# MSN Graduate Student Handbook
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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, while gaining 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. Characteristic of advanced practice, the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree establishes a foundation for doctoral study. The MSN at California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA) is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), and the nurse practitioner options are approved by the California Board of Registered Nurses (BRN).

The master’s degree program in nursing prepares professional nurses for careers as a nurse practitioner (NP), nursing administrator, or nurse educator. Descriptions of each specialty area follow this introduction.

The program has four nurse practitioner specialties: Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (ANP), Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (ACNP), family nurse practitioner (FNP) and psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP). Additional MSN specialties include tracks in Nursing Education and Nursing Administration. Post-master’s certificate programs are available for all nurse practitioner tracks and the nursing education.

Philosophy of the Patricia A. Chin School of Nursing (PACSON)

The faculty of the PACSON espouses beliefs about the person, health, nursing, society, learner, and the teaching-learning process. The faculty believes that the recipient of health care and focus of nursing is for the patient/client, who may be an individual, group, family or community, who 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 believes 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.

**MSN Program Student Learning Outcomes**

The MSN Program’s Student Learning Outcomes were derived from the School’s philosophy, as well as *The Essentials of Master’s Education* as identified by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). Upon completing the program, the student should be able to:

1. Integrate the humanities and scientific findings from nursing, biopsychosocial fields, genetics, public health, quality improvement, and organizational sciences for the continual improvement of nursing care across diverse settings

2. Apply organizational and systems leadership to current healthcare and educational issues for the promotion of high quality and safe patient
care, including the emphasis on ethical and critical decision making, effective working relationships, and a systems-perspective

3. Critique methods, tools, performance measures, and standards related to quality, and apply quality principles within their organization.

4. Apply nursing research outcomes within the practice setting, resolves practice problems; works as a change agent and disseminates results

5. Manage informatics and healthcare technologies to provide integrated and coordinated care to individuals, families, and aggregates/identified populations

6. Demonstrate the ability to intervene at the system level through policy development processes and advocacy strategies to influence health and health care

7. Provide leadership of interprofessional teams by communicating, collaborating and consulting with other health professionals

8. Synthesize broad organizational, client-centered, and culturally appropriate concepts in the planning, delivery, management, and evaluation of evidence-based clinical prevention and population care and services to individuals, families, and aggregates/identified populations

9. Demonstrate advanced nursing practice interventions including both direct and indirect care components that influence health care outcomes for individuals, populations, or systems

SECTION II: ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Curriculum
The MSN degree program provides advanced study in selected areas. A total of 35-47 units in nursing are required depending on the option chosen. Students must select one of the following options:

♦ Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (43 units)
♦ Adult Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (41 units)
♦ Family Nurse Practitioner (47 units)
♦ Nursing Education (35 units)
♦ Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (43 units)

All students are required to take three graduate Core courses (9 units). Students in the Nursing Education Option and the Nurse Practitioner Options are also required to take 12 units of courses in the Advanced Practice Core and Option courses (i.e., specialty area). The program consists of five components: (a) required core courses, (b) advanced nursing practice area courses, (c) electives, (d) option-specific courses, and (e) the culminating experience: either the comprehensive exam or thesis or project.

I. Required Core (9 units):
   - NURS 5020: Role, Health Care & Policy (3)
   - NURS 5900: Theory, Research & Practice (4)
   - NURS 5800: Nursing Informatics (2)

II. Advanced Nursing Practice Area (12 units):
   - NURS 5280: Pharmacology (3)
   - NURS 5660: Advanced Pathophysiology (3)
   - NURS 5720: Advanced Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning (3)
   - NURS 5730: Advanced Assessment Practicum (3)

III. Electives:

Selection of the appropriate number and types of electives with advisor approval depends on the specialty area and choice of comprehensive exam, thesis or project. The number of electives depends on one’s option and whether the student selects the comprehensive exam or thesis or project as their culminating experience.

IV. Options (Specialty Areas) (14-26 units):

For coursework requirements within each of the above options, students should refer to the University General Catalog or their Option Program Planning Sheet.

V. Culminating Experience: Comprehensive Examination or Thesis or Project
Students obtaining a master’s degree choose to complete a comprehensive examination or a thesis or a project as a culminating experience in their program. The culminating experience is a requirement of Cal State LA for all master’s programs. The comprehensive exam is the minimum requirement for the PACSON to complete the MSN degree. The thesis or project is an alternative choice for those students with demonstrated academic excellence and an interest in pursuing a particular area of interest through independent scholarship. There are 3 units of coursework associated with the project or thesis in addition to the required courses for each option.

**Comprehensive Examination (0 units)**

NURS 5960: Comprehensive Examination (0) is the required culminating experience for all MSN students unless a thesis or project is chosen. Students should register for NURS 5960 the semester that the comprehensive examination will be taken. Orientation session times and other details are posted on the MSN Graduate Bulletin Board and emailed to those enrolled in the course using Cal State LA email addresses. Comprehensive examinations are offered during fall and spring semesters only. Further, exams will only be administered on advertised days and times each semester. Refer to Appendix B for complete details.

**Thesis or Project (3 units)**

Students choosing the thesis or project option must take required unit credit: NURS 5970 Graduate Research (2 units or one unit x 2), and for NURS 5990 Thesis or Project Research (3 units or one unit x 3). It is important that students have a thesis/project chair before registering for the NURS 5970 or NURS 5990 courses. Refer to Appendix C and D for eligibility criteria and complete details.

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

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

- 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 PACSON MSN Program Committee 3.0 grade point average in the last 60 semester units attempted;
- Completion of a statistics course (three semester units or more which included inferential statistical content);
♦ NURS 4900 (three semester unit undergraduate nursing research course) or equivalent course;
♦ Recent physical assessment course (within 5 years) for nurse practitioner and Education students;
♦ Current, unrestricted license to practice nursing in California.

**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 specialties:

♦ Acute Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner  
♦ Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner  
♦ Family Nurse Practitioner  
♦ Family Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner  
♦ Nursing Education

**Admission Requirements:**

The general admission requirements for these post-master’s programs are:

1. Current California Registered Nurse License
2. Master’s degree in Nursing (MSN or MN)
3. Recent physical assessment course (within 5 years)

**Required Courses for Post-Master’s Certificate Programs**

Students enrolled in a post-master’s certificate program must complete the same program coursework as traditional MSN students, with the exception of graduate core courses (9 units), electives, and the comprehensive examination/thesis/project.

**Graduation Information for Post-Master’s Certificate Recipients**

Upon successful completion of a post-master’s certificate program, students are awarded a certificate. Obtaining a certificate involves completing an application, paying a $25 application fee, and following the guidelines on the application. Applications are available in the Records Office, Administration Building Room 409. Also, applications may be downloaded online from the Schedule of Classes at http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Graduation/Docs/certificate_application.pdf or from the Graduation section on the Cal State LA website at http://www.calstatela.edu/graduation.

Student transcripts also provide evidence of coursework and hours of study/clinical practice. Those students completing 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 and are eligible to sit for the national certification in their specialty.

**The Decision Regarding Thesis or Project versus Comprehensive Exam**

The student who chooses to complete the thesis or scholarly project versus taking the comprehensive exam is making an important decision. Faculty encourage this option for those who have followed a thoughtful knowledgeable decision-making process. The thesis or scholarly project is an outstanding option for a student who has demonstrated academic excellence and wishes to pursue independently an area of predetermined interest. The graduate student may have developed a unique interest in an area based on previous course content or nursing/life experiences. Having a strong predetermined interest in an area greatly facilitates the process of developing the proposal.

The thesis option follows the traditional research process and is an opportunity for the student to conduct a master’s level research study from beginning to end. This study could be a pilot study, a replication study or could be an independent “slice” of a study from a faculty research project.

The project is a scholarly project, not tied strictly to the research process, and is an opportunity for the student to investigate and demonstrate creative scholarship. Examples of recent projects include: Writing a grant proposal, developing an innovative nursing education curriculum, creating nursing education videos, writing a publishable paper, developing and writing a clinical manual for a vulnerable population, developing an online course, a scholarly website, and/or an extensive clinical brochure. All projects are based on scholarly review of the research evidence. Both the thesis and project require excellent writing and critical thinking skills. Students who select the thesis or project frequently say: “It was a lot of work, but I am really glad I did it!”

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, length of option, career choice following graduation, and grade point average (GPA). 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 semester. In comparison, completion of a thesis or project usually takes two to three semesters. Students who have more intensive specialty option requirements, such as the FNP or Psych/MHNP option, may choose the comprehensive exam because the length of their program is already substantial. Career plans following graduation are other factors to consider. If the student plans to work in education or in a research focused environment, 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 the student plans to teach in a four-year institution.

Grades are also a consideration. For example, thesis and project students must have a minimum 3.5 GPA following all required coursework, as well as an A grade in research course. Appendix C and Appendix D contain detailed information regarding thesis and project requirements.

Fiscal constraints may influence choice of the thesis/project option. Thesis duplication, instrument purchase (rare), and statistical consultation (for thesis option students) may require additional funds by students. To address these issues, students should secure thesis committee members after completing NURS 5900 and before beginning extensive work on the proposal. The thesis or project chair and members should have an interest and substantive or methodological expertise in the area that the student plans to study.

Finally, personality and study factors such as perseverance, resilience, self-discipline, independent working style, problem solving abilities, effective stress reduction and coping styles are all factors for the student to consider when choosing the thesis or project option. Some faculty believe comprehensive examinations may be a better option if the student functions better with a high level of stress for a short time. If, however, the student functions better with a lower level of stress over a longer period of time, writing a thesis/project might be preferable.

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

The student who chooses the thesis/project option should select an enjoyable topic especially because of the amount of time that will be invested. It would not be overstating the case to say that the student should have a passionate interest in the area being proposed for the project or thesis. In addition, the student should incorporate some aspect of the potential area of study in graduate course papers and presentations to increase 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 the student’s nursing knowledge and expertise.

In preparing for the thesis/project process, it is critically important to follow the thesis/project proposal guidelines in either Appendix C or Appendix D.

After receiving institutional review board (IRB) approval for the thesis, securing an outside facility’s human subjects approval may be necessary. The student will then be ready to collect data and examine the results. The thesis chair and/or thesis members will assist with statistics and/or referral to someone with statistical expertise, as needed.
A student must enroll for a total of five units while conducting the thesis/project. Two units of NURS 5970, which can be taken as one unit per semester, are taken during thesis/project preparation followed by three units of NURS 5990, which can be taken as one or two units per semester. Note that thesis students must have IRB approval prior to starting NURS 5990. The student should enroll in a NURS 5990 or UNIV 9000 (0 units) during the semester one submits the final copy of the thesis/project. Once a student is enrolled in the first semester of NURS 5990, switching to the comprehensive exam option is not allowed. A student receives a report in progress (RP) grade until the thesis is completed. At that time, a grade of Credit is granted.

**Suggestions Regarding Comprehensive Examinations**

The complete guidelines of the comprehensive examination are detailed in Appendix B. The School provides detailed content study guides for each option during the semester of the exam.

Orientation and help sessions for students are provided by faculty usually during the 7th week of every semester (most often on Tuesdays) at prescheduled times that are emailed to students enrolled in NURS 5960 and may also be listed on the MSN Graduate Bulletin Board (outside of the main PACSON office). It is suggested that students attend these sessions during the previous semester that they will be writing the exam. Students are required to attend the Comprehensive Exam Orientation in the semester that they take the exam.

Students must register for the examination (NURS 5960, 0 units). There is a fee for registering for NURS 5960. The examination is generally taken after completing all required courses on the student’s classified program or during the final semester of coursework provided that the student is not enrolled in any core (e.g., research) courses. The examination is graded on a Credit/No Credit basis. Once a student has taken the comprehensive examination, switching to a thesis or project option is not allowed.

**Submitted Manuscript in Review in Lieu of Comprehensive Exam**

The student who chooses the manuscript option, in lieu of the essay portion of the comprehensive exam, should select a topic of interest that will advance nursing knowledge. Examples are literature review, concept analysis, or unique case study exemplars. Manuscript topics may also come from course work during the program or from the student’s nursing knowledge and expertise. Previously submitted papers for class credit may not be used unless sufficiently developed in collaboration with a faculty mentor to warrant a scholarly journal submission. Student group papers do not qualify for journal
submission. The student is the first author and the faculty mentor will be considered second author.

In preparing for the manuscript submission process, it is critically important that the student first: a) select an appropriate topic for the manuscript; b) identify a faculty member who approves the manuscript topic; c) complete the Journal Topic Approval Form, signed by the option coordinator, to the PACSON Graduate Advisor; d) submit the manuscript to an appropriate peer-reviewed journal at least one month prior to the comprehensive exam orientation session date; e) obtain notification from the journal editor that the manuscript has not only been received, but has been sent for peer review before the Comprehensive Exam orientation session; and f) submit the journal notification to the faculty mentor and the PACSON Graduate Advisor. The Graduate advisor will notify the student and faculty member of the student’s essay exemption status.

**SECTION III: ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Cal State LA Publications Available to Students**

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

**General University Catalog**

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

**Schedule of Classes**

The *Schedule of Classes* is published each semester and may be found online at [http://www.calstatela.edu/registrar/university-scheduling-office-0](http://www.calstatela.edu/registrar/university-scheduling-office-0). The *Schedule of Classes* contains course offerings and the calendar of important dates for each upcoming semester, new and modified course and program information, academic and other policy changes, comprehensive registration-related information, and general information not included in the catalog. Important information can also be found under various titles online.

**University Thesis/Project Guidelines**
Complete information regarding thesis and project guidelines are located in the Graduate Student Handbook published by the University Graduate Studies Office. The handbook can be accessed online at http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Office%20of%20Graduate%20Studies/grad-student-handbook-2016-2017.pdf.

**Maintaining Enrollment for Thesis/Project**

Students must be advanced to candidacy and must obtain the approval of the Associate Dean before registering for research and thesis/project units. When all units for NURS 5970 and NURS 5990 classes have been completed, a student must maintain continuous enrollment by registering for thesis or research units using the UNIV 9000 course number each semester until completion of the thesis/project. Furthermore, students must be officially enrolled during the semester they expect to graduate.

**Thesis and Project Requirements**

Students who choose to write a thesis or project as their master’s degree culminating experience should consult the Guide to Preparation of Master’s Theses and Project Reports, available at http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatethesis. This link provides information about procedures, regulations, and responsibilities governing the master’s thesis or project; general requirements for thesis preparation and acceptance; format requirements for the thesis; and special instructions for projects and project reports. In addition, students must refer to the MSN Graduate Student Handbook for additional details.

Graduate students who complete research units (NURS 5970) and thesis or project units (NURS 5990) required for master’s degrees must be regularly enrolled during any semester in which they use University facilities or consult with faculty. This means that students must be enrolled during the term in which the student will defend the thesis, file the thesis in the library, and graduate. To maintain residence requirements and continuing student registration privileges, graduate students who are not enrolled in credit-bearing coursework (e.g., NURS 5970 or 5990) must register for UNIV 9000.

Once officially accepted and processed, master’s theses and projects are made available to the public through the Library.

**Procedures and Regulations for MSN Students**

**Admission Procedures**

1. Students first apply to the University and then separately, complete the PACSON MSN Application. Students are admitted to the University and
College of Health and Human Services before they are admitted to a graduate nursing program. Students need to complete the standard CSU Application form for admission available online at www2.calstate.edu/apply. Currently, applications are accepted once a year for admission beginning in Fall semester. Application dates are listed in the schedule of classes. As part of the University admissions procedures, two official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended are required. One official transcript should be sent to the University Admissions’s Office, and another should be sent to the student to include in their MSN Application packet for the PACSON. Applicants who are alumni of Cal State LA may download a copy of their transcript from the GET system and use this unofficial copy for the PACSON.

2. All programs require the MSN Application to be completed, available online at www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/School%20of%20Nursing/PDF/Applications/MSN_PM/msn_application_and_checklist.pdf

3. Also refer to the Cal State LA Graduate Admissions Information for specific admission requirements at www.calstatela.edu/academic/hhs/nursing/MSN_TR_adm.php

4. Because there are additional admission requirements associated with graduate nursing programs, admission to the University and the Xu College of Health and Human Services does not guarantee admission into these programs. A student may schedule an appointment with a graduate adviser before applying to obtain an overview of the program and to discuss qualifications and interests. Course Sequencing Sheets are located for all track online at www.calstatela.edu/hhs/nursing/academic-programs-msn-traditional-post-masters

5. A student’s classified program cannot be finalized until one is formally accepted to the University and the Xu 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 students with a GPA of 2.9-2.99, one course is required, for a GPA of 2.8-2.89, two courses are required, and for a GPA of 2.75-2.79, four courses are required.

6. After receiving an acceptance letter from the University and the Xu College of Health and Human Services, new students may make an initial advisement appointment with the MSN Principal Graduate Adviser to discuss admission to the program and to complete a classified program of study. Such may also be accomplished during the New MSN
Student Orientation Session which is usually held prior to the Fall semester.

7. In preparation for an initial nursing advisement appointment and/or classification appointment, students should bring a personal copy of all transcripts (post high school), RN license, and a copy of admission letters, and a copy of paid University receipt for liability insurance. If a student has completed graduate courses at another university and wishes transfer credit, copies of these course descriptions and/or course syllabi should be brought to the advisement appointment. Such will be used to evaluate the equivalency of courses. 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. Several forms will also be required to be completed regarding. 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, the student should determine how many classes are feasible to take each semester. 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.

8. 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. In most instances only nine (9) units of approved graduate course work may be transferred in as substitution for courses in the plan of study. The specific transfer courses must be equivalent to the courses required in the student’s plan of study. These courses must have been completed within seven years from the date a student’s master’s degree was granted (i.e., the actual date of graduation from the Cal State LA). This seven-year term limit also applies to all Cal State LA courses. Refer to Appendix H and Transfer Credit policy for complete details.
Transfer Credit Policy

Students applying to or enrolled in the MSN program may petition for any course to be accepted as transfer credit and substituted for an equitable course at Cal State LA. The process shall follow the following steps:

1. The student submits a course substitution request which identifies the specific Cal State LA course being requested for substitution and a copy of the course syllabus being requested. In addition, the following items must also be submitted: (a) catalog description, (b) course unit credit allocation (quarter or semester), (c) student learning outcomes, (d) evaluation methods, and (e) calendar of course activities.

2. The request and syllabus are forwarded to the appropriate faculty content expert, who in consultation with the MSN Faculty Course Substitution Committee, approves or denies the petition. The MSN Course Substitution Committee shall consist of each Option Coordinator and the Principal Graduate Advisor.

3. Judgment of course equivalency shall be based on each of the following five parameters:
   a. Catalog description
   b. Course unit credit allocation
   c. Student learning outcomes
   d. Evaluation methods
   e. Calendar of course activities

4. The Principal Graduate Advisor will send an electronic and/or paper letter to the student regarding the decision of the MSN Faculty Course Substitution Committee. All correspondence will become part of the student’s record.

Advisement Requirements

MSN students are usually assigned to their option coordinator as their graduate adviser. Graduate advisers are available to assist students in selecting a program of study, setting up the program, clarifying course work requirements, and clarifying times courses are usually offered. It is the student’s responsibility to seek academic advisement (initially and about once every two semesters after the student’s classified program has been established), or more often as needed. Students will be introduced to their advisor/option coordinator during the New MSN Student Orientation session. Students are expected to consult with their advisor each semester to plan their program of study.
Important Milestones during the MSN Program

Once a student has been admitted to the University and the Xu College of Health and Human Services, the student must complete the following steps to be admitted and subsequently complete the MSN program:

1. Attend the MSN new student orientation to meet with the MSN chair and option coordinators to receive/review one’s master’s degree program/requirements.
2. A background check is required of all new entering graduate students. This is to be completed during the second semester of coursework for all options. Specific information regarding companies to choose and procedures related to the background check may be obtained in Nursing Advisement Office. A new background check is required every two years.
3. Any change in coursework must be approved in advance of course completion by a faculty advisor. A maximum study load for graduate students is 16 units per semester. A student must complete all course and other requirements for the degree within seven years. Students are encouraged to see their option coordinator or the principal graduate advisor for any questions.
4. Graduate students are exempt from UNIV 4000 or the course alternative, UNIV 4010, if they hold an earned bachelor’s degree or higher from an accredited college or university where English is the primary medium of instruction. Graduate students are also exempt from UNIV 4000 if they have a score of 41 or better on the writing portion of the California Basic Education Skills Test (CBEST) or a score of 4 on the analytic writing portion of the GRE or GMAT. International graduate students who graduate from universities where English is NOT the primary language of instruction and do not meet other exemption criteria identified above must pass the Writing Proficiency UNIV 4000 or UNIV 4010 within their first 12 units. Students may only take the WPE one time only. Graduate students who take but do not pass the WPE should take University 4010 the following semester. Students who do not satisfy the GWAR requirement within their first 12 units may be subject to a registration hold. Students must satisfy this Graduate Writing Requirement in order to be Advanced to Candidacy.
5. Complete 12 units of coursework listed on one’s classified program with a B or better GPA and then, the student is eligible for advancement to candidacy. When students are eligible for advanced to candidacy their names are submitted to the Deans office and a confirmation email is sent to their Cal State LA email address.
6. Complete all coursework on one’s 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.
7. Pass the comprehensive examination or write a thesis or complete a culminating project.
8. Apply for graduation by the deadline announced on the Graduation Office website for the semester one wishes to graduate. It is important to note that this usually occurs approximately 1½ semesters before graduation. Graduation application forms are available on the Graduation Office website (http://www.calstatela.edu/graduation). A student 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. It is recommended that students submit Graduation Application Forms two weeks prior to the university deadline to assure adequate processing time.

Registration Procedures

Students may register online each semester after they are accepted into the University and as long as they maintain continuing student status. Continuing students receive information regarding their registration appointment dates by logging into GET (Golden Eagle Territory). Additional information about registration procedures is provided in the Schedule of Classes, available online each semester before the registration period. Online registration (GET) is available to all eligible continuing students.

It is very important that students register early. Courses may be cancelled before the first class meeting if too few students have registered. If one is unable to register for a course because the class is filled, a waiting list for the course (located in the PACSON Office) should be signed. Additionally, the student is encouraged to attend the first class session and attempt to be admitted by the course instructor if space becomes available.

Absence for more than one of any two consecutive semesters without an approved leave of absence will cancel continuing registration eligibility. See Leaves of Absence later in this handbook.

Eligibility for Classes

Faculty will check eligibility for student class registration. In some instances, faculty may drop a student from the course if the student has not completed required course prerequisites.

Adding/Dropping Classes

Students may add or drop a class through 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 Director of the PACSON and the Associate Dean of the College of Health and Human Services. Students should decide early if their
schedule permits successful course completion. It should be noted that having academic difficulty in a course is not an acceptable reason for dropping a course at Cal State LA. However, extenuating circumstances are always taken into account for late drops or withdrawals. A student should discuss one’s needs with the instructor before adding or dropping a course. Once a student has been classified, adding or dropping a course from their 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 PACSON courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>80-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>71-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>60-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>59 &amp; below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grade is an interim grade designed for students who are passing but who through extenuating circumstances have not been able to complete a small portion of the work required for the course. An Incomplete grade shall be assigned at the discretion of the faculty member only when the faculty member concludes that a clearly identifiable portion of course requirements cannot be met within the academic term for unforeseen reasons. It is the responsibility of
the student to request a grade of Incomplete from the instructor and to
determine from the instructor the remaining course requirements that must be
satisfied to remove the Incomplete. The conditions for removal of the
Incomplete including due date shall be specified in writing by the instructor
and given to the student with a copy placed on their file. This “Incomplete
Grade Agreement” must specify the outstanding course requirements and the
final grade to be given based on the evaluation of the outstanding work. It
should be noted that experiencing academic difficulty in a course is not an
acceptable reason for a student to request an incomplete grade. The maximum
time allowed by the University to make up an incomplete grade is one calendar
year. If a student does not remove the incomplete grade within the allotted
time, the “I” will automatically be replaced with and “IC”, will remain on the
student’s transcript, and be counted as an “F” in GPA calculations.

**Course and Program Continuation after Course Failures or Incomplete
Grades**

Any student who does not pass a course or receives an incomplete grade in a
course must make an appointment to see the Principal Graduate Adviser before
progressing in the program. Remediation options will be discussed. The
Principal Graduate Adviser will convey the outcome of the appointment to the
student’s option coordinator.

Students who withdraw from or are not successful in passing a course in the
MSN program with a minimum grade of C must repeat the course in Cal State
LA- PACSON. That is, once a student attempts to take a course in the MSN
program at Cal State LA, substitutions will not be allowed from another college
or university.

Students who receive two grades of C- or lower will not be allowed to continue
in the MSN program.

**Auditing a Class**

Regularly enrolled students may register for classes in audit status through
add/drop (program change) procedures only as indicated in the Schedule of
Classes for audit registration. Such registrations are subject to the same fee
regulations as registration for credit, and fees must be paid at the time of
registration. Registration for a course in audit status is subject to approval of
the instructor and is permitted only after students who desire to enroll on a
credit basis have had an opportunity to do so. Students registered for other
classes may audit classes only by special arrangement with the class
instructor. Regular add procedures do not apply. Students must submit an
instructor-approved program change form at the University registration office.
Regular class attendance is expected, but audit registrants are not required to complete assignments or take examinations. An audit registration may not be changed to a credit registration after the last day to add classes. No entry about audit registration is made on student grade reports or transcripts.

**Credit by Examination**

Students in good standing and officially enrolled in one or more residence courses may challenge courses by taking examinations developed by PACSON Faculty. Credit shall be granted to those students who pass examinations that have been approved for credit in the PACSON. Credit by examination is restricted to undergraduate and graduate courses listed in the General Catalog. Approval of the Director of the PACSON and faculty for the course is required. It is without unit limit but does not count as residence credit. Such credit is not treated as part of the student’s workload during a regular semester and therefore does not require approval for excess study load. Grades received by examination are recorded as final grades on the permanent academic record and are designated as earned through credit by examination.

**Returning Student**

Students returning from a leave in good academic standing, or were on probation, and have not attempted units at another college/university, or through the College of Professional and Global Education (PAGE), students are considered a Returning Student.

Students applying to return to the same Graduate Program will be evaluated for readmission based on academic record and ability to successfully complete the program in a timely manner including any degree progress requirements in that program.

If applying to a different Graduate Program, students will be evaluated based on Program-specific requirements.

Returning students are required to meet with the Option Coordinator and to submit an academic plan consistent with timely graduation policy in order to be considered for readmission.

**Leaves of Absence**

Graduate students must remain in continuous enrollment each semester. Students may petition for a leave of absence for such reasons as medical reasons, including pregnancy, major surgery, and other health-related circumstances. Petition forms are available at PACSON Office. Evaluation of
petitions for leaves of absence takes into account the student’s stated plans and the extent to which a leave would contribute to educational objectives.

Students are expected to plan their time of return and their activities during the leave. They must also state why it is critical to remain in continuous residence. In the case of medical or financial leaves, they must state how they plan to remain current with or advance in their academic field. Graduate students are granted a maximum of 2 semesters of leave of absence, subject to renewal for one additional year; an application must be filed to be considered for a renewal. Petitions must be filed and submitted to Nursing Office no later than 5 weeks before the end of the semester before the proposed leave for vote and approval by the MSN Faculty Committee. Approval entitles students to continuing status for registration purposes if they return no later than the semester specified in their petition. Continuing students who return from a leave are entitled to priority registration privileges and are not required to file an application for readmission.

**Petitions**

To petition for exceptions to coursework or other program requirements, the student must submit a formal written request with rationale to the Chair of MSN Programs for vote by the MSN Faculty Committee. Results of the faculty vote are conveyed to the student in writing by the Chair of MSN Programs.

**Change of Option**

Students enrolled in the MSN program must complete a full PACSON application and admission process required for any student to be considered for and admitted to that option. Internal and external applicants will be considered equally based on space available in the program.

**Requirements for an Additional Option within MSN Program**

Students who are currently enrolled in MSN degree program at Cal State L.A. may concurrently complete an additional option under the same degree. MSN students may work simultaneously on two options. Admission to the second option must follow a full university application and admission process required for any student to be considered for and admitted to that option after completing one year in the MSN program. Internal and external applicants will be considered equally based on space available in the program. Students must complete all requirements for both options including separate culminating experiences. The degrees will need to be completed and awarded simultaneously.

Students who are planning to pursue dual majors in nursing should meet with both option coordinators to discuss the demands of each option to make sure that this would
be feasible. If the student decided to pursue the second option, he/she must re-apply to the university for the second MSN option. The student must complete first option and second option courses in the second year and complete a multiple choice comprehensive exam for each option. The student will receive two MSN degrees.

MSN students cannot pursue post-master certificate programs concurrently with the master’s degree. All students pursuing a post-master certificate must have earned an MSN prior to the term of admission to the post-master certificate program.

**Fees**

Some graduate nursing courses require additional fees (e.g., NURS 5730). Information regarding other additional costs may be found in the *Schedule of Classes* for the current semester and via instructional faculty teaching the course.

**SECTION IV: PACSON REQUIREMENTS**

**Paper Format**

The PACSON requires that students write papers according to the format of the American Psychological Association (APA). The latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* can be purchased in the University Bookstore. However, many excellent links summarizing APA specifics can be found online.

**Clinical Courses and Advanced Field Study**

Students are required, in consultation with faculty, to identify qualified preceptors for clinical rotations. Preceptors may be chosen based on geographic location, through educational preparation, and credentials. Preceptors’ current practice setting must be congruent with the student’s MSN option. For example, nursing administration and nursing education preceptors must hold at least a master’s degree from an accredited school and be working directly in a role involving nursing administration or nursing education, respectively. For nurse practitioner students, preceptors must meet the same criteria, and may be nurse practitioners or physicians [i.e., medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (OD)]. Most importantly, preceptors must currently practice in a clinical setting appropriate to their area of specialization and in the case of nurse practitioners, their national certification as well. For example, nurse practitioner (NP) preceptors for FNP and ANP students must be working in primary care and NP preceptors for ACNP students must be working in acute care. Note that while some FNPs or ANPs may be practicing predominantly in an acute care facility, such rotations will not be approved for FNP or ANP students with the expectation of patient rounding.
The faculty expects students to meet all placement facility requirements before the first day of the course. Most facilities will request a background check, copies of RN license, malpractice insurance, TB skin test or chest X-ray results, evidence of a rubella titer (immune status), and a physical examination by a physician or nurse practitioner within the last year. Refer to Appendix A for complete details.

**First Class Meeting**

Many clinical courses meet on campus the first week of the semester. Times, places, and any announcements regarding the first class meeting are posted on Moodle (Learning Management System) site of the course or emailed via instructional faculty teaching the course.

**Admission to Clinical Labs/Practicums/Field Study**

Prior to entering the first practicum, or field study, students must have university liability insurance, personal health insurance, a current American Heart Association CPR card, 2 Step Mantoux skin test, and have completed all health clearance requirements detailed in Appendix A. In addition, drug screening may be requested depending on agency requirements.

A background check is required at entry to the program. Students are referred to [http://www.castlebranch.com](http://www.castlebranch.com) for both the background check and drug screening if required by the agency. Refer to previous sections of the MSN Graduate Student Handbook regarding background checks for additional information.

Students will not be allowed to participate in any clinical experience if the requirements discussed in this section have not been met at the start of the clinical experience. More specific information is provided below about these requirements.

**Health Clearance Requirements:** All new students are required to purchase a “Student Immunization Tracker” package from www.castlebranch.com. You will be submitting all of your health data for collection and tracking purposes to Certified Background/Certified Profile (the same company that does the background check). The fee for the total time you are in our MS program is $35.00. You pay the company directly. A complete listing of requirements is outlined in detail in Appendix A. Tests and/or immunizations may be obtained through a private physician or the Student Health Center (SHC) on campus. Note that antibody titers (actual numerical values), which demonstrate immunity, are required for rubella, rubeola, mumps, varicella and Hepatitis B (not just documentation of prior immunization). Attach copies of all relevant laboratory tests for documentation. All health clearance
information must be signed and completed prior to any clinical experience. Health clearance information is checked by several people prior to each clinical course and must also include the following:

- A physical examination
- An initial two-step mantoux screening test (TB screening skin test or chest X-ray if positive)

Students should make copies of their documentation prior to submission and retain for their records. If you have not submitted your documents, a hold may be placed on your registration.

1. **Personal Health Insurance**: All students are required to show proof of individual health insurance coverage.

2. **Student Liability Insurance**: The University provides coverage (Medical Professional Liability and Educator’s Errors and Omissions Liability Insurance) for each nursing student for up to $1 million coverage per occurrence. The cost of the annual coverage is $20.00 and can be purchased through the cashier’s office on campus. This policy only provides coverage while in a student role in a CSU nursing course. The policy does not cover student workers or students working as nursing assistants. The insurance policy is good for one year only and must be renewed annually on July 1st. It is also recommended that graduate students carry their own personal malpractice insurance in addition to the student liability insurance.

3. **American Heart Association CPR Card**: All students must have current certification in CPR, referred to as BLS or CPR for Healthcare Providers. (Note that this is not the “Heart Saver” class). Students must obtain CPR training from any American Heart Association (AHA) approved provider. The Student Health Center on campus offers classes. Call 323.343.3340 for fee schedules and class dates.

4. **Background Checks**: Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully assess any personal criminal background before applying to the PACSON. Once admitted to the PACSON, students must have a cleared background check that is satisfactory in meeting the standards of clinical agencies. The Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) in the State of California makes the final determination on eligibility for licensure. An unacceptable background check may be a barrier to licensure, certification and employment. The student accepts this risk upon entering the program. Background checks are confidential and are only viewed by the Director of the PACSON. Costs pertaining to acquiring background checks are the responsibility of the student.

If a student’s background check is not clear, it will be the student’s responsibility to meet with the Director of the PACSON and bring all appropriate relevant documentation for clearance (e.g., rehabilitation,
counseling, etc.). The Director of the PACSON will counsel the student regarding the authority of the BRN, hospital standards related to background checks, and discuss possible outcomes. Clinical facilities have the right to refuse placement based upon information from background checks. If clearance is not possible, a student will not be able attend clinical rotations. Students are advised that if clinical placements are refused, completion of degree requirements will not be possible.

5. **Driver License:** Nursing students should have a valid California driver license and access to an automobile covered by appropriate **automobile insurance** so that they can access assigned clinical agencies independently.

6. **HIPAA Certificate:** Done once via [www.csudh.edu/hhs/hipaa/hipaa.htm](http://www.csudh.edu/hhs/hipaa/hipaa.htm) All of this Health Clearance information must be uploaded to the SON online health tracking system via [www.certifiedprofile.com](http://www.certifiedprofile.com) See SON for package code.

### Guidelines for Professional Image for MSN Graduate Students

**Name Pins:** Name tags are to be worn at all times in the clinical setting. Name tags are to be no larger than 2” × 4”. Name tags are to be white with black lettering. Line 1 should include either the first letter of the student’s first name and then, last name of the student OR the student’s first and last name ONLY. Line 2 is to state “Nursing Graduate Student”. Line 3 is to state “CAL STATE LA”. These directions must be followed exactly with no exceptions.

**Dress:** White lab coats (1/2 or 3/4 length) are to be worn as required by the clinical facility. Full-length lab coats may not be worn by students. Lab coats 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. Except under specified clinical facility requirements, scrubs may not be worn as attire in the clinical setting.

**Footwear:** Shoes should be clean and 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.

**Makeup:** Makeup should appear fresh and natural. Excessive makeup is not acceptable.
**Nails:** Nails should be kept clean and smooth. If polish is used, it should be colorless with a 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, cologne and after-shave lotion is not permitted.

**Sunglasses:** Sunglasses are not to be worn in the clinical setting. 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 Exceptions:** Any request for exception(s) to the dress/appearance code for medical reasons must be signed by your personal physician or appropriate specialist. The request must then be given to the Director of the PACSON for approval and 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. Students should refer to the general *University Catalog* for policies.
SECTION V: NURSE PRACTITIONER PROGRAMS

Purposes

The primary purposes of the nurse practitioner programs at Cal State LA are to:

1. Prepare nurse practitioners as advanced practice nurses in the areas of adult acute care, adult primary, 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 believes 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. The faculty believes 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, diagnosis, 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 believes that the role of the nurse practitioner is to assess from a holistic perspective the bio-psycho-sociocultural 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.

The faculty believes 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 accomplishes this by serving as role models, resource persons, and motivators. Faculty also assists students in moving toward their career potentials.

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. A commitment to lifelong learning is the mark of a true professional.
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 at http://www.calstatela.edu/

Student Government

Enrollment at Cal State L.A. automatically entitles students to membership in the Associated Students, Inc., and students 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 GPA of 3.5 or above. Members pay an annual fee, and receive official publications, priority for educational programs and chapter-sponsored research funding, announcements, and may vote and hold office in local and/or national chapter.

Alpha Tau Delta

Alpha Tau Delta (ATD) is a professional fraternity for nurses. The emphasis of this social and academic organization is service. Through the Cal State LA 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 PACSON Office.

Committees

PACSON committees function as fact-finding, advisory, and coordinating bodies consistent with University and College policies. Membership on the MSN Faculty Committee consists of all full time faculty and volunteer student members. Students are encouraged to send representatives to all PACSON standing committees, including the MSN Faculty Committee. This committee meets at stipulated times during each semester, usually on Mondays. Student
representatives must be registered for a minimum of four units and be in good scholastic standing before and during their term on a committee. While student representatives are not voting members, their input from a student’s perspective can be extremely valuable to the School. Students interested in serving on a PACSON committee should email the Chair of MSN Programs 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.

**Annual Research Day**

MSN students are strongly encouraged to attend the PACSON Annual Research Day continuing education offering. This event, involving the entire PACSON, is jointly sponsored by the PACSON and Sigma Theta Tau and serves to disseminate research on a given theme. The Annual Research Day is usually held from 8 a.m. – 12 noon with an accompanying breakfast.

**Honors Convocation**

Every spring semester, the faculty will nominate and vote on honoring two MSN graduate students in the PACSON who have outstanding academic performance. This performance is recognized at the Honors Convocation. Additionally, all students with a GPA of >3.8 are recognized at this event.

**Commencement**

Commencement Exercises are held at the end of every spring semester in June. Please refer to the general *University 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**

**Principal Graduate Advisor**

The PACSON sponsors a formal student academic support program that consists primarily of referral assistance for academic or personal counseling from the graduate advisor. The graduate advisor primarily advises students who are having difficulty with successful completion of coursework or 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 issues.

Student Health Services
The Student Health Center offers health services to all currently enrolled students at CAL STATE LA. 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 of Financial Aid in the Student Affairs Building, Room 124. Students in need of financial assistance should apply to the center. The scholarship office is in the Student Affairs Building Room118, next to the Administration Building. It is worthwhile to check with the scholarship office periodically as new opportunities may be announced.

The basic University scholarship application must be filed each April for awards to be made for Fall semester each year. There are several scholarship awards made annually to nursing students. Students interested in applying for a student loan should refer to the Financial Aid Office for assistance. 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 relevant to graduate students. Further, a list of nursing scholarships including eligibility, scholarship amounts, application procedures, and deadlines is available on the Scholarship Bulletin Board across the hall from room on the 4th floor of Simpson Tower. Scholarship information is also located on the PACSON website.

A limited number of Title II federal traineeships are available for graduate nursing students. The Principal Graduate Advisor oversees traineeship award applications offered in Fall semester of each year. Information and applications may be obtained from the Nursing Advisement Office.

In addition, there are several scholarships which are periodically offered by local organizations and require a separate application. Application dates vary for these but are most often in the Spring or Fall semesters. Additionally, several nursing organizations offer modest scholarships on an annual basis, including Alpha Tau Delta, Sigma Theta Tau, and several other nursing organizations. Students who need additional 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 1.800.221.9393.

**Career Development Center**

The Career Development Center provides counseling and assists students in the development of employment-seeking skills. 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 *University 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 on 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. Online access for 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 Room B14 or phone 323.343.2600. There is a computer lab in the Salazar Hall that has IBM and Macintosh-compatible computers. The computer lab 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 checkout desk while using this software.

**Women’s Resource Center**

This center is available to all students for information and services relating to single parenting, separation, legislation concerning women, and peer counseling. Location information can be found in the general *University Catalog*.

**Transportation, Housing, and Parking**

Refer to the University Graduate Handbook and the general *University Catalog* and the *University Graduate Handbook* for complete information.
### General Information

Program:  
BSN _____ RN to BSN _____ ABSN/EMSN(ELMN) _____ ADN/BSN _____ MSN(Option) _____ DNP _____  

Student Full Name ______________________________________ CIN ________________________________  

Student Telephone # ___________________________ Student Email ________________________________  

Address _______________________________________________ City __________________ Zip Code ________  

Emergency Contact Name ____________________________ Relationship ________________  

Emergency Contact Phone # ____________________________  

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION  
(provide copies of all, for cards, front and back w/signature)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| American Heart Association CPR (BLS) Cert. (Health Care Provider: 2yrs) | Every 2 yrs | ☐  
| California Driver License | once & when renewed | ☐  
| Auto Liability Insurance | Students name must appear on policy | once & when renewed | ☐  
| RN License (if applicable) | once & when renewed | ☐  
| Health Insurance | Students name must appear on card | once & when renewed | ☐  
| University Liability Ins. | Coverage July 1st through June 30th (available for purchase July 1st of every year) | yearly | ☐  
| HIPAA certificate [http://www4.csudh.edu/son/info/hipaa-precautions/index](http://www4.csudh.edu/son/info/hipaa-precautions/index) | Date: _____ | yearly | ☐  
| OR for BSN: ATI skills module | | |  
| Background Check [www.certifiedprofile.com](http://www.certifiedprofile.com) package code: see SON for code | Date: _____ | once | ☐  
| Live Scan (if required) | Date: _____ | once | ☐  
| Drug Screening (if required) | Date: _____ | once | ☐  
| Fire Card (if required) | Date: _____ | once | ☐  

**APPENDIX A**  
California State University Los Angeles – PACSON  
Student Information and Health Clearance Form  

Upload this form along with required attachments to [www.certifiedprofile.com](http://www.certifiedprofile.com) (see SON for package code) Information must be updated yearly or when current expiration dates are reached. Keep the originals of this form and all documents in your possession throughout the school year. You may be asked by clinical sites and/or faculty to present your documents. Not completing all health clearance items for the SON and for the clinical site may prevent you from successfully completing course requirements.
### REQUIRED HEALTH SCREENING (Immunizations): Copies of all required (results should include lab values with immunity status)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MMR or Positive Titers</td>
<td>once</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles (Rubeola)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubella</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: #1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: #3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella (Chicken Pox) or Positive Titer (_____</td>
<td>once</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: #1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___Hep B Series or ___Declination or ___Positive Titer</td>
<td>once</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: #1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: #3</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tdap</td>
<td>once</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: _____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___Influenza (Flu) Vaccination or ___Declination</td>
<td>yearly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: _____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Exam (see pg 3)</td>
<td>yearly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please submit documentation of a past 2 step TB skin test along with a current 1 step TB or X-ray or QuantiFERON Gold Blood test. The renewal date will be set for 1 year. Upon renewal, one of the following is required: 1 step TB Skin test OR QuantiFERON Gold Blood test OR Chest X-Ray (if positive TB). If you do not have documentation of the 2 step you will be asked to repeat it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TB 2-step (once to be followed by yearly negatives)</td>
<td>once</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: ___</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result: ___</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: #1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(one to three weeks apart)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TB test date</td>
<td>yearly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last 12 months: _____</td>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result: _____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Positive TB provide a negative Chest X-Ray report</td>
<td>yearly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest X-Ray Date: _____</td>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result: _____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QuantiFERON Gold Blood test:</td>
<td>yearly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: _____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result: _____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
California State University Los Angeles – PACSON
Student Information and Health Clearance Form

Physical Exam:

_________________________ was examined on the below date and I found her/him to be in satisfactory health and able to participate fully in the PACSON academic program.

__________________________________________________
Signature of Clinician *

__________________________________________________
Printed Name

________
Date

*This health examination is to be done by a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician’s assistant.

MD/DO _____ NP _____ PA _____

Agency: ______________________________

Clinician Comments:
APPENDIX B
MSN Comprehensive Examination
Guidelines

Overview
The Comprehensive Examination, Thesis, or Master's Project are the three terminal evaluative methods utilized by the PACSON to determine student program achievement and is the final performance for awarding of the master of science in nursing (MSN) degree. Each method provides an avenue for students to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and knowledge required of master's graduates.

Equivalent to the rigor of a Thesis or Master's Project, the Comprehensive Examination is a culminating experience of the MSN program and consists of two parts: (1) a written essay and, (2) a best-answer multiple choice examination that is reflective of relevant core and option specific to the student's specialty option. These components are reflective of the graduate student’s competency in analyzing, synthesizing, applying, and evaluating knowledge. The ultimate interface and application of master's nursing theory, research, and advanced clinical practice are delineated in this two-part examination.

Guidelines
1. Student Eligibility Criteria
   1.1 Students are encouraged to complete all required courses of their classified program prior to taking the comprehensive examination. However, the Comprehensive Examination may be taken during the last term of course work; however, all core courses must be completed prior to taking the examination.
   1.2 Students must enroll for NURS 5960 during each term they plan to take the comprehensive examination.
   1.3 Students must not be on academic probation during the term they enroll to take the comprehensive examination. A minimum 3.0 GPA is required.
   1.4 Student must attend the Comprehensive Exam orientation and help sessions in the term that they are enrolled to take the exam.

2. Components of the Comprehensive Examination
   2.1 Part I: Written Essay
      2.11 Purpose: To demonstrate the ability of the graduate student to critically analyze an advanced practice issue/scenario, formulate a plan/stance, organize, and write a coherent, succinct, graduate-level essay response.
      2.12 Format: Type written (IBM computer) essay paper on a word document.
      2.13 Length: The body of the essay shall be no more than six double-spaced pages, not counting the title or reference pages.
      2.14 Time Allocation: Three hours
      2.15 Location: Large campus computer lab (one or two rooms) with all students attending at the same time and on the same day.
      2.16 Content: The essay will address a multi-part question related to a topic distributed at the MSN Comprehensive Examination Orientation.
      2.17 Additional Requirements:
         2.17-1 Strict, 6th edition APA style format must be used.
         2.17-2 Students are expected to cite at least two reference citations utilizing two different forms of APA citation within the body of the paper.
         2.17-3 A reference list is required.
      2.18 References: Six different references may be brought to the examination. Each reference source must be a scholarly published work (e.g., journal article) or in original format. It is highly recommended that an original research article or articles related to the essay topics be included in the references. Only one reference may be a textbook or similar sized published document/work, and the Essay grading criteria
should be brought to the exam. Additional notes and/or writings within the references or margins are not allowed. No reference sources addressing APA format is allowed.

2.2 Part II: Multiple Choice Examination

2.21 Purpose: (1) To objectively ascertain the depth and extent of the graduate student's knowledge in nursing research and nursing science; (2) To objectively ascertain the depth and extent of the graduate student's knowledge pertaining to advanced practice within one's clinical specialty option (i.e., nursing administration, nursing education, adult-gerontology acute care nurse practitioner, adult-gerontology primary care nurse practitioner, family nurse practitioner, or family psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner).

2.22 Format: Best-answer, multiple choice examination

2.23 Length: 100 items (40 items core; 60 items option specific)

2.24 Time Allocation: Time total is 3 hours

2.25 Location: Large university classroom with all students attending at the same time.

2.26 Content: Best-answer, multiple choice questions

   2.26-1 Nursing research questions may be related to theory, advanced role, issues, trends, vulnerable populations, health care policy, ethics, legalities, health care financing, reimbursement, and national standards including accreditation, among others (40 questions).

   2.26-2 Option-specific questions pertaining to advanced practice within one's clinical specialty option (60-questions).

2.27 Additional Requirements: Apperson answer sheets

2.28 References: closed book examination


3.1 Grading criteria for the Comprehensive Examination written essay component are established by the MSN Graduate Faculty Committee and used consistently across all MSN programs. Refer to the Comprehensive Examination Written Essay Component Grading Criteria document to facilitate preparation for the essay component of the Comprehensive examination. The grading criteria document can be used during the examination.

4. Student Preparation and Administrative Procedures

4.1 All students enrolled in NURS 5960 are required to attend the MSN Comprehensive Examination Orientation which is usually held on 3rd week of the term. A GPA of 3.0 and enrollment in NURS 5960 is required prior to attending the session. A help session reviewing essential content is offered the fourth week of the term. Any student who does not attend the MSN Comprehensive Examination Orientation and the help session is ineligible to take the examination during that term.

4.1A Students who are repeating the examination are required to register for NURS 5960 again and go through the same procedure again.

4.2 At the MSN Comprehensive Examination Orientation, each student will: (1) obtain a copy a topic selected by faculty to be researched and studied in preparation for the written essay component, (2) given the content study guide for the "All Options" content, and (3) given the content study guide for the student's specialty option. Students should carefully consider their intent to take the examination prior to accepting a copy of the essay topic. **At the end of the orientation session, a student who accepts a copy of the essay topic is considered to have taken the examination. If the student does not follow through with taking either the multiple choice or essay examination components they are considered to have taken the exam.**

4.4 Part I of the Comprehensive Examination, the Written Essay Component, is administered on one day (usually morning) of the term approximately four weeks after the Comprehensive Examination
Workshop, (i.e., approximately week seven of the term). The multiple choice examination (all option content and specialty content) will be administered approximately the eighth week of the term. Comp dates are posted one semester prior to the exam.

The Comprehensive Examination will not be offered on dates other than the scheduled examination dates. Students taking the examination for the first time must complete both components. If a student is unsuccessful in passing the Comprehensive Examination, only the component which was unsatisfactory must be repeated on the assigned Comprehensive Examination day(s)-during a future term.

4.5 A code name, which the student selects, will be used in lieu of actual student names as an identifier on both components of the comprehensive examination. To maintain anonymity and "blind" evaluation by the faculty, the student's name or other identifying information should not appear on any of the two examination components. An administrative assistant will formulate a code list on the day of the Comprehensive Examination and place the list in a sealed envelope. No faculty will have access to student codes until final grades have been determined.

4.6 Comprehensive Examinations are only given on announced/posted designated dates and times by the SON on the SON webpage and/or the MSN Board in front of the SON advisement center. No make-up dates or times are allowed.

5. Evaluation of the Comprehensive Examination

5.1 Comprehensive Examinations are evaluated as pass/fail. As such, a grade of CR (credit) or RP (report in progress) will be assigned for NURS 5960. Students must achieve a total of 80% out of a possible 100% on each examination.

5.2 A student who does not pass the Comprehensive Examination on the first attempt is allowed to retake the examination one additional time. The student need not take all components of the exam, only the exam failed. However, the student must first meet with their Option Coordinator to establish and document a remediation plan (form is available in the Graduate Office). This plan should include carefully reviewing the failed examination to identify areas for improvement. Additional remediation activities may be required by the Option Coordinator or Graduate Advisor. **All remediation activities must be completed and filed in the student's record before the student attempts to repeat the Comprehensive Examination.** If a student is unsuccessful on the second attempt, one-third and final chance to successfully pass the examination may be granted by the graduate committee in the case of extenuating and compelling circumstances. The previous petition and remediation processes mentioned above must be followed. Any additional petitions will not be allowed. Petitions received by email are not acceptable. The MSN Chair will notify the student of the Committee's decision after their meeting.

5.3 The written essay component of the Comprehensive Examination paper is assigned to two faculty readers who will independently read and score the paper. If there is a disagreement with the earned score, the two readers will consult with each other. If the difference cannot be settled, the student's essay will be assigned to a third faculty reader. The final essay grade will be determined by the majority rule.

5.4 Refer to the Comprehensive Examination Written Essay Component Grading Criteria document.

6. Reporting of Results

6.1 Upon completion of the grading process, a PACSON administrator (e.g., Chair of MSN Programs or Director of the PACSON) shall notify students of their results through Cal State LA email and via the regular electronic Cal State LA grading system. Grades will be posted during the usual grade reporting time frame as CR (credit) denoting a Pass or RP (Report in Progress) representing a failure of the Comprehensive Examination.

6.2 Students will receive their results letter in the self-addressed envelope provided by the PACSON and completed by the student on the day of orientation.
6.3 Students will be allowed to review their examination results **one time PRIOR** to the next Comprehensive orientation session either on their own by scheduling an appointment with the SON office and/or with the Graduate Advisor, Director or option coordinator by appointment.
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES
PACSON
Comprehensive Exam
Written Essay Component: Grading Criteria

Points

---

*MASTERY OF CONTENT/SUBJECT:* (62 points)

*Must pass this section (at least B- = 49.6 total points) to pass the exam!*

Accuracy of content (42 points)

- Answers all parts of the question
- Substantive content demonstrating depth of knowledge
- Succinctness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Application of constructs/concepts (20 points)

- Critical synthesis of constructs/concepts
- Clarity of thoughts/points
- Provides examples when appropriate to facilitate comprehension of concept/constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STRUCTURE: (25 points)

- Organization
- Use of headings
- Grammar/sentence structure
- Includes introduction and summary
- Logical flow of ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>19.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>17.25</td>
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<td>F</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>21.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>16.25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

USE OF REFERENCES/APA FORMAT: (13 points)

- Includes title page with code and specialty track
- Appropriate APA format:
  - Within the paper
  - Reference list
- Cites at least two, different APA reference styles
- Cites and references all sources appropriately
- Appropriate # of double-spaced pages (Body of paper: At least 4 pages; no more than 6 pages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PASS or FAIL (circle one) MASTERY OF CONTENT/SUBJECT Section

TOTAL POINTS = 100

---
The following URLs contain information that is required reading for every student who is selecting the thesis/project.

- Information on APA workshops held by the library every semester. http://calstatela.libguides.com/style
- Information on Thesis workshops held by The Graduate Resource Center every semester. http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatethesis/workshops
- Office of Graduate Studies and Research Forms http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatetudies/student-forms-and-petitions

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 PACSON 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*
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 Maintain minimum B grades in each of the three graduate research courses (NURS 504, 590 and 592) and achieve an A grade in one of these three courses.

2.2 Minimum a 3.5 GPA in all graduate course work (up to enrollment in NURS 597).

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 complement 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, expertise in the research methodology that the student proposes to use, e.g., quantitative, qualitative; and appointment as a full-time faculty member in the CAL STATE LA PACSON. The Chair should agree to serve as Chair.

*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. Sometimes, a student will request permission to designate a committee member who is from another discipline within the university or an external expert who might be affiliated with a clinical agency. While this is supported by the PACSON, the student should consider the expert’s time and ability to consult on a regular basis. One very practical thing to consider is that the committee member must
sign off on the thesis/project in a timely manner. If the external expert is not available as desired, the student might consider having that expert act in a consultant capacity. In that case, a committee member would still have to be identified. The Chair and the committee member would need to agree to the consultant’s participation. The consultant would need to meet the qualifications of the committee member.

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 four semesters or less. This means that students take NURS 597 once (for two units) or twice (one unit the first and one unit the second semester) and NURS 599 three units total (one or two units each semester). 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 Institutional Review Board. 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 Institutional Review Board. The student fills out and acquires signatures for the GS 12 form prior to registering for N599 (see end of the project section for a sample of this form). These forms are located on the Graduate Studies’ website under forms. The proposal should not be submitted until both of the committee members believe it is ready. Prior to submitting the proposal to the Institutional Review Board for approval, the student should contact the University Compliance Coordinator in the office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 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. These forms can also be found on the Graduate Studies’ website. 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, the Chair of the Graduate Faculty Committee must be informed, since new forms need to be processed. For a qualitative study, the title should minimally include the major focus of the study.

5.2 Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

This section is an introduction prior to the problem and purpose statements that 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. It should be followed by a statement of the purpose of the study, in either a declarative or interrogative format.

5.3 Significance of the Study

The student must briefly state the significance of undertaking the proposed research. The student should also suggest the possible outcomes of both positive and negative findings from the proposed study.

5.4 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

A quantitative study should include a brief description of 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 the student proposes to study the effect of preoperative teaching on stress, he/she 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 through which the study findings will be analyzed.

5.5 Hypothesis(es) or Research Questions

For a qualitative thesis proposal, the student should 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 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

Due to the 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. The summary is to include a synopsis of the areas that were surveyed, as well as a brief statement of the findings and/or the current status of previous work. The literature review summary should include a statement explaining how the proposed research study differs from, extends, or replicates previous research efforts. For a qualitative study, the student will need to summarize their review of the general problem area(s) related to the study's research questions.

5.8 Methodology

The student must briefly describe the research design, the sample, and the setting, including 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). The student must report data in support of the content validity and one appropriate method that estimates reliability. Following this is a data collection procedure that summarizes each step expected in the execution of the investigation. The data collection procedure is followed by a data analysis section, which includes 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 Institutional Review Board.
5.9 Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent when the proposed study involves human subjects, whether these are patients, students, or nursing staff, one must include a section of ethical considerations and attach a consent form in the appendices. Guidelines for the process and consent form are attached.  
http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/aa/orad/irbregulations.php
http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/aa/orad/irbapps.php

For a qualitative study that uses participant observation methodology, informed consent from the appropriate agency administrator, as well as selected informants, must be obtained.

The proposal narrative should include the following:

a. Potential risks

Any physiological, psychological, social, or economic risks that might be anticipated, even minimal risk. These might include discomfort or slight anxiety due to the number and/or type of questions, fatigue from length or participation or the physical condition, and other related risks.

b. Risk management procedures

Minimal risk is defined as the risks people encounter in everyday life. Any risk above this level should be specified. The following actions should be taken:

♦ Obtain informed, witnessed consent before data collection.

♦ Inform the participants of their right to withdraw at any time without jeopardy.

♦ Describe 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.

♦ Describe how key to code numbers, raw data, and consents will be stored and locked.
Describe how privacy will be maintained during data collection.

Describe expertise to be used or consulted for problem resolution related to study or potential participant risks. This includes 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

This section gives a description of 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

A comparison of the potential benefits to the anticipated risks. It must be indicated if benefits are expected to outweigh the risks.

e. Expense to participants

A description of any financial impact on the sample, including gas for mileage.

5.10 References

A list of those references mentioned in the text of the proposal using APA style throughout.
5.11 Writing the Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal must follow 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.

In the library, the Health and Human Services Thesis Coordinator assures that each thesis submitted meets the approved university format guidelines and assists in verifying the fulfillment of department degree requirements. It is strongly recommended that students attend one of the special thesis workshops offered each semester to learn about the format and submission requirements and to verify deadlines for submission. It is advised that students attend this workshop the semester before the semester they intend to graduate. A list of current thesis workshops can be found at: http://www.calstatela.edu/library/workshops/thesis.htm. A one-to-one meeting with the Thesis Coordinator is required prior to completing the thesis.

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.
Project Proposal Guidelines

The following URLs contain information that is required reading for every student who is selecting the thesis/project.

- Information on APA workshops held by the library every semester. http://www.calstatela.edu/library/workshops/

- Information on Thesis workshops held by the library every semester. http://www.calstatela.edu/library/workshops/thesis.htm


- Office of Graduate Studies Student Forms Page http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/aa/gsr/forms.php

- Graduate Student Handbook http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/aa/gsr/assets/cadatalog/gshandbook.pdf

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 MSN faculty believe that varied approaches to projects are appropriate in nursing. Projects must be innovative, original, significant to nursing and the student’s MSN specialty option, 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 that can be accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed nursing journal are examples of possible projects. Other examples include developing and writing a clinical manual for a vulnerable population, developing an online course, a scholarly website, and/or a clinical brochure.

The following PACSON 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* (1993, edited in 2008). Specific project instructions are found in chapter 4 of that document. See the following URL [http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesbk.htm](http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesbk.htm).

Students are also required to follow the preparation information and university format requirements found at [http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesisprep.htm](http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesisprep.htm).

Student should also refer to previous discussions in this handbook and Appendix C.

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 Student must achieve an A grade in the graduate research course (NURS 5900).

2.2 Minimum 3.5 GPA in all graduate course work prior to enrollment in NURS 5970.

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

When a student opts to complete the project, they need to select a Chair of the committee and one committee member.

*Qualifications of the Chair on the project committee are the following:*

- Earned doctoral degree
• Expertise in the research methodology that the student proposes to use (e.g., quantitative, qualitative)
• Appointment as a full-time faculty member in the Cal State LA PACSON
• Willing and available to serve as Chair
• Congruence between the Chair’s and the student’s working style and timetable

Qualifications of the committee member and the alternate committee member (when necessary to designate):
• Expertise in theoretical or methodological area of the proposed thesis (if chair of this committee does not have the requisite content/theoretical background, the second member must possess this expertise)
• Earned doctoral degree or 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 research project)

Sometimes, a student will request permission to designate a committee member who is from another discipline within the university or an external expert who might be affiliated with a clinical agency. While this is supported by the PACSON, the student should consider the expert’s time and ability to consult on a regular basis. One very practical thing to consider is that the committee member must sign off on the thesis/project in a timely manner. If the external expert is not as available as desired, the student might consider having that expert act in a consultant capacity. In that case, a committee member would still have to be identified. The Chair and the committee member would need to agree to the consultant’s participation. The consultant would need to meet the qualifications of the committee member.

4. Roles of the Chair and Committee Member

The nursing faculty recognizes the project chair as the principal contact person for the student and the principal decision maker in the project development process. The Chair and the student should initially develop clear objectives and outcomes for the N5970 and N5990 courses and a timeline associated with each course. This should be shared and approved by the Committee Member. The Chair should schedule regular meetings with the student to provide guidance, direction and feedback to the student scholar. The project committee member possesses skills that supplement and/or complement those of the project chair. The committee member should be involved at the very least as a reader of the proposal and final complete project. The committee member also gives
final approval to both the proposal and the project. The input of the committee member is greatly valued and this input may be shared with the project Chair or in a joint meeting with the chair and the student. Ultimately each committee should work out their communication methods with the student. Clear communication channels should be discussed at the beginning of the project development so that recommendations for revisions are clear to all members. 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 Cal State LA.

* Note: The student should submit the GS-12 form to the Director with signatures as specified on the form after selecting the committee Chair and member. This form is on the Graduate Studies website under forms. [http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatethesis/templates-forms](http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatethesis/templates-forms)

5. **Steps in the Proposal Process**

Listed below is a short summary of the steps the student needs to complete when selecting the scholarly project as their culminating project.

**Summary of Steps:**
- Thoroughly read all recommended information about the comprehensive exam, the thesis, and the project as identified in this handbook
- Identify an initial idea for the project or thesis
- Commit to the project or thesis option
- Make an appointment with a potential chairperson to discuss your idea
- Validate with the chair their commitment to serving as chair
- Select a committee member and make an appointment and confirm their commitment
- Submit Form GS 12
- Enroll in NURS 5970, develop a plan, including workshop attendance as agreed (APA, thesis workshops) and timeline
- Complete the proposal part of the project for credit in N5970
- Enroll in NURS 5990, implement the project methodology and write up and complete the project report and the outcome
- Submit completed report and submit GS 13 and 14 for signatures

Students who enroll in NURS 5970 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 5970, they should not enroll in NURS 5970. Students may not enroll in NURS 5990 until they have completed the project proposal (NURS 597).

6. **Format for Project Proposals**

The following proposal format is consistent with the university guidelines and should be followed flexibly and yet meet the university standards for the proposal. The proposal is a required component of all 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. The proposal becomes the foundation for the final project report.

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

6.2 **Identification, Background, 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.

6.3 **Purpose:** Simple statement of the purpose of the project

6.4 **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.
6.5 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.

6.6 Outcome or Project and Evaluation component

6.7 References

7. The Project Outcome

7.1 The scholarly project is submitted as a written report and the scholarly product. The written report follows the same guidelines as the proposal with the addition of discussion about the outcome and recommendations. The student is directed to the *University Guidelines for Thesis and Project*, particularly Chapter 4. See URL at the beginning of this appendix. Below is an excerpt from the University Guidelines. Refer to Guide to Preparation of Master's Theses and Project Reports at [http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatethesis/format-guidelines](http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatethesis/format-guidelines)
APPENDIX E

Academic Honesty

(Senate: 7/25/00, 7/27/04, 10/23/07, 6/1/10, 11/12/13, 6/2/15; President: 2/5/01, 11/24/04, 11/29/07, 6/21/10, 3/19/14, 10/13/15; Editorial Amendment: 8/01, 09/09)

Governing documents: Executive Order 1098, Student Conduct Procedures

Preamble

The University in its quest for truth and knowledge embraces honesty and integrity. These fundamental values must not be compromised. The trust and respect among professors, students and the society need to be vigilantly protected. Cheating and plagiarism can be neither justified nor condoned, as this would destroy the ideals and purposes of higher education. Students enter the University to gain the knowledge and tools necessary for participation in society. Academic integrity is one foundation for a society based on trust and honesty. Therefore, the University takes seriously its responsibility for academic honesty.

I. Definitions

A. Cheating

At Cal State L. A., cheating is defined as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. The following examples are intended to be representative, but not all-inclusive:

a. Examinations/Tests Administered by Faculty or the University

- Copying from another student's paper
- Employing signals to obtain answers from or provide answers to others
- Stealing or arranging for the theft of an examination
- Knowingly reviewing an unauthorized copy of an examination
- Using lecture notes or textbooks during an examination when prohibited
- Possessing crib notes at the location and during the time of the examination
- Having someone else take an examination in your place
- Feigning illness or telling falsehoods to avoid taking an examination at the scheduled time
- Claiming falsely that you took an examination at the scheduled time
- Storing and/or accessing course subject matter in a calculator, computer, cell phones or other recording devices, without authorization from the instructor,
when such instruments are otherwise permitted to be used during an examination period

- Utilizing calculators and/or other learning aids forbidden by the instructor
- Obtaining assistance in answering questions on a take-home examination, when such action is specifically prohibited
- Attempting to use or using bribery to obtain an undeserved grade
- Changing an answer on a graded test and claiming the student's response to the question was incorrectly marked wrong

b. Papers/Reports, Laboratory/Homework

- Copying the work of other persons in whole or in part and claiming authorship
- Submitting a paper obtained from a any source that provides research/term papers
- Using a ghost writer to compose a paper and claiming authorship
- Claiming an assigned share of a team report, toward which insufficient or no contribution was made
- Lying about the reason for not submitting a report on time
- Pretending to have submitted a paper to an instructor
- Stealing another student's report and submitting it as one's own work
- Submitting the same term paper to two or more different instructors for credit in their courses without their prior permission
- Inventing, falsifying, or altering data for a research survey or laboratory experiment
- Misrepresenting the authorship of an experiment or exercise
- Depending upon others to complete laboratory assignments or homework when instructions call for independent work
- Sabotaging someone else's laboratory work or other exercise
- Fabricating bibliographic references

Cheating on any academic assignment, including course work, comprehensive exams, or theses, is subject to discipline for academic dishonesty.

B. Plagiarism

At Cal State L. A., plagiarism is defined as the act of using ideas, words, or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own, without giving proper credit to the original sources.
The following examples of plagiarism are intended to be representative, but not all-inclusive:

- Failing to give credit via proper citations for others' ideas and concepts, data and information, statements and phrases, and/or interpretations and conclusions
- Failing to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, a sentence, or a part thereof
- Paraphrasing the expressions of thought by others without appropriate quotation marks or attribution
- Assembling parts from various works and submitting the synthesis or single paper as one's own creation
- Representing another's artistic/scholarly works, such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawings, sculptures, or similar works as one's own

Plagiarizing on any academic assignment, including course work, comprehensive exam, or thesis, in whole or in part, is subject to discipline for academic dishonesty.

**C. Misrepresentation**

Knowingly furnishing false academic information to a University official, faculty member, or campus office is subject to discipline for academic dishonesty.

**D. Collusion**

Any student who intentionally helps another student perform any of the above acts of cheating, plagiarism or misrepresentation is subject to discipline for academic dishonesty.

**II. Consequences and Sanctions**

Violations of academic honesty have a dual aspect, constituting both a breach of ethics and a form of academic non-performance. Hence the consequences of violating this policy may fall into two categories. Addressing the violation as an academic matter does not preclude the imposition of further administrative sanctions.

**Academic Consequences:**

Faculty have the right to establish the standards by which the academic performance of students will be evaluated, including the consequences of students not meeting some portion or all of the academic requirements of a course through acts of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation or collusion. These consequences may include but are not limited to assigning a lowered grade, zero or "F" on an individual assignment, or lowering the student's grade or assigning an "F" in the course. Faculty may alternatively permit the student to repeat an assignment/test or complete and submit additional assignments. Furthermore, before these consequences can be effected, the
faculty member must have verified instances of academic dishonesty by personal observation and/or documentation.

**Administrative Sanctions:**

In addition to academic consequences imposed by faculty members or other reporting parties, the University can impose administrative sanctions. Cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation or collusion, in connection with an academic program or campus are subject to the Student Conduct Code and may warrant actions such as, but not necessarily limited to,

- Expulsion
- Suspension
- Probation
- Withdrawal of a degree
- Restitution

Although sanctions can be imposed for a single offense, repeat offenders will receive particular consideration for administrative sanctions. Multiple offenses committed in more than one course, even when discovered simultaneously, shall be considered repeat offenses.

**III. Reporting Procedures**

For the purposes of reporting findings of academic dishonesty, the ‘reporting party’ may refer to a probationary, tenured or temporary faculty member, a librarian, a person in an academic administrative position, a counselor, coach, administrator of a testing center or another person in a position of authority over a student’s academic work. Throughout this policy, the term ‘faculty member’ shall be used to stand in for any reporting party. Teaching assistants, graduate assistants and staff should report allegations of academic dishonesty to their authorized university supervisor. Allegations shall be made against individual students rather than groups of students.

When a faculty member suspects that a student has committed an academically dishonest act, it is the faculty member’s responsibility to take the following steps:

1. The faculty member must first carefully consider the evidence of the apparent dishonesty. A perception that is not supported by reasonable evidence, will not suffice. Examples (not necessarily comprehensive) of evidence sufficient to pursue action are:
   - Documentation regarding the source of text which the student has used without proper attribution or has attempted to represent as his/her own work
   - A demonstrably marked difference in the writing style of the student, as compared to his/her work on previous assignments
   - Testimony from others regarding a student’s use of dishonest means to fulfill the assignment at hand
Firsthand observation of the student engaging in a dishonest act, in a situation in which the student cannot effectively deny that the act took place

Admission by the student that he or she undertook a dishonest act in fulfillment of the assignment at hand

A suspicious degree of similarity in work done by different students

Faculty members are encouraged to discuss any perception of dishonesty and the evidentiary basis for an action with their department/division chair or school director and/or associate dean prior to discussing perceptions of wrongdoing with the affected student.

2. When satisfied that a reasonable evidentiary standard has been met and as soon as possible after discovering the alleged violation, the faculty member should arrange an office conference in order to inform the student of the allegations and the intended academic consequences of the violations. At the conference, the student should be informed of the supporting evidence, the intended academic consequences, and the Academic Honesty Policy.

In the event that the student disputes the findings of academic dishonesty, he or she shall be given the opportunity to respond (orally or writing). The faculty member must consider any information or evidence that the student presents during or after the conference, and determine whether or not such information or evidence mitigates or refutes the charge of academic dishonesty. In every case the student shall have ten (10) days beyond the date of the conference to respond to the allegations, before a report is made (as outlined in #3, below).

At the conference, the student should also be informed of the University’s Grade Appeals/Academic Grievance Policy. Under that policy, the student may appeal the determination that he or she has committed academic dishonesty, the academic consequences stemming from such a determination. Administrative sanctions may be appealed through the CSU Student Conduct Code.

3. If after consideration of all evidence (including any provided by the student), it is determined that a preponderance of the evidence favors a finding of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall proceed as directed below.

The faculty member shall report the finding of academic dishonesty to the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee and the Judicial Affairs Officer via The On-Line Academic Dishonesty Report Form. This report shall be the statement of charges against the student and the record of the academic consequence(s) imposed; all supporting documentation shall be attached to the form and made available to the student. If a student appeals a grade or other adverse consequence of an allegation of academic dishonesty, this report and the related documentation shall be subject to review.
In cases where the student fails to attend the scheduled conference to discuss the alleged dishonesty, or when the alleged dishonesty is detected at the close of the quarter and the faculty member has not been successful in a good-faith effort to contact the student, an Academic Dishonesty Report Form describing the alleged incident and documents supporting the allegation shall be submitted on-line to the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee and the University Judicial Affairs Officer and made available to the student.

In cases where the faculty member cannot, for serious and compelling reasons, participate in any one or more parts of the above process, the department/division chair or school director shall represent the reporting party.

IV. Confidentiality

All parties to the initial conference between a faculty member and a student accused of academic dishonesty and all subsequent deliberations regarding incidents of academic dishonesty have the right to expect that such deliberations will occur in a setting of strictest confidentiality.

Concomitant with this right of confidentiality is the obligation of all parties to refrain from any discussions of these issues regarding cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation or collusion outside of the informal and formal conferences and meetings as outlined elsewhere in this document and in related policies (including the Grade Appeal/Academic Grievance Policy). Confidentiality shall be maintained unless a legitimate need to know is established by the department/division chair or school director in order for the faculty to complete their responsibilities as University employees or in any legal action, and in a manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (Student Records Administration - 011, Sec 5.8) and any other applicable law. The department/division chair or school director may consult with, or request documentation of a student's history of academic dishonesty from the Judicial Affairs Officer only on a strict need to know basis. Violators of this principle of confidentiality are themselves subject to university disciplinary action.

In the matter of student records and according to Federal and State privacy laws, students have the right to protections against improper disclosure of personal information. However, it is permissible for transcripts of student academic records to contain information regarding a student's academic status including such disciplinary actions as suspension or expulsion. Suspension of one academic year or more shall be entered on the student’s transcript permanently without exception; this requirement shall not be waived in connection with a settlement agreement.

Threats/Retaliation:

Any threats or acts of retaliation against any member of the faculty or staff as a consequence of implementing this policy on Academic Honesty will be cause for
disciplinary action under section 41301, Title 5, California Code of Regulations, in addition to civil and criminal liabilities.
Inappropriate conduct by students or by applicants for admission is subject to discipline as provided in Sections 41301 and 41302 of Title 5, California Code of Regulations. These sections are as follows:

41301. Standards for Student Conduct.

The University is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy living and learning environment for students, faculty, and staff. Each member of the campus community must choose behaviors that contribute toward this end. Student behavior that is not consistent with the Student Conduct Code is addressed through an educational process that is designed to promote safety and good citizenship and, when necessary, impose appropriate consequences.

(a) Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to be good citizens and to engage in responsible behaviors that reflect well upon their university, to be civil to one another and to others in the campus community, and to contribute positively to student and university life.

(b) Unacceptable Student Behaviors

The following behavior is subject to disciplinary sanctions:

(1) Dishonesty, including:

(A) Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty that are intended to gain unfair academic advantage.

(B) Furnishing false information to a University official, faculty member, or campus office.

(C) Forgery, alteration, or misuse of a University document, key, or identification instrument.

(D) Misrepresenting one's self to be an authorized agent of the University or one of its auxiliaries
(2) Unauthorized entry into, presence in, use of, or misuse of University property.

(3) Willful, material and substantial disruption or obstruction of a University-related activity, or any on-campus activity.

(4) Participating in an activity that substantially and materially disrupts the normal operations of the University, or infringes on the rights of members of the University community.

(5) Willful, material and substantial obstruction of the free flow of pedestrian or other traffic, on or leading to campus property or an off-campus University related activity.

(6) Disorderly, lewd, indecent, or obscene behavior at a University related activity, or directed toward a member of the University community.

(7) Conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person within or related to the University community, including physical abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, or sexual misconduct.

(8) Hazing, or conspiracy to haze, as defined in Education Code Sections 32050 and 32051:

"Hazing" includes any method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization, or any pastime or amusement engaged in with respect to such an organization which causes, or is likely to cause, bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm, to any student or other person attending any school, community college, college, university or other educational institution in this state; but the term "hazing" does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions.

A group of students acting together may be considered a 'student organization' for purposes of this section whether or not they are officially recognized. Neither the express or implied consent of a victim of hazing, nor the lack of active participation while hazing is going on is a defense. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of hazing is not a neutral act, and is also a violation of this section.

(9) Use, possession, manufacture, or distribution of illegal drugs or drug-related paraphernalia, (except as expressly permitted by law and University regulations) or the misuse of legal pharmaceutical drugs.
(10) Use, possession, manufacture, or distribution of alcoholic beverages (except as expressly permitted by law and University regulations), or public intoxication while on campus or at a University related activity.

(11) Theft of property or services from the University community, or misappropriation of University resources.

(12) Unauthorized destruction, or damage to University property or other property in the University community.

(13) Possession or misuse of firearms or guns, replicas, ammunition, explosives, fireworks, knives, other weapons, or dangerous chemicals (without the prior authorization of the campus president) on campus or at a University related activity.

(14) Unauthorized recording, dissemination, or publication of academic presentations (including handwritten notes) for a commercial purpose.

(15) Misuse of computer facilities or resources, including:

   (A) Unauthorized entry into a file, for any purpose.

   (B) Unauthorized transfer of a file.

   (C) Use of another’s identification or password.

   (D) Use of computing facilities, campus network, or other resources to interfere with the work of another member of the University community.

   (E) Use of computing facilities and resources to send obscene or intimidating and abusive messages.

   (F) Use of computing facilities and resources to interfere with normal University operations.

   (G) Use of computing facilities and resources in violation of copyright laws

   (H) Violation of a campus computer use policy.

(16) Violation of any published University policy, rule, regulation or presidential order
(17) Failure to comply with directions or, or interference with, any University official or any public safety officer while acting in the performance of his/her duties.

(18) Any act chargeable as a violation of a federal, state, or local law that poses a substantial threat to the safety or well being of members of the University community, to property within the University community or poses a significant threat of disruption or interference with University operations.

(19) Violation of the Student Conduct Procedures, including:

   (A) Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information related to a student discipline matter.

   (B) Disruption or interference with the orderly progress of a student discipline proceeding.

   (C) Initiation of a student discipline proceeding in bad faith.

   (D) Attempting to discourage another from participating in the student discipline matter.

   (E) Attempting to influence the impartiality of any participant in a student discipline matter.

   (F) Verbal or physical harassment or intimidation of any participant in a student discipline matter.

   (G) Failure to comply with the sanction(s) imposed under a student discipline proceeding.

(20) Encouraging, permitting, or assisting another to do any act that could subject him or her to discipline.

(c) Application of This Code

Sanctions for the conduct listed above can be imposed on applicants, enrolled students, students between academic terms, graduates awaiting degrees, and students who withdraw from school while a disciplinary matter is pending. Conduct that threatens the safety or security of the campus community, or substantially disrupts the functions or operation of the University is within the jurisdiction of this Article regardless of whether it occurs on or off campus. Nothing in this Code may conflict with Education Code Section 66301 that prohibits disciplinary action against students based on behavior protected by the First Amendment.
(d) Procedures for Enforcing This Code

The Chancellor shall adopt procedures to ensure students are afforded appropriate notice and an opportunity to be heard before the University imposes any sanction for a violation of the Student Conduct Code.


41302. Disposition of Fees: Campus Emergency; Interim Suspension.

The President of the campus may place on probation, suspend, or expel a student for one or more of the causes enumerated in Section 41301. No fees or tuition paid by or for such student for the semester, semester, or summer session in which he or she is suspended or expelled shall be refunded. If the student is readmitted before the close of the semester, semester, or summer session in which he or she is suspended, no additional tuition or fees shall be required of the student on account of the suspension.

During periods of campus emergency, as determined by the President of the individual campus, the President may, after consultation with the Chancellor, place into immediate effect any emergency regulations, procedures, and other measures deemed necessary or appropriate to meet the emergency, safeguard persons and property, and maintain educational activities.

The President may immediately impose an interim suspension in all cases in which there is reasonable cause to believe that such an immediate suspension is required in order to protect lives or property and to insure the maintenance of order. A student so placed on interim suspension shall be given prompt notice of charges and the opportunity for a hearing within 10 days of the imposition of interim suspension. During the period of interim suspension, the student shall not, without prior written permission of the President or designated representative, enter any campus of the California State University other than to attend the hearing. Violation of any condition of interim suspension shall be grounds for expulsion.

It is believed by the makers of this statement that adequate safeguards have been included to protect the rights of all concerned parties and to insure that Grievances are handled fairly. However, no rule, regulation, or policy should substitute for open, honest communication; nor should any Grievance procedure take the place of negotiating in good faith. The Grievance procedure described herein is but one channel for solving problems. It should not be used to avoid the personal communication that is necessary to the academic process.

Information regarding procedures for filing a Student Grievance may be obtained from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the Student Grievance Policy and Procedure is to enable students to seek redress for complaints or grievances (referred to as “grievances”) that allegedly resulted in injury to the student. A grievance arises from any alleged unauthorized or unjustified act or decision by a member of the faculty, staff, and/or management employee which adversely affects the status, rights, or privileges of a student.

**Policy:**

The Student Grievance process is intended to resolve grievances that are not addressed by more specific policies or investigative processes. It applies to existing University policy and is not a vehicle to change existing or create new University policy.

**Definitions/Responsibilities:**

A. **Appropriate Administrator** – The Vice President of the Division (or the Division Vice President’s designee) in which the named employee works. In the case of a faculty employee, the dean of the appropriate college may be the appropriate administrator. The appropriate administrator will work with the
named employee and the student to attempt to resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of both.

B. **Appropriate Supervisor** – The immediate superior to whom the named employee reports on the date of the action or event being grieved. For purposes of this Grievance Procedure, a faculty employee’s appropriate supervisor is his/her department/division chair or school director. The appropriate supervisor will work with the named employee and the student to attempt to resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of both.

C. **Business Day** – All days of the week, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and days on which California State University, Los Angeles is closed.

D. **Committee** – The University Student Grievance Committee. The Committee, through its panel, will conduct grievance hearings, deliberate, and issue findings of fact and recommendations for action fairly and expeditiously.

E. **Coordinator** – The Coordinator of the Committee. The Coordinator shall be a University administrator, appointed by the President. The Coordinator shall serve at the pleasure of the President, with no set term of office. The Coordinator shall serve as Chair of the Committee and advise the Committee and any panels on rules and procedures. The Coordinator shall not vote and the Coordinator shall remain neutral on the merits of the grievance. The Coordinator will select panels from the Committee, chair, coordinate, and monitor the activities of the panels, schedule hearings, and meet with the Committee and panels as necessary. The Coordinator will ensure that grievances are processed in accord with this Grievance Procedure and assist students in submitting grievances to the Committee.

F. **Faculty Unit Employee** – An employee who is a member of Bargaining Unit 3 at the University.

G. **Grievance** – A complaint by a student, which is not subject to another investigation process, that a named employee has treated the student unfairly or has violated the California State University, Los Angeles policy, resulting in an injury to the student. Grievances may not be brought against the University President under this procedure.

H. **Investigation Process** – Any grievance resolution process, formal investigation process, or discipline process administered by the University, other than the student grievance process, which more appropriately and effectively resolves the issues raised in the student’s grievance.
I. **Management Employee** – An employee with management/supervisory responsibilities working under the Management Personnel Plan (Title 5, Article 2.2).

J. **Named Employee** – An employee of the California State University, Los Angeles (including a faculty unit employee) who is the focus of the student’s grievance. The named employee will attempt, when possible, to resolve the grievance informally with the student.

K. **Panel** – A subset of the Committee assigned to consider a grievance, consisting of one faculty member, one student, and one President’s appointee. The Coordinator may serve as an advisory, non-voting member of the panel.

L. **President** – The President of California State University, Los Angeles. The President will consider timely appeals of the President’s Designee’s decision, consult with other persons as necessary, and issue decisions on appeals and corrective orders.

M. **President’s Designee** – A management employee designated by the President.

N. **Student** – A person who, at the time that the event or action which is the subject of the grievance occurred, was a continuing undergraduate or graduate student, or enrolled in an Extended Education or Open University course.

O. **Vice President** – The Vice President of the division of the University in which the named employee works.

**Informal Grievance Resolution:**

Because timely resolution of complaints or grievances is in the best interests of students, faculty, administration, and the University as a whole, all parties are expected to actively seek resolution to these complaints or grievances within the time frame and through the procedures set forth by this policy. Although they are informal, the first three steps of the grievance process must be completed within ninety days of the event/action (or the last date of a related series of events/actions) upon which the grievance is based, unless the student and the appropriate administrator enter an extension of time in writing. All parties have the responsibility to make themselves aware of these procedures and act in a manner which allows the process to work efficiently and fairly.

**Step One**

**Discussion with Named Employee**
Before commencing any formal proceedings under the Student Grievance Process, a student should normally attempt to discuss with the named employee the student’s concerns or complaints about the named employee’s conduct. This may not be possible in all cases, particularly if the student believes that he/she is or will be the victim of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Barring these concerns, however, the student should make the effort to speak to the named employee.

A student is not required to discuss his/her grievance with the named employee and may proceed directly to step two. However, the panel may consider unwarranted avoidance of the named employee in evaluating the credibility of the student’s grievance and the severity of the named employee’s conduct.

If the grievance is resolved at step one, no further action under this policy will be taken.

Step Two

Discussion with Appropriate Supervisor

If the grievance is not resolved at step one, the student should discuss it with the appropriate supervisor. This discussion is a prerequisite to proceeding to steps three and four. The appropriate supervisor’s role at this stage is that of mediator. The appropriate supervisor shall reasonably attempt to mediate a resolution to the grievance. This stage of the grievance process shall be considered informal and the involved parties are strongly encouraged to participate and cooperate with the appropriate supervisor’s attempt to resolve the dispute. If the named employee is a unit three employee, the supervisor may consult an appropriate department/division/school committee that has been designated by the department/division/school to hear student grievances. This department/division/school committee shall recommend a resolution to the Supervisor who will share this information with the student and the employee. If the appropriate supervisor or named employee believes that the student did not reasonably attempt to resolve the grievance, the panel may consider this in evaluating the credibility of the student’s grievance and the severity of the named employee’s conduct.

If the grievance is resolved at step two, no further action under this policy will be taken.

If the appropriate supervisor is the named employee against whom the student has grieved, the student may bypass step two and proceed directly to step three.
Step Three

Discussion with the Appropriate Administrator

If the grievance is not resolved at step two, the student should discuss it with the appropriate administrator. This discussion is a prerequisite to proceeding to step four. The appropriate administrator shall reasonably attempt to mediate a solution to the grievance. If the appropriate administrator believes that the student or named employee did not reasonably attempt to resolve the grievance, the panel may consider this in evaluating the credibility of the student’s grievance and the severity of the named employee’s conduct.

If the grievance is resolved at step three, no further action under this policy will be taken.

If the appropriate administrator is the named employee against whom the student has grieved, the student may bypass steps two and three and proceed directly to step four.

Committee Formation Procedures:

The committee shall consist of nine members, each serving a one-year term commencing on July 1. Three members shall be students, three members shall be unit three faculty, and three members shall be staff employees.

Student members shall be appointed by the governing board of the Associated Students, no later than April 15 of each year. No more than one student in any major may be appointed. To be eligible for appointment, a student must have completed at least two semesters at the University and at the time of appointment be in good academic standing. Within five business days of appointing student members, the Associated Students shall notify the President of their names and majors.

Faculty shall be appointed by the Nominations Committee of the Academic Senate no later than April 15 of each year. No more than one faculty member may be appointed from any college. To be eligible for appointment, a faculty member must be tenured or tenure-track. The faculty member may not be on sabbatical, a difference-in-pay leave, or be serving a terminal year during his/her year of service. Within five business days of making appointments, the Nominations Committee shall notify the President of the names and departments of the selected faculty members.

Staff members shall be appointed by the President no later than April 15 of each year.
If, for any reason, a committee member leaves the committee, the appropriate appointing authority shall replace him/her as soon as possible. If the departing member is on one or more panels that have not completed their cases, the coordinator shall select an alternate panel member by lot.

**Formal Grievance Resolution:**

**Step Four**

**Presenting Grievance to the Committee**

Within one hundred days of the event/action (or the last date of a related series of events/actions) upon which the grievance is based, a student must complete an approved grievance form and present it to the coordinator if he/she desires formal review of the grievance, notwithstanding any action taken by the appropriate administrator. If the student and the appropriate administrator had entered an extension of time in writing permitting the first three levels of the grievance process to be completed in more than ninety days, then this deadline for completing an approved grievance form shall be automatically extended by the same number of days as set forth in the extension document. The student shall have first completed the informal processes, in a time and manner that will permit the timely filing of the grievance form.

The coordinator shall assist the student in submitting allegations and identifying physical evidence and witnesses on the grievance form. The coordinator shall determine whether findings have been made as to facts alleged in the grievance through another investigation process and obtain a copy of such findings if they exist and are not confidential.

Within five business days of receiving a grievance, the coordinator shall select a panel from the committee.

The coordinator shall select by lot a panel of three members, consisting of one member each from three groups of appointees. If a panel member can not serve because of unavailability, conflict of interest, or other reason beyond his/her control, a replacement shall be selected by lot from that panel member’s group.

For purposes of panel selection, a conflict of interest exists for a potential panel member if he/she is:

a. the named employee against whom the grievance is brought;

b. a student who was in the class that is a subject of the grievance;
c. a witness to any of the events that are the subject of the grievance or the name employee’s response;

d. a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, first cousin, spouse, ex-spouse, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, niece, nephew, or domestic partner of, or who has cohabited with the student or the named employee; and

e. from the same department or unit as the named employee.

A panel member who has conflict shall immediately notify the coordinator, so that a replacement may be selected. A knowing failure to disclose a conflict of interest shall be grounds for disciplinary action against the panel member by the University and shall be grounds for permanent removal of the individual from the committee.

Within five business days of selecting a panel, the coordinator shall notify the student, in writing, that he/she has received the grievance and that the panel has been formed. The names of the panel members shall be provided in the notice. A copy of this policy and procedure shall also be included with the notice.

Within two business days of selecting the panel, the coordinator shall notify the named employee, in writing, that a grievance has been filed against him/her. The notice shall include a copy of the completed grievance form and the names of the panel members. The notice shall inform the named employee that he/she has ten business days in which to deliver to the coordinator a written response to the grievance and that no facts, physical evidence or witnesses will be permitted at the hearing if they are not identified in the written response. A copy of this policy and procedure shall be included with the notice.

A student or named employee must notify the coordinator, in writing, of any objections to a member of the panel within five business days of receiving notice of the panel members’ names. Objections to the composition of the panel must be based on at least one of the grounds set forth in the section on conflict of interest. The coordinator shall immediately contact the panel member in question. If the panel member denies that a conflict exists, the coordinator shall decide whether a conflict exists, within five business days of receiving the objection. If the panel member is removed or admits a conflict, a new panel member shall be selected and all parties shall be notified in writing of the replacement within five business days.

If the coordinator receives written findings made in another investigation process stemming from the same events/actions as the grievance prior to a
decision by the panel, and those findings are not confidential, he/she shall give copies of the findings to the panel, the student and the named employee within five days.

Within five business days of receiving the response from the named employee, the coordinator shall give a copy of the response to the student.

**Initial Consideration of Grievance:**

Within five business days of selecting the panel, the coordinator shall provide each panel member a copy of the completed grievance form. The panel members shall meet with the coordinator within five business days after the coordinator provides the grievance form to the panel to discuss the allegations, determine, based on the preliminary information available at that point, whether a case for misconduct has been stated, and notify the coordinator of its conclusion in writing. For the purposes of this policy a potential case for misconduct exists only if:

a. the alleged conduct, if true, would constitute unfair treatment or a violation of policy by the named employee against the student, and

b. a hearing on the allegations would reasonably permit the panel to determine the truth or falsity of the facts alleged.

The named employee’s response is not relevant and shall not be considered by the panel members at this stage. Similarly, findings from another investigation process shall not be considered at this stage. A panel member may not abstain from voting on whether or not a case for misconduct exists.

If the panel concludes that a case for misconduct does not exist as to one or more allegations, the coordinator shall provide the written conclusion and a copy of the grievance to the President’s Designee within five business days of receipt, of the conclusion from the panel. Within five business days of receipt, the President’s Designee shall adopt the panel’s conclusion as to the allegations in question and notify the student in writing or reject it in whole or in part and direct the panel to conduct a hearing. If the President’s Designee directs the panel to hear the grievance as to the allegations in question, he/she shall identify in writing those allegations for which he/she believes a case for misconduct exists, and provide a copy to the coordinator.

If the panel concludes that a case for misconduct exists in some or all of the allegations, the panel shall identify in writing those allegations and provide a copy to the coordinator.

Within five business days of receiving a decision to conduct hearing, the coordinator shall provide a copy of the decision to the student and the named
employee and schedule a hearing date no later than 20 business days after his/her receipt of the decision. The hearing may be scheduled on a later date only for extraordinary reasons, which shall be limited to the availability of the student, the named employee, a panel member, or a witness deemed by a majority of the panel as material to the hearing. A person is available unless he/she is legally required to be elsewhere or has previously planned travel or activity that will make him/her physically unavailable. If the coordinator subsequently receives a directive from the President’s designee to conduct a hearing on other allegations, the coordinator shall provide a copy of the directive to the panel, the student, and the named employee.

If the coordinator believes that multiple grievances are sufficiently related, he/she may schedule a single hearing in which all related grievances shall be presented provided the named employee approves. Where such grievances have been assigned to different panels, the coordinator shall choose one of these panels by lot to hear the grievances. Within five business days of selecting the panel, the coordinator shall notify in writing the affected students, employees, and panel members of the consolidation and provide the names of the panel members in writing to the affected students and employees. The coordinator shall send copies of the grievance forms to the panel members.

**Grievance Hearing:**

The coordinator shall provide to the student and named employee written notice of the date, time, and location of the hearing, at least ten business days before the date of the hearing. Shorter notice may be provided only if all parties to the hearing have agreed to accept shorter notice. The coordinator shall include with the notice to the President’s Designee or panel’s identification of pertinent allegations.

It is the duty of the student and the named employee to provide notice to and secure attendance of their witnesses at the hearing.

No person who is or ever has been licensed to practice law may participate in the hearing process, unless that person is the student, the named employee, a panel member, or a witness. A student or named employee may be represented by any other person. The representative may assist in the presentation of evidence and arguments to the panel, but may not also be a witness. The panel may receive legal advice from the University Legal Counsel regarding procedural or legal questions, but not about the merits of the grievance.

The burden of proof in a hearing rests with the student, who must prove that it is more likely than not that the alleged actions/events occurred and that they constituted unfair treatment or a violation of policy.
Each party shall provide all evidence necessary to support his/her claims or defenses. In instances where relevant evidence is in the custody of another student or named employee, the party who wishes to use the evidence may ask the panel to order that person to provide it to the panel prior to the hearing. The panel shall have the authority to order any University employee or student to appear and/or produce evidence. No University employee employed by the Campus Police shall be required to appear and/or produce evidence if doing so is not permitted by law or recognized public policy.

The panel shall, where necessary, delete or obscure appropriate portions of evidence to protect the privacy of non-parties.

The student and the named employee may be present at all times during the hearing. The hearing shall be closed to all persons except the student, the named employee, their respective representatives, the witness who is presently testifying, the coordinator, the student’s support person, and the panel members. The hearing shall proceed only when all three panel members are present.

The formal rules of evidence shall not govern grievance hearings. However, the rules set forth in this section are necessary to ensure that evidence offered at a hearing is appropriately received and considered.

Prior to the hearing, the coordinator shall give to each panel member a copy of the named employee’s response to the grievance and any relevant findings made in another investigation process. Unless the panel deems it necessary to accommodate the schedules of witnesses, the panel shall receive all other evidence in the following order:

a. The student shall present all evidence in support of the grievance. The student is limited to presenting evidence that is referred to in or relevant to the allegations made in the grievance form.

b. The named employee shall present all evidence refuting the allegations. The named employee is limited to presenting evidence that is referred to in or relevant to the allegations and defenses raised by the named employee in the response to the grievance form.

c. The student shall present all evidence that rebuts the named employee’s evidence that does not simply restate the student’s earlier evidence.

d. The named employee shall present all evidence that rebuts the student’s rebuttal evidence that does not simply restate the named employee’s earlier evidence.
Evidence that is solely about the character of a student, named employee, or witness shall not be permitted. This shall not preclude evidence that, for reason other than character, bears on the credibility of a student, named employee, or witness, or tends to show a relevant trait or practice.

Hearsay statements may be considered, but the panel should consider the existence or lack of corroborating evidence and the reason for the absence of the person to whom the statement is attributed.

Cross-examination of witnesses shall not be permitted. However, panel members may ask questions of any witness. A student or named employee may, at the conclusion of a witness’ testimony, request that the panel ask other questions of the witness. The panel may honor or disregard such requests.

To expedite a hearing, the student and named employee may agree to the existence of any fact. Where possible such agreements should be entered onto the record at the beginning of the hearing. The panel shall consider proven all facts for which there are such agreements.

Either party may object to evidence at the time it is introduced on the ground that it is impermissible under the grievance procedure. The panel shall rule on all objections.

The panel may record the hearing. Such recording shall exist solely for use by the panel while making its findings of fact and recommendations, and shall be used for no other purpose. Recordings will be destroyed five years after the conclusion of the hearing.

**Decision of the President's Designee:**

Within ten business days after the hearing concludes, the panel shall deliberate and make findings of fact in writing. The panel shall convey its findings and any recommendations for remedial action in writing to the President’s Designee. The findings shall summarize the testimony of each witness, identify each piece of physical evidence presented during the hearing, and describe how the panel made its findings. Copies of all documents placed in evidence shall be included.

In making its findings, the panel shall defer to and adopt any relevant findings made in an earlier investigation process, unless the evidence presented at the hearing clearly compels a different finding.

Within five business days of receiving the panel’s findings and recommendations, the President's Designee shall issue a written decision. The decision shall state whether each finding has been accepted or rejected. The
President’s Designee shall accept each finding made by the panel unless he/she concludes that no evidence was presented that, if true, would support a finding. The President’s Designee may adopt, reject, or modify any recommendation by the panel. The President’s Designee shall address his/her decision to the student, with copies to be sent to the named employee, the coordinator, and the appropriate administrator. Absent a timely appeal, the President’s Designee’s decision shall be final.

**Appeal Procedures:**

The student or named employee may appeal the President’s Designee’s decision. The student or named employee must deliver a written appeal to the President within ten business days of the receipt of the President’s Designee’s decision.

Appeals may be taken only for the following reasons:

a. The grievance was not submitted in a timely manner at step four.

b. A panel member had a conflict of interest and was not removed after an objection was raised in a timely manner.

c. A panel member had a conflict of interest that was discovered subsequently to the time during which objections could be made.

d. The procedure set forth in this grievance procedure was not followed, to the detriment of the appealing party.

e. A panel member was biased against the appealing party.

The letter shall describe in detail the facts that support one or more of the reasons set forth in this section. Appeals based on bias must state facts that, if true, indicate bias.

The President may make inquiries of any person he/she believes has information relevant to the appeal, and shall issue a written decision rejecting or accepting the appeal within fifteen business days of receipt of the appeal. The President’s decision shall be addressed to the appealing party, with copies to be sent to the other party, the coordinator, and the appropriate administrator.

If the President rejects an appeal, the President’s Designee’s decision is final.

If the President concludes that the appeal is meritorious, he/she shall refer the matter back to the level at which the error occurred, with corrective
instructions. If a panel member was biased or in conflict, the instructions shall include an order to assign a new panel. The grievance shall proceed from the level to which it was referred.

**General Guidelines:**

Any decision or action by a panel is, unless otherwise indicated, made by majority vote.

If the date to take some action under this policy falls on a day that is not a business day, the action may be taken on the next following business day. The date on which an action is to take place may also be extended by the coordinator, the President’s Designee, or the President, as deemed necessary to the fair consideration of a grievance.

Except as necessary to process a grievance, the coordinator and the members of the committee shall maintain strict confidentiality as to all grievance matters and materials.

No student or named employee, or witness should suffer adverse academic or employment consequences as a result of attendance at a grievance hearing, provided he/she has given prior notice of his/her anticipated absence from class or work to his/her instructor or supervisor. The coordinator shall certify, upon request by any person, the date(s) and time(s) during which that person participated in a grievance hearing. Supervisors and instructors are required to excuse any absence that is so certified, instructors shall permit a student to turn in work or take test at an alternate time if necessary to accommodate the student’s appearance at the grievance hearing.

All documents that are required to be sent to a student, or named employee are deemed received on the date that a document is personally delivered or faxed, or two days after it is placed in the mail.

The President or President’s Designee may consult any person in performing their duties and may delegate their duties to any management employee who is not the subject of the grievance.

The student or named employee may have a support person present at all levels of review, including the grievance hearing.

**Organizations Affected:**

All University departments
PACSON Student Grievance Procedure

Before filing a grievance, the student must consult informally with the concerned party and attempt to resolve the problem through open communication and discussion. If informal communication does not resolve the problem, the School Director must be informally consulted by both parties. During this consultation, the student will be given a copy of the grievance procedure. If all informal attempts have failed to resolve the problem, the student has the right to initiate the grievance procedure. (See Appendix D).

Informal Grievance Committee within the PACSON

According to the Grade Grievance Policy (See Appendix D), “The Director shall reasonably attempt to facilitate a resolution to the grade dispute. The involved parties are strongly encouraged to participate and cooperate with the Director’s attempt to resolve the dispute. The chair may consult an appropriate department/division/school committee to hear Grade Appeals or other Academic Grievances. This Department/Division/School committee shall recommend a resolution to the Director, who will share this information with the student and the instructor.” In the case that the Chair/Director opts to refer the informal grievance to a committee within the SON, the following criteria should be used to select the committee.

Committee Membership

Two faculty randomly selected from a pool of faculty who meet the following criteria:

1. Full-time Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty (as appropriate to the grievance) with Didactic and Clinical Instruction Experience regardless of specialty
2. No direct knowledge or involvement with the situation

One student and one randomly selected alternate from a pool of 4 graduating BSN or MSN students identified by the Chair of the BSN or MSN programs who meet the following criteria:

1. No direct knowledge or involvement with the situation
2. Students with current or past SON leadership experience

Guidelines

The Director should convene the committee within three weeks following the semester in which the student has indicated concern.
The student and faculty should provide the committee with appropriate written documentation including:

1. Background: Provide the significant dates and the specific history of the grievance
2. Syllabus
3. Student Work in question with grades and comments of faculty member

Procedure for finding facts: Issues before the committee.

1. What violations(s) are alleged by the grievant?
2. What evidence and support has the grievant presented to sustain the violation
3. What does the committee find with regard to the issue(s) before it?
4. What evidence has the faculty presented to support grade decision

Findings:

1. This Department/Division/School committee shall recommend a resolution to the Chair/Director in writing summarizing the above procedure and outcome, who will share the outcome information with the student and the instructor.
Credit for Transfer Work

(Taken from the Faculty Handbook Section Curricular Policies)

(Senate: 4/12/94; President: 5/25/94; Editorial Amendment: 8/01, 1/21/15)

To receive credit toward a master's degree for acceptable post-baccalaureate work taken at other colleges or universities, students must have official transcripts forwarded to the Admissions Office, and must file a "Request for Records" (form GS1A) with their major department/division/school. Cal State L.A. will allow credit for work taken at another college or university only when it appears on the student's official transcript from that institution, is acceptable for master's degree credit at the offering institution, and is deemed appropriate to the student's master's degree program by the major department/division/school at Cal State L.A. See limitations and exclusions below:

- For master's degrees requiring 30 total units, no more than 9 semester units of acceptable transfer, extension and/or special session courses may be included on a master's degree program. For master's degrees requiring more than 30 semester units, up to 30% of the total required units may consist of acceptable transfer, extension and/or special session courses, providing such action is approved by the appropriate graduate department/division/school advisor.
- No master's degree credit is allowed for directed teaching, 700 or 800-level courses, courses numbered below 400, or courses taken at another accredited institution that would not be accepted toward a master's degree at that institution.
- Six semester units of 5000-level or other graduate courses taken through extension are eligible for master's degree credit.
APPENDIX I

Nursing Graduate Student Handbook
Acknowledgement Form
2017-2018 Academic Year

I have read and understand the policies, procedures and requirements in the Patricia A. Chin School of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook. I understand that my eligibility to participate in this program may be terminated if I cannot meet these expectations.

I am aware that the Handbook is revised annually, and I must abide by the current policies and procedures in the current academic year handbook each year of my enrollment in the program. Should revisions to the handbook occur during an academic year, I understand I will be notified of changes via my CSU email address and the most current handbook will be posted on the PACSON website at all times.

I acknowledge that I know how to access the Nursing Graduate STUDENT HANDBOOK. I understand that I am responsible for knowing the information contained in this handbook and will abide by all policies set forth in the handbook during my time of enrollment in the program. I will seek clarification of policies I do not understand.

This acknowledgement form is specific Nursing Graduate Student Handbook for the 2017-2018 Academic Year.

________________________________________________________________________

(Print Name)

________________________________________________________________________

(Signature) /

________________________________________________________________________

(CWID) (Date)