, and attends to expressed and unexpressed content/feelings/concerns.
4. Interacts with clients in a culturally sensitive manner.
5. Maintains confidentiality.

## **Domain III: The Teaching and Counseling Function**

1. Assesses and responds to clients' educational needs, including readiness to learning about their health concerns.
2. Validates clients' understanding of their health problems.
3. Assists clients to set and meet their own goals for health promotion/disease prevention, life style and behavioral changes, and use of community resources.
4. Maximizes clients' participation and decision-making.
5. Implements developmentally, culturally and educationally appropriate counseling and teaching strategies with clients.

## **Domain IV: Organizational and Role Competencies**

1. Coordinates care and advocates for clients.
2. Promotes and works collaboratively with the interdisciplinary health team for the provision of optimum comprehensive health care.
3. Manages organizational functions and resources according to agency policy and within the scope of responsibility defined by job description.
4. Participates in legislative and policy-making activities that influence cost, access, and quality of health care.

5. Analyses implications of contemporary health policy on consumers, health care providers, and the nation.
6. Provides care for individual, family and community clients within integrated health care services using nationally accepted guidelines and standards.

### **Domain V: Monitoring and Ensuring Quality of Health Care Practice**

1. Defines own professional role and scope of competency.
2. Upholds a professional code of ethics in practice.
3. Incorporates professional/legal standards into practice.
4. Assumes accountability for practice.
5. Monitors quality of own practice.
6. Provides back-up coverage to ensure safe medical and nursing care.
7. Participates in peer review.
8. Interprets own professional strengths, role, and scope of ability to peers, clients, and colleagues.
9. Meets eligibility requirements for certification.

## **SECTION VI: ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES RELATED TO NURSING AND THE UNIVERSITY**

There are several nursing-related organizations that graduate students may be interested in joining. In addition, students are eligible to participate in the many student activities available on campus. There is an extensive array of clubs, interest groups, councils, and committees for student life. Interested students should consult the Campus Life link on the University web page . <http://www.calstatela.edu/>

### **Student Government**

Enrollment at Cal State L.A. automatically entitles students to membership in the Associated Students, Inc., and you may wish to become involved in this group's activities.

### **Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society of Nursing, NU MU Chapter**

The purposes of this society are to recognize superior achievement and leadership qualities, foster high professional standards, encourage creative work, and strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession. Candidates for membership are selected from the master's program after completing at least 16 units of the required graduate classes with a G.P.A of 3.5 or above. Members pay an annual fee and receive official publications, priority for educational programs and research funding, meeting announcements, and may vote and hold office.

### **Alpha Tau Delta**

Alpha Tau Delta (ATD) is a professional fraternity for nurses. It is a social and academic organization with service emphasis. Through the CSULA chapter, students have the opportunity to share information about the field of nursing and to participate in local service projects. Students who wish more information should leave their name, address, and telephone number in the ATD mailbox in the main department office.

### **Committees**

School of Nursing committees function as fact-finding, advisory, and coordinating bodies consistent with University and College policies. Membership on the Graduate and Post Baccalaureate Committee consists of faculty and student members who have full membership and voting privileges. This committee meets at stipulated times during each quarter, usually on Mondays. Student representatives to committees are

selected from self-nominations and/or recommendations of the faculty. Students must be registered for a minimum of four units and be in good scholastic standing before and during their term on the committee. Students interested in serving on department committees should obtain a student committee application from the Nursing Advisement Office or speak to a full-time faculty member.

### **Special Events at the University**

The University has several formal academic programs. Only a few are listed here. Please consult the *General Catalog* for further information.

#### **Honors Convocation**

Every spring quarter, the faculty nominate and vote on honoring two graduate students in the Nursing Department who have outstanding academic performance. This performance is recognized at the Honors Convocation, followed by a more personalized College recognition ceremony.

#### **Commencement**

Commencement Exercises are held at the end of every spring quarter (June). Please see the *General Catalog* for more information. Students are encouraged to attend this event to receive final recognition in academic regalia from the University. Noted speakers are announced before the ceremony. Caps and gowns are rented from the University Bookstore.

### **University Support Services for Students In Nursing and The University**

#### **Nurse Counselor**

The School of Nursing sponsors a formal student academic support program that consists primarily of tutorial assistance for academic or personal counseling from the nurse counselor. Although the Nurse Counselor is not involved in routine academic advisement, this person primarily advises undergraduate students who are having difficulty with successful completion of coursework, and those disqualified from the nursing program and/or the University. Students with personal problems may be referred to the University Counseling Center.

## **University Counseling Center**

The University Counseling Center is available to students who are having personal/social adjustment problems or legal problems. International (visa) students may obtain special counsel through this center. In addition, the International Student Services provides comprehensive information and services for visa students.

## **Student Health Services**

The Student Health Center offers health services to all currently enrolled students at CSULA. Limited direct services are provided on an outpatient clinic basis.

## **Financial Aid, Scholarships and Grants**

The major source of information about scholarships, grants and loans is the Office Financial Aid in Student Affairs 124. Students in need of financial assistance should apply to the center. The scholarship office is in SA 118, next to the Administration Building. It is worthwhile to stop by there periodically, because new opportunities may be announced. The basic University scholarship application must be filed each April for awards to be made for Fall quarter each year. There are several scholarship awards made each year to nursing students. If you are interested in applying for a student loan, the Financial Aid office may be able to help. There are low interest loans specifically for nursing students that do not accrue interest until after graduation.

A Nursing faculty member serves as the Faculty Scholarship Coordinator to oversee nursing scholarships, grants, and traineeships for graduate students. The Nursing Advisement Office has available a list of nursing scholarships that includes eligibility, scholarship amount, application procedures, and deadlines.

A limited number of Title II federal traineeships are available for graduate nursing students. Information and applications may be obtained from the Nursing Advisement Office.

In addition, there are several scholarships offered by local organizations, which are offered periodically and require a separate application. The dates vary for these, but are most often in the spring or fall quarters. Several nursing organizations offer modest scholarships on an annual basis, including Alpha Tau Delta, Sigma Theta Tau and several ethnic nursing organizations.

The State of California offers scholarships under the Minority Health Professions office. These are particularly focused on increasing the

number of bachelor's prepared Latino, African-American and Native American nurses available to work in underserved communities, but others may apply who make a commitment to work in those areas. They are need-based, and can be from \$2,000 to \$5,000. Applications are accepted quarterly, and preference is given to RN ADN-BSN students who will graduate in two years or less. We have applications, or for more information call 1-800-773-1669. There is also a loan repayment program under which nursing student loans can be repaid in return for employment in designated underserved areas. (If you are interested in applying for a student loan, see the Financial Aid office. There are low interest loans specifically for nursing students, which do not accrue interest until after graduation.)

Students who need more financial support and are willing to make a long term work commitment after graduation might consider applying to one of the military services, The Veteran's Administration or the National Health Services Corps. The Army, Navy and Air Force Nurse Corps all have programs which differ slightly, but require active duty after graduation. A similar program is offered by the Veteran's Administration. The National Health Services Corps provides both scholarships and loans to Advanced Practice Nurses who provide primary care in underserved communities. For further information, call their informational hot line, 1-800-221-9393.

## **Career Development Center**

The Career Development Center provides counseling and assists students in the development of employment seeking skills. (The Teacher Placement Center is located in King Hall). The Center keeps student files with letters of recommendation for forwarding to prospective employers and provides many other services. For more information, see the *General Catalog*.

## **Library**

The John F. Kennedy Library provides the graduate student with numerous academic resources in addition to its books, periodicals, documents, etc. New students should take a self-guided tour for library orientation. For details about the many services and library hours, see the information center in the north wing of the library, first floor. The John A. Palmer Wing (south wing) houses the Learning Resource Center (LRC), a center for self-directed learning. On-line access to many library services is also available.

## **Computing Facilities**

Graduate students have access to the Computing Center, which provides data processing services as well as instructional consultants to assist with program problems and to orient to the use of the computer. For information, go to Library North B14 or phone (323) 343-2600. There is a computer lab in Simpson Tower Annex that contains IBM-compatible and Macintosh computers for students. The Annex houses the nursing software programs that students may use in the lab after completing a sign-out procedure. Students must leave their student photo I. D. at the check-out desk while using this software.

## **Women's Resource Center**

This center is available to all students for information and services relating to single parents, separation, and other problems, legislation concerning women and peer counseling. Check the *General Catalog* for their current location.

## **Transportation, Housing, and Parking**

See the *Student Information Handbook* and the *General Catalog* for information.

# APPENDIX A

# California State University, LA – School of Nursing

## Student Information and Health Clearance Form

Please give one copy of this form and documentation to the nursing advisement office and a copy of this form and required documentation to your clinical instructor at the first day/meeting of each and every clinical course. Information must be updated yearly or when current expiration dates are reached. Attach copies of the documentation for all information requested. Keep the originals of this form and all documents in your possession. All students must complete a one-time background check and submit it to Director, School of Nursing.

### General Information

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ CIN \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please indicate home/work/cell.)  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

2. RN /LVN License # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Entered Program \_\_\_\_\_ Program \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If applicable, attach copy of RN/LVN license) Qtr/YR (Circle one) Accel MSN  
 Basic BSN  
 RN-BSN  
 ELMN

3. California Driver License# \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Attach copy)

4. Auto Liability Ins. Co. \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Attach copy)

5. CPR (BLS) Cert. Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ (American Heart Association Healthcare Provider Course only)  
 (Attach copy)

6. Health Insurance \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_ Policy expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

7. Immune titers-Attach copies of laboratory reports. Must be repeated every 10 years

Rubeola Titer	Date _____	Results _____
Rubella Titer	Date _____	Results _____
Mumps Titer	Date _____	Results _____
Varicella Titer	Date _____	Results _____
HBsAg (surface antigen)	Date _____	Results _____
HBsAb (surface antibody)	Date _____	Results _____

(HBsAb must be at least 8 weeks after 3rd immunization)

Note: Students who are HBsAg positive are not excluded, but must submit report of HBsAg and evaluation of health status by health care provider.

### 8. Immunization:

Diphtheria/Tetanus (TD) or Tetanus Toxoid every 10 years Date \_\_\_\_\_

Hepatitis B Series (if in progress): First Immunization Date \_\_\_\_\_

Second Immunization Date \_\_\_\_\_

Third Immunization Date \_\_\_\_\_

MMR First Dose Date \_\_\_\_\_ Second Dose Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Not required for those with documented positive titers)

9. Annual Tuberculosis Screening: PPD Date \_\_\_\_\_ Results \_\_\_\_\_

Previous PPD must be documented Date \_\_\_\_\_ Results \_\_\_\_\_

(Two-step testing required)

If PPD positive: Annual chest x-ray Date \_\_\_\_\_ Results \_\_\_\_\_

(Attach copy of previous positive PPD results and x-ray report)

### 10. Annual Physical Exam

Provider's Signature/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Exam Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Provider License # \_\_\_\_\_

(PE by MD, OD or NP) It is not necessary to include all details of physical examination. Your signature above verifies that annual exam was within normal limits. If not signed above, attach signed copy of PE.

(rev. 4/30/07)

## **APPENDIX B**

### **GRADUATE PROGRAM: COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PHILOSOPHY AND GUIDELINES**

#### **Philosophy**

The comprehensive examination, thesis and project are the three terminal evaluative methods selected by the School of Nursing to determine student achievement and performance. Each method provides an avenue for student to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and knowledge required of graduates of the master's degree program.

The comprehensive examination is a culminating experience within the Program and consists of a written paper which reflects the graduate student's competency in analyzing, synthesizing, applying and evaluating knowledge within a student's specialty area as well as within nursing theory and research. The examination is not intended to be a reflection of specific course content, but is designed to tap overall relevant knowledge as defined by the objectives of the graduate program in nursing. It represents an independent activity that is of a scope and depth over and beyond that of any particular class, meaning that information beyond that of any course or courses is required to successfully pass the examination.

The examination is structured so that students writing the examination will make linkages between nursing practice, theory and research. The content of the examination consists of a limited number of content areas/issues considered relevant within the student's specialty area. One of these topics or issues is selected by the student as the focus of her/his written examination.

The knowledge and skills necessary for successful completion of the examination are consistent with nationally recognized criteria: organization, integration, synthesis, complex conceptualization, functional transfer of material and critical thinking. Integration occurs when material from multiple sources is selected and organized into a coherent answer. Analysis of issues from an interactional as well as a linear perspective indicates complex conceptualization. The functional transfer of material is evidenced by appropriate application of theory or research to practical situations. Evidence of critical thinking is expected in both the analysis and examined opinion components of the examination.

The granting of a master's degree during a certain year implies the graduate's currency within nursing and their selected specialization.

Therefore, the knowledge evaluated via this method reflects that which is considered the state of knowledge at the time within which the comprehensive examination is taken.

Students who delay taking comprehensive examinations after completing their course work will need more updating to achieve currency in the tested area.

## **Guidelines**

Note: These guidelines are subject to change. Students must use the guidelines distributed at the comprehensive examination orientation.

### 1. Student Eligibility Criteria

1.1 Because the comprehensive examination is one of the terminal evaluation methods (and a culminating experience) for graduate work, students are encouraged to complete all required courses on their classified program prior to taking the comprehensive examination. The examination may be taken during the last quarter of coursework, however, **all core courses must be completed prior to taking this exam.**

1.2 Students must enroll for N596 during the quarter they plan to write the comprehensive examination.

1.3 Students must not be on academic probation during the quarter they enroll to write the comprehensive examination.

### 2. Comprehensive Examination Test Pool

2.1 Separate comprehensive examinations will be developed by the graduate faculty for each of the options (specialty areas):

2.2 Within each of the functional specialty areas, the comprehensive examination will consist of three basic parts.

Part I: Introduction and Analysis of the Issue or Clinical Problems.

Faculty will prepare a list of 3 or 4 issues/clinical problems for each functional specialty area. From this list, a student chooses one focus for the comprehensive examination. Specific instructions related to development, approach, and required content for this section

may vary among the functional specialty areas; these instructions will be included with the specialty guidelines.

Part II: Theory Analysis and Application.

In this section the student will select a theory, theoretical framework or conceptual model that underlies the intervention used to address the issue or clinical problem described in Part I.

In this section the student should include:

1. An overview of the theory (also known as: theoretical framework or conceptual model) selected to support the issue and intervention.
2. A description of the specific portion of the theory as it relates to the issue and or intervention.
3. Application of theory to the proposed intervention.

Part III: Research Application.

In this section the student will use the identified theory in Part II as a conceptual/theoretical framework and propose elements of a research project related to the selected issue/topic from Part I. The research project should evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention/program/strategy. In this section the student will be asked to address specific areas of the research process such as:

- Introduction to the planned research
- Identify content areas from nursing and other disciplines that address the study variables and would form the basis for the literature review in a proposal.
- State the research question(s) or research hypothesis (es).
- Identify and define both conceptually and operationally the research variables (e.g., independent and dependent) and identify the extraneous variables.

- State the specific research design which will be used and explain the rationale for selection.
  - Propose at least three ways that the identified extraneous variables could be controlled.
- 2.3 The comprehensive examination paper may not exceed 20 pages in length excluding the title page, reference list and must be constructed according to the APA style and format.
- 2.4 The list of comprehensive examination issues, problems, or focus areas for each functional specialty shall be revised periodically by the Graduate Studies Committee.
- 2.5 Grading criteria for the comprehensive examination paper shall be established by the Graduate Studies Committee and used consistently across all functional specialty areas (refer to separate grading criteria document).
3. Student Preparation and Administrative Procedures.
- 3.1 Students should attend the general comprehensive examination meeting on Tuesday of the second week of the quarter in which they are enrolled. They should also obtain a copy of the comprehensive examination philosophy and guidelines from the School Office on or before this orientation meeting.
- 3.2 Students should attend the appropriate functional specialty area group consultation meetings that are held Tuesday through Thursday of the second week of the quarter in which they are enrolled. They should also obtain a copy of the functional specialty area guidelines from the School Office (available second Tuesday of the quarter).
- 3.3 A code number, which the student selects, will be used on the comprehensive examination paper and support articles. To maintain anonymity and "blind" evaluation by the faculty, the student's name or other identifying information should not appear on any of the materials. The faculty coordinator will collect the code list at the orientation meeting and place them in a sealed envelope. Upon completion of the grading process, the coordinator shall identify the names of students and notify students of their results.
- 3.4 Three copies of the comprehensive examination paper plus an electronic copy (CD) must be submitted to the Director of

the school of Nursing or her designee on Monday of the sixth week of the quarter, no later than 5:00 p.m. No late examinations will be accepted. The CD will be submitted to an anti-plagiarism program (such as Turnitin).

- 3.5 Three copies of three-five key articles or chapters used by the student in developing the comprehensive examination must be submitted with three copies of the examination. One of the articles (or book chapters must address the theory used.
  - 3.6 Comprehensive examinations are offered during the Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters only.
4. Evaluation of the Comprehensive Examination
    - 4.1 Student achievement of the comprehensive examination shall be evaluated as pass/fail. Students must achieve a total of 80 points out of a possible 100 points to earn a passing grade.
    - 4.2 Students who do not pass the comprehensive examination on the first attempt are allowed to retake the examination one additional time. Students retaking the examination must abide by the regulations regarding the examination which are in place during the quarter in which the repeat occurs. Students must select a different issue/topic for the focus of their second examination. Acceptance of the examination questions by the student will be counted as an attempt whether or not the student turns in a completed examination.
    - 4.3 The comprehensive examination paper is assigned to two faculty readers who will read and score the examination within 20 working days after receipt. One reader must teach in the student's functional specialty area while the other reader must teach in the graduate program. If there is a disagreement in the earned score, the two readers will consult with each other. If the difference cannot be settled, the student's examination will be assigned a grade of SP (satisfactory progress) and a third reader brought in the following quarter to resolve the difference.
    - 4.4 Refer to grading criteria document for grading breakdown.
  5. Recording the Grades and Reporting the Results
    - 5.1 The faculty coordinator of the comprehensive examinations files the completed grade list during final examination week.

- 5.2 Students are notified by mail of the results of the comprehensive examination by the end of finals week of the same quarter.
- 5.3 If the student earns a failing grade, a grade of RP (report in progress) will be assigned and the student will be instructed to arrange for a conference with one of the readers to review the paper and identify areas which need improvement.

### **Grading Criteria**

The comprehensive examination paper may not exceed 20 double spaced pages in length and is to be constructed in accordance with APA style and format. Grading of the comprehensive examination paper will be on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Organization, Structure, Composition, and Documentation (15 points)

The paper is to be constructed so that there is an orderly presentation of ideas and logical transitions between the various segments of the paper. The writing style will be evaluated for the use of precision, parsimony, and clarity of expression, as well as for creativity and the logical progression of ideas. Paper construction will also be evaluated for the proper use of grammar, syntax, spelling and APA format. The adequacy of documentation from relevant bodies of literature will also be evaluated. The margins 1.25 inches and fonts 12 points. If the paper exceeds 20 pages, it will not be accepted.

2. Content of the Comprehensive Examination (85 points)

#### Part I: Introduction and Analysis of the Issue/Trend (35 points)

This section is to include an introduction to the selected issue/problem and a discussion of the background of the issue and the relevance of the issue/problem to the student's functional specialty area. Students should develop their analysis of the selected issue/trend using critical thinking; they should also incorporate current literature and cite appropriate authorities. A logical, clearly constructed and well-articulated examination of the selected issue/problem area is expected.

## Part II: Theory, Analysis and Application (25 points)

This section is to include the analysis and application of a selected theoretical or conceptual framework, which is related to the issue/trend in Part I and the research component in Part III. This theory should either provide a foundation for the selected issue or should guide functional specialty area practice and research application. It is expected that the student will demonstrate critical thinking and develop their ideas in adequate depth as evidenced by appropriate documentation of primary sources. In this section the student should address the following:

- ◆ An overview of the theory.
- ◆ Description of the specific portion of the theory as it relates to the issue or intervention.
- ◆ Application of the theory to the intervention proposed.

## Part III: Research Application (25 points)

In this section the student will use the theory selected in Part II as a conceptual/theoretical framework and propose a research project or program evaluation related to the issue/trend selected in Part I. Students should address the specific areas of the research proposal as directed.

# APPENDIX C

## SCHOOL OF NURSING THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

### 1. Philosophy

The thesis experience is viewed as a unique student-faculty experience. It requires a highly motivated student who has the time, desire and ability to study a particular research problem in an independent fashion. The student should enter the process with competent writing skills. Ideally, the thesis topic is such that the faculty and student involved can engage in a reciprocal learning experience. This type of experience is more likely to occur if the thesis topic is of mutual interest and/or is an outgrowth of the student's work.

The graduate faculty believes that varied approaches to research are appropriate in the study of the broad spectrum of questions/issues germane to nursing. Experimental, exploratory, descriptive, correlational, case study, and evaluation are examples of approaches that are acceptable to use in theses.

The following School of Nursing Project Guidelines are in addition to and/or clarification of the CSULA University Guidelines. Students are required to follow all university criteria as listed in *Guide to Preparation of Master's Theses and Project Reports* found at <http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesbk.htm> Specific project instructions are found in chapter 4 of that document.

### 2. Student Eligibility Criteria

Because completing a thesis requires a student to be skilled in written expression, the ability to conceptualize and the research process, students must fulfill the following criteria to qualify for the thesis option:

- 2.1 Minimum B grades in each of the three graduate research courses (NURS 504, 590 and 592). Student must achieve an A grade in one of these three courses.
- 2.2 Minimum 3.5 GPA in all graduate course work (through NURS 590).

### **3. Qualifications of the Thesis Committee Chair and Members**

The faculty recognizes the thesis chair and member as the persons responsible for decision making in the thesis process. The thesis committee member possesses skills that supplement and/or compliment those of the thesis chair. It may be appropriate to select an alternate member when either the chair or second member is on academic leave. The member and the alternate can be faculty members from other departments.

*Qualifications of the chair on the thesis committee are the following:* Earned doctoral degree or doctoral candidate who is ABD (all but dissertation), expertise in the research methodology that the student proposes to use, e.g., quantitative, qualitative; appointment as a full-time faculty member in the CSULA School of Nursing.

*Qualifications of the member and alternate member of thesis committee:* Expertise in theoretical or methodological area of the proposed thesis or an earned doctoral degree candidate status; if chair of this committee does not have the requisite content (theoretical background, the second member must possess this expertise; if the second member and the alternate do not have a doctoral degree or doctoral candidate status, they must have completed a thesis as part of a master's degree program or completed an equivalent research project.

### **4. Steps in the Proposal Process**

Students are encouraged to complete the entire thesis experience, from writing a proposal to having a thesis signed off, in five quarters or less. This means that students take NURS 597 twice (one unit the first and one unit the second quarter) and NURS 599 (one unit each quarter) three times. Before enrolling in NURS 597, students must have a plan for a thesis. This can be a research proposal from NURS 590. It should be presented to the student's potential thesis chair.

Students who enroll in NURS 597 and who do not show progress will be required to discontinue this option and should seek advisement to change to the comprehensive examination option. If students anticipate demands on their time such that they cannot meet the written proposal requirements for NURS 597, they should not enroll in NURS 597. Students may not enroll in NURS 599 until their thesis proposal has been approved by the IRB.

A student who has obtained a faculty sponsor should select one committee member. The chair and member should review and critique the student's proposal before it is submitted to the IRB. The proposal should not be submitted until both of the committee members believe it is ready. Prior to submitting the proposal to the IRB for approval the student should contact the University Compliance Coordinator in the office of Research and Sponsored Programs: (323) 343-3798. A packet of information "Procedures and Guidelines of the California State University, Los Angeles Institutional Board" is available through this office. It contains regulation for the thesis and signature forms to accompany the proposal. The abstract requires all thesis committee members' signatures as well as the School Director.

## **5. Format for Presentation of Qualitative and Quantitative Thesis Proposals**

The purpose of the thesis proposal is to acquaint the faculty members with the nature of the student's proposed areas of research. Therefore, the length of the typed document, excluding appendices and references, should not exceed 20 pages.

### **5.1 Title**

In a quantitative thesis proposal, the thesis title should include the variables being addressed as well as the target population to be studied. If the title is later modified, please inform the chair of graduate studies because new forms need to be processed. For a qualitative study, the title should minimally include the major focus of the study. (See school guidelines for titling theses, if you have questions).

### **5.2 Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study**

Introduction prior to the problem and purpose statements reviews pertinent literature that identifies gaps in the area(s) of the proposed study. A clear, concise indication of the problem to be studied is required in a thesis proposal. A statement of the purpose of the study, in either a declarative or interrogative format, should follow.

### **5.3 Significance of the Study**

Briefly state the significance of undertaking the proposed research. Suggest the possible outcomes of both positive and negative findings from the proposed study.

#### 5.4 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

For a quantitative study, briefly describe the theoretical or conceptual model on which the study will be based. The model should specify in conceptual terms the type of relationships one would expect between the variables of interest. For instance, if you propose to study the effect of preoperative teaching on stress, you should detail a model that would allow one to predict the effect of this nursing intervention on stress. For a qualitative study, the proposal must contain a description of the interpretive framework within which the study findings will be analyzed.

#### 5.5 Hypothesis (es) or Research Questions

For a qualitative thesis proposal, briefly state the hypothesis(es) or research question(s) in terms of the theoretical or conceptual model of the study. The hypothesis or research details the expected relationship between the variables. In a qualitative thesis proposal, no hypotheses are generated, but more general research questions are included.

#### 5.6 Definition of Terms

In a quantitative thesis proposal, the major theoretical variables or concepts which are operationalized within the hypothesis(es) are defined, i.e., both conceptual and operational definitions need to be included. Within a qualitative thesis proposal, the primary concepts need to be defined in terms of their generally accepted meaning consistent with the literature review.

#### 5.7 Summary of a Review of the Literature

Because of a need for brevity, only a summary of the literature review is to be included in the proposal, although a comprehensive review should be completed prior to the presentation of the proposal. In the summary, a synopsis of the areas that were surveyed, as well as a brief statement of what was found and/or the current status of previous work, are to be included. The literature review summary should include a statement explaining how your proposed research study differs from, extends, or replicates previous research efforts. For a qualitative study, you will need to summarize your review of the general problem area(s) related to the study's research questions.

## 5.8 Methodology

Briefly describe the research design, the sample, and the setting. Describe the instruments to be employed in testing the hypothesis (es) with consideration given to instrument reliability and validity. Complete instruments should be attached to the thesis proposal. If a new instrument is being developed, report data in support of the content validity and one appropriate method that estimates reliability. The data collection procedure should follow. Summarize each step that is expected in the execution of the investigation. A data analysis section should follow in which there is a description of the sample and study variables and a statistical analysis plan for testing hypothesis (es) or addressing the research questions. Limitations of the study, including internal and external validity concerns, are required in the proposal submitted to the RFRB.

## 5.9 Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent

When the proposed study involves human subjects whether these are patients, students, or nursing staff, include a section of ethical considerations and attach a consent form in the appendices. Guidelines for the consent form are attached.

For a qualitative study, using participant observation methodology, obtain informed consent from the appropriate agency administrator as well as selected informants.

Include the following points about ethical concerns in the proposal narrative:

### a. Potential risks.

Name any physiological, psychological, social, or economic risks that might be anticipated, even minimal risk. These might include discomfort or slight anxiety because of the number and/or type of questions, fatigue from length or participation or the physical condition, etc.

### b. Risk management procedures

Discuss how the risks will be minimized. Minimal risk is defined as the risks people encounter in everyday life. Any risk above this level should be specified. The following components should be included:

- ◆ Obtaining informed, witnessed consent before data collection.
- ◆ Informing the participants of their right to withdraw at any time without jeopardy.
- ◆ Describing how anonymity/confidentiality of data will be preserved by use of codes on questionnaires or other data collection tools and by group analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of the research results.
- ◆ Describing how key to code numbers, raw data, and consents will be stored and locked.
- ◆ Describing how privacy will be maintained during data collection.
- ◆ Describing expertise to be used or consulted for problem resolution related to study or potential participant risks. Include information in proposal about how compensation (if appropriate) will be provided for harm or injury (physical or psychological).
- ◆ Discuss what provisions are made to preserve self-determination and voluntary participation, including non-coercion.
- ◆ Indicate reading level (using Fry and Smog tests) of consent form.(See next page for references.)

c. Potential benefits

- ◆ Describe direct or indirect anticipated benefits (physical, psychological, social, legal, economic, etc.) to participants and/or populations to which findings will be applied.

d. Risk/Benefit ratio

- ◆ Compare the potential benefits to the anticipated risks. Be sure to indicate if benefits are expected to outweigh the risks.

e. Expense to participants

- ◆ Describe any financial impact on the sample, including gas for mileage.

## 5.10 References

Provide a list of those references mentioned in the text of the proposal using APA style throughout.

### 5.11 Writing the Thesis Proposal

Type the thesis proposal according to the guidelines provided in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

## 6. Variance Procedure

Any variance from the above criteria must be petitioned through the Graduate and Post Baccalaureate Studies Committee.

## 7. University Guidelines for Theses

Students should be aware that the University has general guidelines for theses. Check with the Director, Graduate and Post Baccalaureate Studies Committee or Principal Graduate Advisor and consult the Library Thesis Advisor.

In the library, the University Thesis Coordinator assures that each thesis submitted meets the approved university format guidelines and assists in verifying that department degree requirements are fulfilled. It is strongly recommended that students attend one of the special thesis workshops offered each quarter to learn about the format and submission requirements and to verify deadlines for submission. It is advised that students attend this workshop the quarter before the quarter they intend to graduate. A list of current thesis workshops can be found at:

<http://www.calstatela.edu/library/instruct7.htm>

A one-to-one meeting with the Thesis Coordinator is required prior to completing the thesis. Students need to contact:

Thesis Coordinator  
California State University, Los Angeles  
(323) 343-4986

Students need to obtain a copy of *Guide to Preparation of Master's Theses and Project Reports*. This is available free on the Web at: <http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesbk.htm>. It is full of needed information and also includes examples of proper page format requirements.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **SCHOOL OF NURSING Project Proposal Guideline**

#### **1. Philosophy**

The project experience is viewed as a unique student-faculty experience. It requires a highly motivated student who has the time, desire and ability to develop and complete an appropriate project in an independent fashion. The student should enter the process with competent writing skills. Ideally, the project topic is such that the faculty and student involved can engage in a reciprocal learning experience. This type of experience is more likely to occur if the topic is of mutual interest and/or is an outgrowth of the student's work.

The graduate faculty believes that varied approaches to projects are appropriate in nursing. Projects must be innovative, original, significant to nursing, and have a product as an outcome. Writing a grant proposal, developing an innovative nursing education curriculum, creating nursing education videos, and writing a scholarly paper which can be accepted for publication in a peer reviewed nursing journal are examples of possible projects.

The following School of Nursing Project Guidelines are in addition to and/or clarification of the Cal State LA university guidelines. Students are required to follow all university criteria as listed in *Guide to Preparation of Master's Theses and Project Reports* found at <http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesbk.htm> Specific project instructions are found in chapter 4 of that document.

#### **2. Student Eligibility Criteria**

Because completing a project requires a student to be skilled in written expression and creativity, students must fulfill the following criteria to qualify for the project option:

- 2.1 Minimum B grades in each of the three graduate research courses (NURS 504, 590 and 592). Student must achieve an A grade in one of these three courses.
- 2.2 Minimum 3.5 GPA in all graduate course work (through NURS 590).

### **3. Qualifications of the project Committee Chair and Members**

The nursing faculty recognizes the project chair and member as the persons responsible for decision making in the project process. The project committee member possesses skills that supplement and/or compliment those of the project chair. It may be appropriate to select an alternate member when either the chair or second member is on academic leave. The member and the alternate can be faculty members from other departments in CSULA.

*Qualifications of the chair on the project committee are the following:* Earned doctoral degree or doctoral candidate who is ABD (all but dissertation), expertise in research methodology; appointment as a full-time faculty member in the Cal State L.A. School of Nursing.

*Qualifications of the member and alternate member of project committee:* Expertise in area of proposed project or an earned doctorate/doctoral candidate status. If the second member and the alternate do not have a doctoral degree or doctoral candidate status, they must have completed a thesis as part of a master's degree program or completed an equivalent thesis or project.

### **4. Steps in the Proposal Process**

Students are encouraged to complete the entire project experience, from writing a proposal to having a project signed off, in five quarters or less. This means that students take NURS 597 twice (one unit the first and one unit the second quarter) and NURS 599 (one unit each quarter) three times. Before enrolling in NURS 597, students must have a plan for a project. Some aspects of the project proposal can begin in NURS 590. The proposal should be presented to the student's potential project chair.

Students who enroll in NURS 597 and who do not show progress will be required to discontinue this option and should seek advisement to change to the comprehensive examination option. If students anticipate demands on their time such that they cannot meet the written proposal requirements for NURS 597, they should not enroll in NURS 597. Students may not enroll in NURS 599 until they have completed the project proposal (NURS 597).

A student who has obtained a faculty sponsor should select one committee member. The chair and member should review and critique the student's proposal.

## **5. Format for Project Proposals**

The following proposal format is flexible as faculty realize that some of what follows is not suitable to all types of projects. The purpose of the project proposal is to acquaint the faculty with the nature of the student's development of a product. In order for the faculty to give consideration to the suitability of the problem of interest to the student, a full clarification of the nature of the proposed project should be made by the student. The proposal should not exceed twenty (20) pages in length. The following should be included.

### 5.1 Title

This may be a temporary title and should convey the major intent of the project to be carried out.

### 5.2 Identification and Justification for Project Development

This requires a clear, concise identification of the project, including specific reasons for development of the project. Justification should be supported by an extensive survey of the literature published in the area of interest, although the complete survey need not be submitted as part of the proposal. That is, the student may formulate the justification by summarizing the current status of previous work, relevant arguments in the field, or basic difficulty. In this section, demonstration must be made of the originality and uniqueness of the project.

### 5.3 Significance of the Project

Specify how the project will make a general contribution to nursing and how it can be utilized in, or applied to, a specific area of nursing. It should be clearly stated how this project will benefit the student, nursing education, nursing practice, nursing research, and/ or patient care.

### 5.4 Methodology

Describe the proposed project placing emphasis on the process of developing the project and the expected outcome. Summarize each step in the development of the project, including a timetable. Evaluation of the final product must be included.

## 5.5 References

Provide a list of those reference cited in the text of the proposal using the current edition of the *Publication Manual American Psychological Association* throughout.

**Revised 1/08**