



# MERRIMACK COLLEGE

## Department of Nursing

### Traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing

### First Professional Nursing Degree Student Handbook

2025-2026

Merrimack College has been granted Full Approval Status through the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing for the operation of its Traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing at Merrimack College is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<http://www.ccnaccreditation.org>).

## Welcome to Nursing at Merrimack College

Dear Nursing Student:

WELCOME to Merrimack College Nursing! We are delighted you have chosen to join our team of students, faculty, staff and administration. Together we will create a vibrant community of learners, teachers, and scholars to prepare nurses for all aspects of professional practice in an ever-changing and challenging world of health care.

The Department of Nursing is committed to the success of each student. Your nursing academic advisor, course and clinical faculty will be partners in your academic journey, so **please always ask for the support you need.**

The Nursing Student Handbook is the official student guide, which provides nursing majors with essential Department of Nursing policies, procedures and information. This guide is intended to supplement the College catalog and student handbook as it provides information specific to the nursing program. All students are expected to review and abide by the current Nursing Student Handbook.

It is important to note that nursing students are still expected to adhere to the policies and procedures, applicable to ALL students, as conveyed in the [Merrimack College Student Handbook](#) and [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

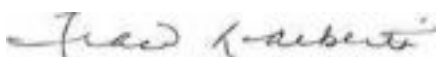
Please be sure to read these documents and use them as a reference during the school year as you are responsible for the information contained within them. If nursing policies and/or procedures change or new ones are added during the academic year, they will be included as addendums to the handbook and sent out to students via Merrimack College student email.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, we wish you all the best and much success during this upcoming academic year!

Cordially,



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## **Section 1: Program Missions and Outcomes**

### **1.1 Merrimack College Mission**

Merrimack College's mission is to enlighten minds, engage hearts and empower lives.

### **1.2 Nursing Department Vision**

Our vision is to be a highly reputable and respected nursing department advancing nursing education, research and leadership, which is committed to serving diverse communities.

### **1.3 Nursing Department Mission**

Our mission is to develop caring, professional, and exceptional nurse graduates who provide evidence-based, safe, high quality, holistic, ethical and equitable healthcare. Aligning with the College's Augustinian values, our focus is to prepare lifelong learners who serve as collaborative leaders in healthcare.

### **1.4 Undergraduate Nursing Program Outcomes**

Upon graduation, the Merrimack College Traditional BS in Nursing major will be able to:

1. Engage in socially valued nursing practice and health care leadership through the acquisition of a liberal arts and sciences education to foster the basis for clinical reasoning. (1. Knowledge for Nursing Practice )
2. Use clinical judgment to provide holistic, compassionate person-centered care that reflects equitable and ethical values. (2. Patient Centered Care) Appraise the equity of healthcare policies and management of populations through healthcare and community-based partnerships. (3. Population Health)
3. Appraise the equity of healthcare policies and management of populations through healthcare and community-based partnerships. (3. Population Health)
4. Engage in scholarly inquiry to integrate scientific evidence into nursing practice (4. Scholarship for Nursing Discipline)
5. Demonstrate effective use of strategies to mitigate errors and reduce the risk of harm to patients, self and others in healthcare, home, and community settings. (5. Quality & Safety)
6. Provide equitable, high quality patient care through the application of organizational and systems-based practices to optimize patient outcomes. (7. Systems-Based Practice; 5. Quality & Safety)
7. Collaborate with all members of the health care team, patients, families and communities to provide person centered outcomes. (6. Interprofessional Partnerships)
8. Integrate informatics and patient care technologies to assist in the delivery of equitable, high quality, safe patient care for individuals and communities. (8. Informatics & Healthcare Technology)
9. Integrate professional values such as caring, humanity, advocacy, social justice and accountability into practice that upholds established regulatory, legal and ethical principles while providing equitable high-quality nursing care. (9. Professionalism) Demonstrate commitment to reflective practice and self-care to cultivate personal health and well-being and foster resiliency for lifelong learning, professional practice and the capacity for leadership in nursing practice. (10. Person, Professional and Leadership Development)

10. Demonstrate commitment to reflective practice and self-care to cultivate personal health and well-being and foster resiliency for lifelong learning, professional practice and the capacity for leadership in nursing practice. (10. Person, Professional and Leadership Development)

## Section 2: Nursing Curriculum

### 2.1 Traditional BS in Nursing Program Concepts and Definitions

#### **Patient Centered Care:**

Patient centered care provides “holistic care that recognizes an individual’s preferences, values, and needs and respects the patient or designee as a full partner in providing compassionate, coordinated, age and culturally appropriate, safe and effective care” (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Nursing Initiative. Revised March 2016, p. 10).

#### **Teamwork and Collaboration:**

Teamwork and collaboration involve the ability to “function effectively within nursing and interdisciplinary teams, fostering open communication, mutual respect, shared decision making, team learning, and development” (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Nursing Initiative. Revised March 2016, p. 37).

#### **Evidence Based Practice:**

Evidence based practice (EBP) is the ability to “identify, evaluate, and use the best current evidence coupled with clinical expertise and consideration of patients’ preferences, experience and values to make practice decisions” (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Nursing Initiative. Revised March 2016, p. 47).

#### **Informatics and Technology:**

Informatics and technology is the ability “to use advanced technology and to analyze as well as synthesize information and collaborate in order to make critical decisions that optimize patient outcomes” (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015).

#### **Quality Improvement:**

Quality improvement (QI) is the ability to use “data to monitor the outcomes of care processes and use improvement methods to design and test changes to continuously improve the quality and safety of health care systems” (QSEN Institute, 2020, Grid 4: [https://qsen.org/competencies/pre-licensure-ksas/#quality\\_improvement](https://qsen.org/competencies/pre-licensure-ksas/#quality_improvement)).

#### **Safety:**

Safety is the ability to “minimize risk of harm to patients and providers through both system effectiveness and individual performance” (Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) Institute, 2020, Grid 5: [https://qsen.org/competencies/pre-licensure-ksas/#quality\\_improvement](https://qsen.org/competencies/pre-licensure-ksas/#quality_improvement)).

#### **Leadership:**

Leadership is the ability to “influence the behavior of individuals or groups of individuals within their environment in a way that will facilitate the establishment and acquisition/achievement of shared goals (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Nursing Initiative. Revised March 2016, p. 18).

#### **Professionalism:**

Professionalism is the ability to “demonstrate accountability for the delivery of standard-based nursing care that is consistent with moral, altruistic, legal, ethical, regulatory, and humanistic principles” (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Nursing Initiative. Revised March 2016, p. 14).

#### **Communication:**

Communication is interacting “effectively with patients, families, and colleagues, fostering mutual respect and shared decision making, to enhance patient satisfaction and health outcomes” (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Nursing Initiative. Revised March 2016, p. 32).

**Systems-Based Practice:**

Systems-based practice involves being able to demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context of the health care system and effectively call on work unit resources to provide care that is of optimal quality and value (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Nursing Initiative. Revised March 2016, p. 22).

**Liberal Education:**

A liberal education involves intentionally fostering, “across multiple fields of study, wide-ranging knowledge of science, cultures, and society; high-level intellectual and practical skills; an active commitment to personal and social responsibility; and the demonstrated ability to apply learning to complex problems and challenges” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007, p. 4).

**Health Promotion:**

Health promotion involves participating in “activities directed toward increasing the level of well-being and actualizing the health potential of people, families, community, and society” (Hravnak, 1998, p. 284).

**Health Policy:**

Health policy involves goal directed decision-making about health that is the result of an authorized public decision-making process (Keller & Ridenour, 2021). Nurses play critical roles in advocating for policy that impacts patients and the profession, especially when speaking with a united voice on issues that affect nursing practice and health outcomes (American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Understanding the Re-Envisioned Essentials: A *RoadMap* for the Transformation of Nursing Education, March 2021).

**Clinical Judgment:**

Clinical judgment is the skill of recognizing cues regarding the clinical situation, generating and weighing hypotheses, taking action, and evaluating outcomes for the purpose of arriving at a satisfactory clinical outcome (AACN Understanding the Re-Envisioned Essentials: A *RoadMap* for the Transformation of Nursing Education, March 2021).

**Competency:**

Competency is an observable ability of a health professional, integrating multiple components such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. Since competencies are observable, they can be measured and assessed to ensure their acquisition (Frank, Snell, Cate, et al., 2010); as cited in AACN Understanding the Re-Envisioned Essentials: A *RoadMap* for the Transformation of Nursing Education, March 2021).

**Determinants of Health:**

Determinants of health is the range of personal, social, economic, and environmental factors that interrelate to determine individual and population health. These factors include policymaking, social factors, health services, individual behaviors, and biology and genetics. Determinants of health reach beyond the boundaries of traditional health care and public health sectors. Sectors such as education, housing, transportation, agriculture, and environment can be important allies in improving population health (Healthy People 2020; as cited in AACN Understanding the Re-Envisioned Essentials: A *RoadMap* for the Transformation of Nursing Education, March 2021).

**Diversity:**

Diversity is a broad range of individual, population, and social characteristics, including but not limited to age; sex; race; ethnicity; sexual orientation; gender identity; family structures; geographic locations; national origin; immigrants and refugees; language; any impairment that substantially limits a major life activity; religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. Inclusion represents environmental and organizational cultures in which faculty, students, staff and administrators with diverse characteristics thrive. Inclusive environments require intentionality and embrace differences, not merely tolerate them. Everyone works to ensure the perspectives and experiences of others are invited, welcomed, acknowledged, and respected in inclusive environments (AACN Understanding the Re-Envisioned Essentials: A *RoadMap* for the Transformation of Nursing Education, March 2021).

**Equity:**

Equity is the ability to recognize the differences in the resources or knowledge needed to allow individuals to fully participate in society, including access to higher education, with the goal of overcoming obstacles to artificial barriers, stereotypes, or prejudices (Cooper, 2016; as cited in AACN Understanding the Re-Envisioned Essentials: A *RoadMap* for the Transformation of Nursing Education, March 2021).

**Health Disparities:**

Health disparities are “a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with economic, social, or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater social or economic obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, age, or mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion” (United States (US) Department of Health and Human Services, 2010; as cited in AACN Understanding the Re- Envisioned Essentials: A *RoadMap* for the Transformation of Nursing Education, March 2021).

**Health Equity:**

Health equity is when “every person has an opportunity to attain his or her full health potential” and no one is “disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances” (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). Health inequities are reflected in differences in length of life; quality of life; rates of disease, disability, and death; severity of disease; and access to treatment (AACN Understanding the Re-Envisioned Essentials: A *RoadMap* for the Transformation of Nursing Education, March 2021).

**Health Inequity:**

Health inequity is the distribution and allocation of power and resources differentially, which manifest in unequal social, economic, and environmental conditions (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; as cited in AACN Understanding the Re-Envisioned Essentials: A *RoadMap* for the Transformation of Nursing Education, March 2021).

**Social Justice:**

Social justice is the expectation that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities. Equity, access, participation, and human rights are four principles of social justice including to ensure all people have access to goods and services regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, etc.; to enable people to participate in decisions that affect their lives, and to protect individual liberties to information about circumstances and decisions affecting them and to appeal decisions believed to be unfair (Morgaine, 2014; Nemetchek, 2019; as cited in AACN Understanding the Re-Envisioned Essentials: A *RoadMap* for the Transformation of Nursing Education, March 2021).

## **2.2 Traditional BS in Nursing Program Writing Requirement**

As part liberal studies as the foundation core for the nursing curriculum, students are required to take a “Writing Intensive course (W)”. School of Nursing & Health Sciences (SNHS) requires students to take three minor writing intensive courses (w) to meet the “W” requirement.

The three minor writing intensive courses for the classes of 2025 and beyond are: NUR1550 Introduction to Professional Nursing, NUR3700 Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice, and NUR4050 Role Transition. Specific writing requirements in each of these courses are detailed in course syllabi. Beginning with the entering Class of 2028, students will follow The Foundations and Connections Core Curriculum.

## **2.3 Traditional BS in Nursing Program Course Sequences**

The following tracking plans outline the program course sequences.

Classes of 2025 -2027 Bachelor of Science in Nursing Curriculum Tracking Plan			
Year 1			
First Semester		Second Semester	
HSC1122 – Anatomy & Physiology I	4	HSC1123 –Anatomy & Physiology II	4
RTS1XXX – Religious & Theological Studies (RTS) <b>OR</b> PHLXXXX – Philosophy	4	RTS1XXX – Religious & Theological Studies (RTS) <b>OR</b> PHLXXXX – Philosophy	4
HDE1000 – Intro. to Human Development (SOSC1)	4	NUR1550 – Intro to Professional Nursing (w1)	4
ENG1050 – Intro to College Writing <b>OR</b> one of *Foreign Language (FL)/Historical Studies (H)/Art & Literature (AL)/MTH1111 – Basic Statistics (Q) <b>Prerequisite:</b> a score of 9 or > on Math Test or passing MRH 1000	4	ENG1050 – Intro to College Writing <b>OR</b> one of *Foreign Language (FL)/Historical Studies (H)/Art & Literature (AL)/ Basic Statistics (Q) <b>Prerequisite:</b> a score of 9 or > on Math Test or passing MRH 1000	4
FYE1050 – First Year Experience (FYE) (Nursing)	1		
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16</b>
Year 2			
Third Semester		Fourth Semester	
NUR2000 – Nursing Fundamentals & Health Assessment	4	NUR2550 – Care Considerations for the Older Adult with Chronic Conditions	6
CHM2037 – Nursing Biochemistry (STEM) <b>OR</b> HSC3320 – Microbiology for Health Professions (Must take both in year 2)	4	CHM2037 – Nursing Biochemistry (STEM) <b>OR</b> HSC3320 – Microbiology for Health Professions (Must take both in year 2)	4
**Social Science Core 2	4	NUR2600– Pathopharmacology I	4
ENG1050 – Intro to College Writing: <b>take if not yet taken OR</b> FL/H/AL/MTH1111 – Basic Statistics (Q)	4		
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>14</b>
Year 3			
Fifth Semester		Sixth Semester	
NUR3000 – Medical-Surgical Nursing	8	NUR3500 – Pediatric Nursing <b>AND</b> NUR3550 – Obstetrical and Newborn Nursing <b>AND</b> NUR3700– Nursing Research & EBP (w2) <b>AND 1 of the 3 below:</b> ***PHL2060 – Biomedical Ethics (E) <b>OR</b> RTS2820: Bioethics & Healthcare (E) <b>OR</b> PHL3060: Justice in Health & Healthcare <b>OR</b> NUR3600 – Community/Public Health Nursing (D) <b>AND</b> NUR3655 – Mental Health Nursing Care <b>AND</b> NUR4000 – Critical Care Nursing <b>AND 1 of the 3:</b> ***PHL2060 – Biomedical Ethics (E) <b>OR</b> RTS2820: Bioethics & Healthcare (E) <b>OR</b> PHL3060: Justice in Health & Healthcare	4 4 4 4 4 4 5 4
*Foreign Language (FL)/Historical Studies (H)/Art & Literature (AL)/MTH1111 – Basic Statistics (Q) <b>Prerequisite:</b> a score of 9 or > on Math Test of passing MRH 1000	4		
NUR3050 – Pathopharmacology II	4		
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16/17</b>
Year 4			
Seventh Semester		Eighth Semester	
NUR3500 – Pediatric Nursing <b>AND</b> NUR3550 – Obstetrical and Newborn Nursing <b>AND</b> NUR3700– Nursing Research and EBP (w2) <b>AND</b> NUR4050– Role Transition (w3) or Interdisciplinary Elective <b>OR</b> NUR3600 – Community Public Health Nursing (D) <b>AND</b> NUR3655 – Mental Health Nursing Care <b>AND</b> NUR4000 – Critical Care Nursing <b>AND</b> NUR4050– Role Transition (w3) or Interdisciplinary Elective	4 4 4 4  4 4 5 4	NUR4500 – Capstone Synthesis NUR4550 – Capstone Preceptorship (X)(Senior Seminar Course) NUR4050– Role Transition (w3) or Interdisciplinary Elective	4 6 4
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total Courses = 30</b>		<b>Total Credits = 126</b>	

Class of 2028 Bachelor of Science in Nursing Curriculum Tracking Plan			
Year 1			
First Semester		Second Semester	
HSC1122 – Anatomy & Physiology I	4	HSC1123 – Anatomy & Physiology II	4
RTS1XXX – Introduction to Religion	4	DJPXXX – FC Core Course Diversity Power & Justice	4
HDE1000 – Intro. to Human Development	4	MTH1111 – Basic Statistics <b>Prerequisite:</b> a score of 9 or > on Math Test of passing MRH 1000	4
FYS1947 – First Year Seminar	4	NUR1550 – Introduction to Professional Nursing	4
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16</b>
Year 2			
Third Semester		Fourth Semester	
NUR2000 – Nursing Fundamentals & Health Assessment	4	NUR2550 – Care Considerations for the Older Adult with Chronic Conditions	6
CHM2037 – Nursing Biochemistry (STEM) <b>OR</b> HSC3320 – Microbiology for Health Professions ( <b>PICK ONE</b> - Must complete both courses)	4	CHM2037 – Nursing Biochemistry (STEM) <b>OR</b> HSC3320 – Microbiology for Health Professions ( <b>PICK ONE</b> - Must complete both courses)	4
FC Core Course #1	4	NUR2600 – Pathopharmacology I	4
FC Core Course #2	4		4
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>14</b>
Year 3			
Fifth Semester		Sixth Semester	
NUR3000 – Medical Surgical Nursing	8	<b>SPRING - Specialty Cohort A</b> <b>1 of the following (4 credits):</b> PHL2060 – Biomedical Ethics RTS2820 – Bioethics & Healthcare PHL3060 – Justice in Health & Healthcare THR3560 – Bioethical Drama	4
NUR3050 – Pathopharmacology II	4	NUR3700 – Research & Evidence-Based Nursing Practice	4
FC Core #3	4	NUR3500 – Pediatric Nursing	4
		NUR3550 – Obstetrical & Newborn Nursing	4
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16</b>
		<b>SPRING - Specialty Cohort B</b> <b>1 of the following (4 credits):</b> PHL2060 – Biomedical Ethics RTS2820 – Bioethics & Healthcare PHL3060 – Justice in Health & Healthcare THR3560 – Bioethical Drama	4
		NUR3655 – Mental Health Nursing Care	4
		NUR4000 – Critical Care Nursing	5
		NUR3600 – Community/Public Health Nursing	4
		<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16/17</b>
Year 4			
Seventh Semester		Eighth Semester	
<b>FALL – Specialty Cohort A</b> NUR4050 – Role Transition	4	NUR4500 – Capstone Synthesis	4
NUR3700 – Research & Evidence-Based Nursing Practice	4	NUR4550 – Capstone Preceptorship	6
NUR3500 – Pediatric Nursing	4	FC Core Elective #4	4
NUR3550 – Obstetrical & Newborn Nursing	4		
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>FALL – Specialty Cohort B</b> NUR4050 – Role Transition	4	<i>Notes: This is a sample curriculum map. Students may progress toward graduation using alternative pathways. In addition, 'FC Core Requirement' signifies that the course is required as part of the Foundations and Connections Core – the College's general education program. Please be aware that all students must take six FC Core Requirement courses (FYS, DPJ, HUM, RTS, SOSC, and STEM) and four FAC Core Elective courses to satisfy the College's general education requirement.</i>	
NUR3655 – Mental Health Nursing	4		
NUR4000 – Critical Care Nursing	5		
NUR3600 – Community/Public Health Nursing	4		
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>TOTAL CREDITS FOR PROGRAM =</b>	<b>125</b>

EXAMPLE of Bachelor of Science in Nursing Course Curriculum Plan (Class of 2029 and beyond)			
Year 1			
First Semester	Cr.	Second Semester	Cr.
HSC1122 – Anatomy & Physiology I	4	HSC1123 – Anatomy & Physiology II	4
RTS1XXX – Introduction to Religion (RTS)	4	FC Core Course #1	4
HDE1000 – Intro. to Human Development (SOSC)	4	NUR1200 - Health Assessment	5
NUR1001 - Intro to Professional Nursing Practice	2	MTH1111 - Basic Statistics (Q)	4
FYS1947 – First Year Seminar (FYS)	4	<b>Prerequisite:</b> a score of 9 or > on Math Test or passing MRH1000	
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>17 (35 total)</b>
Year 2			
Third Semester	Cr.	Fourth Semester	Cr.
NUR2100 - Fundamentals of Nursing (w)	5	NUR2550 - Nursing Care of the Adult I 4 hours per week didactic; 2 credits toward clinical/lab	6
CHM2037 – Nursing Biochemistry (STEM) <b>OR</b> HSC3320 – Microbiology for Health Professions (Must take both in year 2)	4	CHM2037 – Nursing Biochemistry (STEM) <b>OR</b> HSC3320 – Microbiology for Health Professions (Must take both in year 2)	4
FC Core Course #2	4	NUR2300 - Pharmacology	4
NUR2200 - Pathophysiology	4		
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>17 (52 total)</b>	<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>14 (66 total)</b>
Year 3			
Fifth Semester	Cr.	Sixth Semester	Cr.
NUR3000 - Nursing Care of the Adult II 4 hours per week didactic; 4 credits toward lab/clinical	8	NUR3500 – Pediatric Nursing <b>AND</b> NUR3550 – Family and Newborn Nursing <b>AND</b> NUR3100 – Informatics for Healthcare Systems <b>AND</b> FC Core Course #3	4 4 2
Humanity Course - PHL2060 – Biomedical Ethics, <b>OR</b> RTS2829 – Bioethics & Healthcare, <b>OR</b> PHL3060 – Justice in Health & Healthcare <b>OR</b> THR3560 – Bioethical Drama (Choose 1 of these 4 HUM courses)	4	<b>OR</b>	4
NUR3700 – Nursing Scholarship & EBP (w)	4	NUR3600 – Community & Population Health (DPJ) <b>AND</b> NUR3655 – Mental Health Nursing Care <b>AND</b> NUR4000 – Critical Care Nursing <b>AND</b> FC Core Course #3	4 4 5 4
<b>Total Credits =</b>	<b>16 (82 total)</b>		<b>17 (99 total)</b>
Year 4			
Seventh Semester	Cr.	Eighth Semester	Cr.
NUR3500 – Pediatric Nursing <b>AND</b> NUR3550 – Family and Newborn Nursing <b>AND</b> NUR3100 – Informatics for Healthcare Systems <b>AND</b> FC Core Course #4	4 4 2 4 <b>14 (113 tot)</b>	NUR4500 – Capstone Synthesis for Nursing Practice	4
<b>OR</b>		NUR4550 – Capstone Preceptorship (X)-Senior Seminar Course	6
NUR3600 – Community & Population Health Nursing (DPJ) <b>AND</b> NUR3655 – Mental Health Nursing Care <b>AND</b> NUR4000 – Critical Care Nursing <b>AND</b> FC Core Course #4	4 4 5 4 <b>17 (113 tot)</b>	NUR4100 – Personal, Professional and Leadership Development (w)	4
			<b>14 (127 tot)</b>
		<i>Notes: This is a sample curriculum map. Students may progress toward graduation using alternative pathways. In addition, 'FC Core Requirement' signifies that the course is required as part of the Foundations and Connections Core – the College's general education program. Please be aware that all students must take six FC Core Requirement courses (FYS, DPJ, HUM, RTS, SOSC, and STEM) and four FAC Core Elective courses to satisfy the College's general education requirement.</i>	
		<b>Total Courses = 31</b>	
		<b>Total Credits = 127</b>	



## 2.4 Traditional BS in Nursing Course Descriptions/Prerequisites/Corequisites

### **NUR1001 Introduction to Professional Nursing Practice**

This seminar course introduces students to the nursing profession and the role of the professional nurse as a provider of patient and family centered care, critical member of the healthcare team, patient safety advocate, coordinator of care, and member of the most trusted profession. Topics include: history of nursing, knowledge, judgment, theory, research, inter-professional roles, self-care and professional values with a legal/ethical framework. The course also provides an introduction to professional writing utilizing American Psychological Association (APA) format. **(2 Credits, Prerequisite(s): Nursing Majors only or with permission from the UNPD)**

### **NUR1200 Health Assessment**

This course introduces the components of physical and functional health assessment of the adult patient, including health history, vital signs, and body system assessments. Students will learn how to individualize physical assessments based on factors including age, gender, culture, ethnicity, and medical history. Additional course content includes principles of safety, infection control, health promotion, disease/injury prevention, documentation, and patient teaching. Principles of interprofessional communication will be integrated throughout the course. At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate proficiency in performing a comprehensive health assessment. **(5 Credits, Prerequisite: NUR1001)**

### **NUR2000 - Nursing Fundamentals & Health Assessment**

This course introduces the assessment components of interviewing, history and vital sign taking, functional assessment, and physical examination of patients across the lifespan. Students will learn the assessment phase of the nursing process using a systems-focus assessment approach. Teaching will include special emphasis on health promotion and disease/injury prevention. Additional course content will focus on the role of the nurse, basic skills essential to professional nursing practice, documentation, and patient teaching. A focus with respect to communication, sensory and motor deficits, and skill performance with emphasis on the importance of promoting safety in older adults is covered. Simulation/lab experiences will build on those skills mastered during the previous semester and include focused assessments, a full physical assessment, patient mobility, and patient safety. Individual student demonstration of competence in the various skills, with simulation, will commence this semester. **(4 Credits) Prerequisite(s): NUR1550 Corequisite(s): CHM2037 or HSC3320 (may have taken this previously)**

### **NUR2100 Fundamentals of Nursing**

This course will be developed and will offer an immersive introduction to the art and science of nursing, blending core theoretical concepts with clinical skills, clinical judgement, and evidence-based practice to equip students for modern healthcare challenges. Students will develop an understanding of the nursing process while honing proficiency in patient care, therapeutic communication, and ethical decision-making. Safety, quality improvement, and interprofessional collaboration are underscored to begin developing competence and confidence in care delivery. This course lays the foundation for cultivating compassionate, innovative, and safety-conscious nursing professionals by uniting essential knowledge, professional behaviors, and a commitment to holistic, evidence-based practice. **(5 Credits, Prerequisite: NUR1200)**

### **NUR2200 Pathophysiology**

This course will be developed, and students will study how select disease states alter human physiology and the relevance of these alterations to the delivery of patient-centered care. For each disease process, students will explore alterations in physiological function, clinical manifestations, diagnostics, treatment, prevention, risk

management, and complications. Students will use evidence-based practice and the nursing process to inform appropriate nursing care for diverse populations. Throughout this course, students will identify pathophysiological concepts which will prepare them to provide holistic patient-centered care. **(4 Credits, Prerequisite NUR1200, Corequisite NUR2100)**

### **NUR2550 - Care Considerations for the Older Adult with Chronic Conditions/ Nursing Care of the Adult I**

Including both a didactic and hands-on component, Care Considerations for the Older Adult with Chronic Conditions focuses on understanding the aging process and age-related changes, common chronic adult health disorders, and evidence-based nursing care of those living in long-term/rehabilitation care settings. Standardized assessment tools for assessing the unique care needs of the older adult patient are introduced. Simulation/lab experiences build on those skills mastered during the previous semesters and include medication administration, skin /wound care, use of standardized assessment scales, and patient communication/education. Student demonstration of competence in various skills will take place. **(6 Credits)**

**Prerequisite(s): NUR2000**

**Corequisite(s): NUR2600, HSC3320 or CHM2037 (may have taken this previously)**

### **NUR2300 Pharmacology**

This course will be developed, and students will be introduced to principles of pharmacology and their application to nursing practice. Pharmacotherapeutic concepts will be explored with a focus on pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics, and factors influencing an individual's drug response. Utilizing evidence-based practice, students will acquire knowledge of the mechanism of action, contraindications, major interactions, adverse effects, and the nursing considerations of select medications. At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to apply knowledge of the role and responsibility of the nurse in the safe and effective administration of pharmacological therapy within a legal/ethical framework. **(4 Credits, Prerequisite NUR2300, Corequisite NUR2550)**

### **NUR2600 - Pathopharmacology I**

This course is the first in a two-part series that integrates concepts of pathophysiology and pharmacology. Pathophysiological changes resulting from disease processes within the human body are examined, with an emphasis on chronic conditions in the adult population. Pharmacological concepts are applied with particular focus on the mechanism of action, interactions, adverse effects, and the nursing implications of each drug classification, utilizing a body systems approach. The course will include effects of medications, in consideration of culture, age and the role and responsibility of the nurse in providing the safe and effective administration of pharmacological therapy within a legal/ethical framework guided by the nursing process. **(4 Credits)**

**Prerequisite(s): NUR2000**

**Corequisite(s): NUR2550, and HSC3320 or CHM2037 (may have taken this previously)**

### **NUR3000 - Adult Medical-Surgical Nursing/ Nursing Care of the Adult II**

The focus of this course is on the role of the nurse in providing patient centered care to the acutely ill adult patient on medical-surgical and telemetry units. Course content will focus on care of the perioperative patient, intravenous therapy, and common medical and surgical disorders related to cardiovascular, respiratory, endocrine, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, genitourinary, fluid and electrolyte, hematological, and reproductive disturbances. Specific emphasis is on disease management, health restoration, health promotion, and disease and injury prevention. The concepts of safety, evidenced-based practice, confidentiality, teamwork and collaboration, therapeutic communication, patient education, and patient advocacy are built upon from previous semesters. Legal, ethical, regulatory, and professional

accountability issues, in relation to the care of the acutely ill adult patient, are addressed throughout the course. Critical thinking, clinical reasoning and leadership skills are incorporated into classroom, experiential, lab, and simulation experiences. Simulation/lab experiences will build on those skills mastered during the previous semesters. Student demonstration of competence in various skills will take place at mid-term and at the end of the semester. **(8 Credits)**

**Prerequisite(s): NUR2550, NUR2600**

**Corequisite(s): NUR3050**

### **NUR3050 - Pathopharmacology II**

This course is the second in a two-part series that integrates concepts of pathophysiology and pharmacology. Pathophysiological changes resulting from disease processes within the human body are examined, with an emphasis on acute conditions in the adult population. Pharmacological concepts are applied with particular focus on the mechanism of action, interactions, adverse effects, and the nursing implications of each drug classification, utilizing a body systems approach. The course will include effects of medications, in consideration of culture and age. The role and responsibility of the nurse in providing the safe and effective administration of pharmacological therapy within a legal/ethical framework guided by the nursing process will also be included. **(4 Credits)**

**Prerequisite(s): NUR2550, NUR2600**

**Corequisite(s): NUR3000**

### **NUR3500 - Pediatric Nursing**

This course applies a family-centered care approach and knowledge of growth and development and health issues of children to assess, plan, implement and evaluate nursing care for neonates, infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. Students will explore the social, cultural, ethical, and legal influences on children and their families. Additional topics covered will include acute and chronic childhood illnesses, genetics, health promotion, injury prevention, as well as build on previous knowledge of palliative and end-of-life care. Principles integrated throughout the course include child advocacy and communication with the child and family. Experiential learning will include acute care and various community settings such as schools, clinics, and homes. Simulation/lab experiences will build on those skills mastered during the previous semesters. **(4 Credits)**

**Prerequisite(s): NUR3000, NUR3050**

**Corequisite(s): NUR3550**

### **NUR3550 - Obstetrical and Newborn Nursing/*Family and Newborn Nursing***

Obstetrical and Newborn Nursing focuses on the role of the nurse in promoting women's health throughout the lifespan but primarily during the childbearing years. Students will use the nursing process to maintain optimum health in the childbearing family. Course content includes pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, lactation, healthy newborn care, perinatal complications, and common health problems encountered by women during the reproductive years. Content will incorporate reproductive health in relation to cultural, global, ethical, and legal issues. Experiential learning will include acute care and community settings allowing students to care for women across the lifespan and within the context of the family. Simulation/lab experiences will build on those skills mastered during the previous semesters and include various labor and delivery situations. **(4 Credits)**

**Prerequisite(s): NUR3000, NUR3050**

**Corequisite(s): NUR3500**

### **NUR3600 - Community / Public Health Nursing/ Community & Population Health**

This course introduces nursing students to concepts of community and public health nursing care, diverse, multicultural, population-focused nursing, and applies the nursing process to the community as the client. Students will explore health promotion strategies in a variety of community diverse settings, examine core functions and essential services of public health, and be introduced to epidemiological and economic concepts and models. The role of the

community/public health nurse in ethical issues and health policy, with a focus on diverse and vulnerable populations. Students will examine types of community-based strategies that serve underserved populations that live in a variety of community settings. Students will examine the role of the community/public health nurse as: a population focused care provider, case manager, coordinator of care, collaborator, liaison between agencies, and nurse researcher. **(4 Credits)**

**Prerequisite(s):** NUR3000, NUR3050

**Corequisite(s):** NUR3655, NUR4000

### **NUR3655 Mental Health Nursing Care**

This course focuses on the major mental health diagnoses and the role of the nurse in the acute psychiatric care setting. Students will apply knowledge about the nurse-patient relationship, therapeutic communication, trauma informed care, and psychotherapeutic approaches to patient care. Students will use the nursing process and clinical reasoning to enhance the delivery of psychosocially, culturally, and spiritually appropriate nursing care to individuals and their families who are coping with major mental illnesses. The course will also focus on learning the pharmacotherapeutics and biological-based approaches to care of the mentally ill patient. Experiential learning will include the use of simulation/lab experiences, as well as, clinical experiences in an acute inpatient psychiatric care setting. **(4 credits)**

**Prerequisites:** NUR3000, NUR3050

**Corequisites:** NUR3600, NUR4000

### **NUR3700 - Nursing Research and Evidence-based-practice (EBP)/ Nursing Scholarship & EBP**

This course examines the foundational research and evidence-based-practice (EBP) knowledge, and skills baccalaureate prepared nurses will need in their professional practice, research, or scholarship. The course covers basic information about nursing research and its methods, process, ethics, approach to literature review and associated databases, and theoretical frameworks, with a focus on evaluating and communicating research findings and reports to support evidence-based-practice. Students will engage in individual and team-based scholarly inquiry, explore aspects of the research process and EBP, evaluate published research findings, and explore how ethical conduct supports excellence in research and EBP. **(4 Credits)**

**Prerequisite(s):** NUR3000

### **NUR3100 Informatics for Healthcare Systems**

This course will be developed and will immerse students in the foundational principles of nursing informatics, emphasizing the integration of information technology with patient care and healthcare systems. Through critical analysis and application of the nursing process, students investigate informatics tools—such as electronic health records (EHRs), telehealth platforms, and data analytics—and their transformative impact on clinical decision-making, patient safety, and evidence-based practice. Central to the course is an in-depth examination of the ethical and legal dimensions of informatics, which underpin the evolving landscape of modern healthcare delivery. Upon course completion, students will be equipped to thrive as future nursing leaders with the essential competencies needed to excel in today's data-driven healthcare environment.

### **NUR4000 - Critical Care Nursing**

During this course, students will critically think and clinically reason through critical care diagnoses while using the nursing process to plan care for the critically ill adult. Course content builds on knowledge acquired previously and includes use of the nursing process in caring for patients with acute care diagnoses such as spinal cord injury, shock, acute respiratory failure, increased intracranial pressure, sepsis, acute coronary syndrome, trauma and burns. Students will gain knowledge and skills associated with the care of the critically ill client such as assessment, hemodynamic monitoring, ventilator care, and arrhythmia interpretation and management. This course will not include clinical in an intensive care unit, but simulation and lab experiences will allow students to apply content learned in the course to build on those skills mastered during the previous semesters. **(4 Credits)**

**Prerequisite(s):** NUR3000 and NUR3050

### **NUR4100 Personal, Professional and Leadership Development**

This course will be developed and will prepare senior level BSN students to integrate personal growth, professional identity, and leadership skills into their nursing practice. Grounded in current trends and issues, the course emphasizes self-awareness, nursing scholarship, and system-based thinking. Students will explore leadership theories, communication strategies, and collaboration techniques to promote high-quality, patient-centered care. Additionally, students will gain a deeper understanding of how political, legal, and ethical frameworks shape healthcare policy and influence patient outcomes. With a focus on continuous professional development, the course empowers students to transition from novice to confident, accountable, and compassionate nursing leaders, ready to meet the evolving demands of healthcare. (4 credits, prerequisite NUR4000)

### **NUR4050 - Role Transition**

This course prepares students to transition from a student nurse into professional nursing practice as a registered nurse. This course is a continuation and accumulation of prior nursing courses. Students will be introduced to leadership and advanced concepts related to the role of the professional nurse, a provider in patient-centered care, an advocate for patients and families, and a member of the interdisciplinary healthcare team. An emphasis is placed upon the utilization of evidenced-based practice and informatics to promote safety and quality in healthcare delivery. This course also provides guidance to assist students in career development and planning. **(4 Credits)**

**Prerequisite(s): NUR3600 and NUR3655 OR NUR3500 and NUR3550**

### **NUR4500 - Capstone Synthesis/ Capstone Synthesis for Nursing Practice**

This course prepares the student to become a graduate registered nurse. The topics of licensure, malpractice, and lifelong learning are introduced whereas those of critical thinking, delegation and prioritization are built upon from previous learning. Case studies and other pedagogies are used to apply and synthesize previous course content to help the student prepare to take the NCLEX-RN exam. A number of comprehensive exams are administered throughout the semester to help the student identify individual learning needs and to develop remediation plans aimed toward success on the NCLEX exam. Simulation will build on previous learning experiences and will prepare the student for safe, competent and professional practice. **(4 credits) Prerequisite(s): NUR4000**

### **NUR4550 - Capstone Preceptorship/Capstone Preceptorship- Senior Seminar Course**

The Capstone Preceptorship experience will involve a 130-hour clinical experience where the senior nursing student will work one-on-one with a registered nurse (RN) in a health care or community setting. The student will follow the RNs work schedule, which will allow for numerous opportunities to critically think, clinically reason, and apply previously learned knowledge and skills to the evaluation, management and provision of care to persons, families, and communities under the supervision of a nurse preceptor. Students will complete a senior preceptorship project and presentation, which will enable the application and evaluation of an evidence-based practice that was implemented during the experience. Students will explore, in-depth, one of the QSEN and/or Nurse of the Future Competencies, what it means to be part of an inter-professional team, and articulate how these are actualized at the preceptorship site. A one-hour per week seminar will allow students to share their experiences and learning with faculty and peers. This experience allows for the socialization and professional development of the student while maximizing clinical competence. **(6 credits)**

**Prerequisite(s): NUR4000**

## Section 3: Undergraduate Nursing Requirements

### 3.1 Admission to Undergraduate Nursing Program

In addition to meeting the College admission criteria, students considered for admission to the Merrimack College Traditional BS in Nursing program must meet the following criteria:

- Official copies of all secondary school transcripts, including first term senior grades.
  - Satisfactory evidence of secondary school graduation or its equivalent will be required by all candidates.
- High school subject requirements (expressed in terms of secondary units where 1 unit=1 academic year of study), as per College Requirements, with the exception that Foreign Language, 2-4 is recommended.
- High School GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- C or better in all science grades.

### 3.2 Transferring into the Undergraduate Nursing Program Policy

The Merrimack College Traditional BS in Nursing Program allows for potential transfer into the Nursing Major (for both internal and external transfer students). Students must meet the eligibility criteria outlined below. Acceptance into the nursing program is not a guarantee, acceptance will depend upon students meeting all criteria and space in the program.

#### Transfer Credits Policy

The Merrimack College Traditional BS in Nursing Program allows for potential transfer credits for the following nursing courses: NUR1001 Introduction to Professional Nursing Practice, NUR1200 Health Assessment, NUR2200 - Pathophysiology, NUR3100 Informatics for Healthcare Systems, and NUR3700 Nursing Research & Evidence Based Practice/Nursing Scholarship & Evidence Based Practice. Other non-nursing courses may be transferred in for credit. Refer to the Transfer Credits of the Undergraduate Catalog for the process required to transfer in credits from colleges or universities attended.

#### Definitions:

**Admitted Nursing Student:** All first year students admitted into the nursing major during the fall of each new academic year and all transfer students admitted to nursing during this same academic year are considered to be an admitted nursing student.

**Matriculated Nursing Student:** Students who meet the requirements for NUR1200: Health Assessment, either as a first year college student or as an internal/external transfer student, are considered to be officially matriculated in the nursing program once registered.

- Transfer students will have the ability to be admitted as a nursing student at Merrimack College and take missing prerequisites in the semester(s) before taking NUR1200: Health Assessment.
- Transfer students may be enrolled to the sophomore cohort of the Traditional BS in Nursing program, once all prerequisite courses and requirements are met. If a student does not meet all prerequisites/requirements prior to the beginning of the fall semester, they will not be able to enroll in NUR2100: Fundamentals of Nursing.

### **Pre-Licensure Nursing Transfer Applicant Requirements for enrollment in NUR1200:**

- Transferring into the Traditional BS in Nursing Program may require an additional semester of course work depending on what courses the student has completed prior to transfer.
- A minimum of 16 credits of college-level work completed
- A minimum college level cumulative GPA of 3.0
- The following prerequisite courses must be completed prior to being registered in NUR1200: Health Assessment (unless being taken concurrently as noted)
  - Anatomy & Physiology I
  - Anatomy & Physiology II (must be a co-requisite for NUR1200 if not previously taken)
  - Human Growth & Development (must be a co-requisite for NUR1200 if not previously taken)
  - Basic Statistics
  - NUR1001: Introduction to Professional Nursing Practice (this NUR course may be transferred in or taken concurrently)
- Satisfactory evidence of graduating from high school or having earned a GED or HiSET certificate to validate the Merrimack College admission requirements.
- Official transcripts of all colleges or universities attended
- The following nursing courses will be considered for transfer: NUR1001 Introduction to Professional Nursing Practice, NUR1200 Health Assessment, NUR2200 - Pathophysiology, NUR3100 Informatics for Healthcare Systems, and NUR3700 Nursing Research & Evidence Based Practice/Nursing Scholarship & Evidence Based Practice. The course description, course content, lab/clinical components, and syllabi for the course must be equivalent to the Merrimack College course. All other nursing courses must be taken at Merrimack College.
- If transferring in any nursing (NUR) or non-nursing courses required for the nursing major (A&P I with lab, A&P II with lab, Microbiology with lab, Nursing Biochemistry with lab, Basic Statistics, a type of Medical/Healthcare Ethics, and/or Human Growth & Development), the following criteria must be met:
  - Course(s) must have been completed at a regionally accredited college or university.
  - The course description, course content, and syllabi for the course must be equivalent to the Merrimack College courses.
  - The minimum acceptable grade for any NUR course and the following prerequisite and science course requirements (Anatomy & Physiology I, Anatomy & Physiology II, Microbiology, Nursing Biochemistry, Human Growth & Development, and Bioethics) is a "C+".
  - To be accepted for transfer, the NUR courses, science and mathematics course grades cannot be older than 5 years.
- Students who have been excluded or dismissed from another nursing program are not eligible for enrollment in the Merrimack College pre-licensure BS in nursing program.
- If transferring from another nursing program, a letter is required from the Director/Dean of the nursing program stating the student left that program in good standing.
- All transfer applicants to the nursing program must provide evidence of adherence to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Immunization and nursing program clinical requirements.
- An advising session with the Undergraduate Nursing Program Director (UNPD).

### **3.3 Non-Discrimination Policy**

Merrimack College is firmly committed to the practice of equal opportunity. Every student is entitled to an environment free of discrimination. The College prohibits discrimination of any kind.

Discrimination constitutes a serious infraction of College policy as well as a violation of state and federal law. Any member of the Merrimack College community who discriminates against, excludes, degrades or otherwise devalues another on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, mental or physical disability, or other lawfully protected categories will be disciplined accordingly, up to and including dismissal.

Merrimack College administers all decisions without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, mental or physical disability, or other lawfully protected categories. The College's [Nondiscrimination Policy](#) can be found on the website.

### 3.4. Additional Requirements for the Undergraduate Nursing Program

- **Nursing Program Medical History & Physical Examination Form:**
  - Medical clearance is a requirement of clinical affiliates. All students are required to have documentation of good health signed by a health care practitioner prior to entering the Nursing Program during the fall of the first year.
- Nursing Program Immunization Requirements (Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements 2025-2026):

Tdap	1 dose; and history of a DTaP primary series or age-appropriate catch-up vaccination; Tdap given at $\geq 7$ years may be counted, but a dose at age 11-12 is recommended if Tdap was given earlier as part of a catch-up schedule; Td or Tdap should be given if it has been $\geq 10$ years since Tdap
Hepatitis B	3 doses; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable; 2 doses of Heplisav-B given on or after 18 years of age are acceptable
MMR	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1st birthday and second dose must be given $\geq 28$ days after first dose; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable. Birth in the U.S. before 1957 acceptable only for non-health science students
Varicella	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1st birthday and second dose must be given $\geq 28$ days after first dose; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable. Birth in the U.S. before 1980 acceptable only for non-health science students
Meningococcal	1 dose; 1 dose MenACWY (formerly MCV4) required for all full-time students 21 years of age or younger. The dose of MenACWY vaccine must have been received on or after the student's 16th birthday. Doses received at younger ages do not count towards this requirement. Students may decline MenACWY vaccine after they have read and signed the MDPH Meningococcal Information and Waiver Form provided by their institution. Meningococcal B vaccine is not required and does not meet this requirement

#### Additional Clinical Partner Immunization Requirements

- **The following additional immunizations are required by clinical affiliates:**

Influenza	Annual influenza vaccination - Due by October 1st each year or earlier if required by clinical agency
Covid-19	Primary Covid-19 vaccination or a bivalent vaccination is required for students in the nursing program due to clinical partner requirements. Some clinical partners may require a bivalent booster for those who only have a primary series. Students will be notified in advance if a bivalent booster is required for their clinical placement.

**The following additional items are requirements from clinical agencies. All nursing students are required to complete all clinical rotations to graduate from Merrimack College's nursing program. Students who do not submit health requirements may be ineligible for clinical placement and therefore unable to complete the nursing program.**

- **Additional medical requirements:**
  - All students are required to have a TB blood test (**T-SPOT or QuantiFERON**) completed by October 15th of the first year.
  - A TB blood test (**T-SPOT or QuantiFERON**) will be required annually after the first year or as per clinical agency requirements.
  - Annual flu shot (due by October 1st).
- **Drug Screening (12-panel):**
  - All students are required to undergo a 12-panel drug screen prior to entering the second semester of the program.
  - 12-panel drug screens are an annual requirement due by August 1st of each year and may be done more frequently if required by the clinical agency.
- **Criminal Background Check:**
  - All students are required to have a criminal background check by October 15th of their first year. Annual background checks will be required yearly by August 1st as required by clinical agencies.
  - A felony conviction may affect a student's ability to be placed in a clinical setting. Criminal background checks must be completed, and the Nursing Program will have no obligation to refund tuition or otherwise accommodate a student in the event that a criminal background check, fingerprinting or drug screening render the student ineligible to complete required courses or clinical field experiences.
  - Students should note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NCLEX licensure exam and/or attain employment. Any concerns should be communicated to the Undergraduate Director of Nursing or the MA Board of Registration in Nursing for advice.
- **CPR Certification**
  - By August 1st prior to the third semester, nursing majors must provide evidence of completion of an American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support course and every 2 years thereafter.
  - Online courses are not accepted. All certificates must include a hands-on portion.
- **Copy of Health Insurance Card** (both the front and the back) annually by August 1st.
- **Dementia Training will be required** before entering the clinical practicum in a long-term care facility during NUR2550. Information related to this training will be provided to the student prior to the course.
- **CastleBranch and Exxat:**

CastleBranch and EXXAT are companies used by the Nursing Program to track all requirements. These companies offer easy-to-use, secure, online systems that allow the tracking and management of background checks, drug testing, immunization record tracking, fingerprinting, and documentation management.

  - All **first-year nursing students** will be required to register with the Exxat system ahead of their spring semester. More information will be forthcoming in the NUR1001 Introduction to Professional Nursing Practice Course. Students will use this tracking system to submit required documentation throughout their time spent in the Nursing Program.
  - All **returning nursing students**, must submit all updated prerequisites to CastleBranch in a timely fashion, per the expiration dates, in order to maintain ongoing compliance with Nursing Program requirements. See grid below for CastleBranch deadlines/requirements by cohort.

REQUIREMENT	Freshmen	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
<b>Open Castle Branch/Exxat account &amp; get CORI form approval</b>	At beginning of first semester	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Background Check</b>	January 15	August 1	August 1	August 1
<b>Immunizations</b>	January 15	August 1	August 1	August 1
<b>Drug Test</b>	January 15	August 1	August 1	August 1
<b>CPR</b>	n/a	August 1	n/a	renewal by August 1
<b>Dementia</b>	n/a	March 1	n/a	n/a
<b>Health Insurance card (both sides on one sheet)</b>	January 15	August 1	August 1	August 1
<b>Nursing Student Handbook Signature Page</b>	January 1	October 1	October 1	October 1

- CastleBranch/Exxat will send student emails when various immunizations or other requirements are due up for renewal.
- It is the responsibility of each individual student to keep track of their requirements and due dates.
- Failure to comply with requirements, at any time, will result in the inability of the student to attend clinical for all nursing courses that have a clinical component, which may affect their ability to progress in the program.
- If students are unable to maintain CastleBranch/Exxat compliance, course registration and program progression may be jeopardized.

### 3.5 Grading Scale

All nursing courses will use the same grading values as indicated below. There is no rounding of scores. Course faculty will define how specific grades will be assigned in their syllabus.

93-100% = A	73-76.9% = C
90-92.9% = A-	70-72.9% = C-
87-89.9% = B+	67-69.9% = D+
83-86.9% = B	63-66.9% = D
80-82.9% = B-	60-62.9% = D-
77-79.9% = C+	< 60% = F

Beginning with NUR1200, as per the Requirements for Progression in the Traditional BS in Nursing Program (Section 3.8), students must achieve a **weighted cumulative average on all examinations** within each nursing course of at least a "C" (73) and receive an overall course grade of "C" in each of the nursing courses. If the weighted cumulative exam average is less than 73%, the final course grade will be calculated solely on the weighted cumulative exam grade, and the student will fail the course with a grade of C-, D+, D, D- or F. See the Requirements for Progression in the Nursing Program Policy (3.8) below for additional grade requirements.

### 3.6 Medication Calculation Policy

Accurate medication calculation is extremely important in order to avoid medication administration errors. The following policy is followed to ensure competency with this skill:

- Students will achieve a score of 90 percent (90%) on each ATI Dosage Calculation & Safe Medication Administration Assessment (Fundamentals, Medical-Surgical, Maternal-Newborn, Nursing Care of Children, and Critical Care).
- A student's FIRST score, for each of the assessments listed above, will be worth 5 percent (5%) of the total course grade.
  - If a 90% score is not achieved, the student will remediate with a tutor in the Math Center and take a second exam.
  - If a 90% score is not achieved on the second exam, the student will create an individualized remediation plan in collaboration with the course instructor, implement and take the third exam.
  - If a 90% score is not achieved on the third exam, the student will receive a "Clinical Performance Deficiency Report".
  - All three exams, if required, must be completed by the end of the semester. An exception is the half semester courses; please refer to the syllabus for specific time periods for completion deadlines.
- Prior to each clinical rotation, beginning spring semester second year, students will be given a pass/fail medication calculation quiz (a 100% required to pass).
- Any student who does not receive a 100% on the quiz will be required to complete remediation and then retake another quiz.
  - Students have up to a total of three attempts at receiving the 100%. Failure to do so will result in the student receiving a "Clinical Deficiency Performance Report".
  - Students will not be allowed to administer medication in the clinical setting until a score of 100% is obtained, which will affect their ability to pass the clinical portion of the course.

### 3.7 Graduation Requirements for the Traditional BS in Nursing

**Candidates for a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree must complete all of the following:**

- Successfully complete:
  - A minimum of 124 credits,
  - All progression standards over the course of the program,
  - All courses as per the nursing curriculum plans of study,
- All required nursing courses (NURXXXX); and
- Maintain cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of at least 2.75.

### 3.8 Requirements for Progression in the Traditional BS in Nursing Program

#### 1. First Year students must:

- Achieve a weighted cumulative average on all examinations within each nursing course of at least a "C" (73- 76.99) and receive an overall course grade of "C" in each of the nursing courses. If the weighted cumulative exam average is less than 73%, the final course grade will be calculated solely on the weighted cumulative exam average, and the student will fail the course with a grade of C-, D+, D, D-, or F;
- Achieve a grade of "C" or higher in NUR1200 Health Assessment, HCS1122 Human Anatomy & Physiology I; and HSC1123 Human Anatomy & Physiology II; and
- Successfully complete a minimum of 35 credits with a CGPA of 2.75 or higher prior to entering second year.

\* Any student who has not successfully completed a minimum of 32 credits or has earned an overall CGPA of less than 2.75 by the end of the first year spring semester will receive a letter from the Nursing Program advising of their dismissal from the program if they fail to meet progression standards prior to entering their second year. This letter will also advise the student to contact their advisor to discuss potential options for meeting progression standards prior to entering second year.

\*\* If progression standards are not met prior to entering second year, the student will be dismissed from the nursing program.

#### 2. Second Year students must:

- Achieve a weighted cumulative average on all examinations within each nursing course of at least a "C" (73) and receive an overall course grade of "C" in each of the nursing courses. If the weighted cumulative exam average is less than 73%, the final course grade will be calculated solely on the weighted cumulative exam average, and the student will fail the course with a grade of C-, D+, D, D-, or F;
- Achieve a grade of "C" or higher in CHM 2037 Nursing Biochemistry and HCS3320 Microbiology for Health Professions;
- Have a CGPA of 2.75 or higher at the end of each semester;
- Receive a grade of "pass" on end-of-semester clinical evaluation;
- Achieve a medication calculation quiz score of 100%;
- Maintain compliance with all health and clinical agency requirements; and
- Have successfully completed a minimum of 66 credits prior to entering third year.

\* Any student who has not successfully completed a minimum of 62 credits or has earned an overall CGPA of less than 2.75 by the end of the second year spring semester will receive a letter from the Nursing Program advising of their dismissal from the program if they fail to meet progression standard prior to entering their third year. This letter will advise the student to contact their advisor to discuss potential options for meeting progression standards prior to entering the third year.

\*\* If progression standards are not met prior to entering the third year, the student will be dismissed from the nursing program.

### 3. Third Year students must:

- Achieve a weighted cumulative average on all examinations within each nursing course of at least a "C" (73) and receive an overall course grade of "C" in each of the nursing courses. If the weighted cumulative exam average is less than 73%, the final course grade will be calculated solely on the weighted cumulative exam average, and the student will fail the course with a grade of C-, D+, D, D- or F;
- Have a CGPA of 2.75 or higher at the end of each semester;
- Receive a grade of "pass" on end-of-semester clinical evaluations;
- Achieve a medication calculation quiz score of 100%;
- Maintain compliance with all health and clinical agency requirements; and
- Have successfully completed a minimum of 99 credits to qualify for promotion to year four.

\*Any student who has not successfully completed a minimum of 99 credits or has earned an overall CGPA of less than 2.75 by the end of the third year spring semester will receive a letter from the Nursing Program advising of their dismissal from the nursing program if they fail to meet progression standards before entering their fourth year. This letter will advise the student to contact their advisor to discuss potential options for meeting progression standards prior to entering the fourth year.

\*\* If progression standards are not met prior to entering the fourth year, the student will be dismissed from the nursing program.

### 4. Fourth Year students must:

- Achieve a weighted cumulative average on all examinations within each nursing course of at least a "C" (73) and receive an overall course grade of "C" in each of the nursing courses. If the weighted cumulative exam average is less than 73%, the final course grade will be calculated solely on the weighted cumulative exam average, and the student will fail the course with a grade of C-, D+, D, D-, or F;
- Have a CGPA of 2.75 or higher at the end of each semester;
- Receive a grade of "pass" on end-of-semester clinical evaluations;
- Achieve a medication calculation quiz score of 100%;
- Maintain compliance with all health and clinical agency requirements; and
- Successfully complete a minimum of 127 credits\* to qualify for graduation.

**\* Completed a minimum of 124 credits, and all nursing course requirements, as per the nursing curriculum plan.**

### 5. Course Failure

- Students are allowed to repeat only one nursing course throughout the entire nursing curriculum. Failure of two nursing courses or failure of the same nursing course twice will result in dismissal from the Nursing Program.
- Students who fail a nursing course for the first time will be permitted to stay in the Nursing Program but may not progress until that course has been successfully repeated. The only exception is when a student fails the first of a half semester specialty-nursing course in a semester. Students will be permitted to continue into the next specialty course within the same semester but may not progress to the next semester until the failed course is successfully repeated. Failure of a nursing course may result in a 5-year plan of study.
- All required nursing courses must be repeated on campus.

## **6. Clinical Failure**

- A student may fail clinical at any time during the clinical experience for documented unsafe practice or at the end of the clinical experience for failure to meet outcomes. Failure of any clinical rotation will result in failure of the course. The student will receive a grade of “F” for the entire course - both the clinical and the course.
- A student is allowed to repeat only one nursing course.
- All required nursing courses/clinical must be repeated at Merrimack College.

## **7. Nursing Clinical or Course Failure**

- All students with a first time, single course/clinical failure, will be placed on Nursing Program Academic Probation by the Undergraduate Nursing Program Director for at least one semester.
- For the purpose of progression, the failed nursing course/clinical will be considered the one allowed course/clinical failure throughout the student’s program.
- A second failed course or clinical will result in dismissal from the Nursing Program.

## **8. Dismissal from the Nursing Program**

- Students that fail to meet progression requirements, fail a second course or clinical, or fail to meet ethical or legal nursing standards will be dismissed from the program.

# **Section 4: General Policies and Procedures**

## **4.1 Class Attendance Policy**

Nursing class attendance is essential to a good educational experience; therefore, it is expected for students to attend classes regularly. It is the responsibility of the professor(s) to notify students in writing of their specific attendance policies in their course syllabus, and to place such statements on file with the Department of Nursing. The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing requires class attendance standards, including a maximum amount set for missed nursing classes by all nursing students. Three or more absences constitute excessive absence and will require a discussion with the course instructor.

- In those rare instances when it is necessary to be absent, students will inform the course instructor in advance and are responsible for work missed.
- Permission to make up quizzes, examinations, and other work will be as follows, provided the professor was notified of the absence prior to the start of the missed class:
  - For first time absences (consecutive missed days are considered one absence), make up will be allowed.
  - If the absence is due to a conflict with a Merrimack College activity or event, the responsible Merrimack College faculty member, staff member, or administrator will provide advance written notice to the course instructor and make-up will be allowed for missed quiz, examination, and other work.
  - Any student who anticipates being absent or who is absent from a nursing class for three or more consecutive days must notify the course instructor and provide documentation explaining the reason for the absences.
  - The course instructor is responsible for notifying the UNPD of excessive absences.
- Nursing classes take place Monday through Friday, and must be attended in person, unless otherwise approved by the instructor. Students are expected to be in class each and every day, including those right before or after a holiday or break.

For all non-nursing courses, students should follow Merrimack College's "Attendance Policy" found in the [Undergraduate Academic Catalog](#).

## 4.2 Course Exemption Policy

The Merrimack College Traditional BS in Nursing Program will not consider course exemption for any of the nursing courses. Please refer to the College Undergraduate Catalog for identification of non-nursing course exemption.

## 4.3 Transfer Credits Policy

The Merrimack College Traditional BS in Nursing Program allows for potential transfer credits for the following nursing courses: NUR1001 Introduction to Professional Nursing Practice, NUR1200 Health Assessment, NUR2200 - Pathophysiology, NUR3100 Informatics for Healthcare Systems, and NUR3700 Nursing Research & Evidence Based Practice/Nursing Scholarship & Evidence Based Practice. Other non-nursing courses may be transferred in for credit. Refer to the [Transfer Credits](#) section of the College Undergraduate Catalog for the process required to transfer in credits from all colleges or universities attended.

## 4.4 Advanced Placement Policy

The Merrimack College Traditional BS in Nursing Program does not allow advanced placement of nursing major courses into the curriculum.

## 4.5 Educational Mobility Policy

"Educational mobility is a process by which individuals complete formal and/or informal educational offerings to acquire additional knowledge and skills. To the extent possible, educational mobility should build on previous learning without unnecessary duplication of that learning and be focused on outcomes" (AACN, 1998, p. 314).

According to the AACN (1998), approaches to educational mobility should:

- be designed to attain and maintain educational integrity and program quality;
- enhance the socialization of students as members of the profession of nursing as well as foster achievement of personal goals and needs of individuals;
- focus on the attainment of outcomes that reflect a higher level of knowledge, skills, critical thinking, problem solving, social interaction, and effective professional citizenship; consider flexible admission criteria while focusing on exit criteria and standards; and
- include collaborative programs, where possible, for articulation and broader use of existing statewide and regional articulation models (p. 315).

To avoid duplication of learning, the Traditional BS in Nursing program at Merrimack College supports the following:

- Non-nursing course exemption per College policy.
- Merrimack College students and external applicants may apply for transfer into the Traditional BS in Nursing Program as per our Transfer Policy (3.2, p.18).

The Traditional BS in Nursing Program outcomes reflect student attainment of a high level of knowledge, skills, critical thinking, problem solving, interdisciplinary collaboration and effective professional citizenship. These standards will prepare graduates to progress into master's and doctoral programs, and this will be emphasized and encouraged throughout the program.

## **4.6 Military Education Policy**

### **4.6.1 Advanced placement of Military Education**

The Merrimack College Traditional BS in Nursing Program does not allow advanced placement of Military Education into the curriculum.

### **4.6.2 Transfer of Military Education**

The Merrimack College Traditional BS in Nursing Program does not allow the transfer of military education into the curriculum.

### **4.6.3 Training or Service for a Military Health Care Occupation**

The Merrimack College Traditional BS in Nursing Program does not allow credit for training or service for a military health care occupation into the curriculum.

## **4.7 Withdrawal Policies**

### **4.7.1 Student Withdrawal from Nursing or Pre-requisite Courses**

#### **4.7.1.1 Nursing Course or Science Course withdrawals**

Undergraduate nursing students may withdraw and receive a semester grade of "W" from one required nursing course, and one of the following science courses: Anatomy & Physiology I & II, Microbiology for the Health Professions, and Nursing Biochemistry-for the entire duration of their academic career. A second nursing or science course withdrawal will result in dismissal from the program.

Students thinking about taking a withdrawal from a nursing or Anatomy & Physiology I & II, Microbiology for the Health Professions, and Nursing Biochemistry course should meet with the nursing advisor and notify their professor prior to withdrawing to ensure that the decision is in the student's best interest. Withdrawing from a course may affect the student's ability to progress in the Nursing Program and/or may lead to an additional year of study. See Progression Standards (Section 3.8, page 24) and Program Course Sequence (Section 2.3, pages 1-12) in the Nursing Student Handbook. If the student decides to withdraw, the student must follow the Merrimack College withdrawal process as outlined in the college withdrawal policy (pages 28-29).

#### **4.7.1.2 Subsequent Withdrawals from Health Sciences**

A pattern of withdrawals from nursing and/or health science pre-requisite courses puts a student at risk for dismissal from the Nursing Program.

Nursing students who are considering taking a leave of absence, withdrawing from the College or withdrawing from the nursing major are encouraged to discuss their situation with their faculty advisor and the UNPD.

#### **4.7.2 Withdrawing from the Nursing Major**

If a nursing student chooses to withdraw from the nursing major, the procedures for [Declaring or Changing Majors and Minors](#) should be followed.

#### **4.7.3 Leave of Absence/Withdrawal from the College**

If a nursing student decides to take a leave of absence (LOA) from the College or withdraw entirely, the procedures for [Leave of Absence/Withdrawal from the College](#) found in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog should be followed.

### **4.8 Readmission Policy**

If a nursing student has transferred out of the nursing major, been dismissed from the Traditional BS in Nursing Program, or withdrawn from the College, they cannot be readmitted to the Nursing Program.

### **4.9 Student Rights and Grievance Policies**

#### **4.9.1 Nursing Course Grade Appeal**

1. The student must provide, in writing, objective evidence to support the request for the grade change. Evidence provided for the appeal must be one of three circumstances indicating the grade was calculated incorrectly:
  - a. The calculated grade given was different from that written on the syllabus.
  - b. The grade given was a departure from the syllabus (e.g. – a pop quiz was added)
  - c. The grade given was different from that applied to others in the same course.
2. A student who wishes to appeal a nursing course grade is expected to discuss the matter first with the course instructor, doing so within 5 days of receipt of the grade. The instructor will listen, provide explanations, and be receptive to changing the grade if the student provides evidence of options (1)(a), (b), or (c) above. In most cases the discussion between the student and the instructor should suffice and the matter should not need to be carried further.
3. If the appeal is denied after the discussion with the instructor, the student can appeal within 5 business days of the instructor's decision, in writing and with evidence to support options (1)(a), (b), or (c), to the Undergraduate Nursing Program Director ("UNPD").
4. If the UNPD denies the appeal, the student may further appeal within 5 business days of the UNPD's decision to the Academic Dean of Nursing. The UNPD will forward all paperwork relating to the appeal to the Academic Dean of Nursing.
5. If the Academic Dean denies the appeal, the student may further appeal within 5 business days of the Academic Dean's decision to the Provost/ Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs (SVPAA). The final decision regarding the appeal will be made by the Provost/ SVPAA.

#### **4.9.2 Non-Nursing Course Grade Appeal**

If a nursing student wishes to appeal a course grade received in a non-nursing course, the College's policy on [Procedures for Grade Appeal](#) found in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog will be followed.

#### **4.9.3 Inability to Progress/Clinical Failure/Dismissal**

Nursing students may appeal a clinical failure, inability to progress or dismissal from the Traditional BS in Nursing Program by following the procedure below within seven (7) days of the date marked on the grade report or within seven (7) days of the date marked on the inability to progress and/or program dismissal letter.

Procedure:

1. The student will appeal to the course/clinical faculty for a clinical failure or to the UNPD for an inability to progress and/or dismissal from the program. The UNPD may consult the Nursing Department Leadership Council to help with the decision. (The Nursing Department Leadership Council is made up of the Nursing Academic Administrators and a senior level faculty representative).
2. If the appeal is denied, the student may appeal to the Academic Dean of Nursing. The student must present a written rationale and specific evidence to support the request. This information must be submitted to the Academic Dean within 72 hours of the UNPD's decision.
3. If the appeal is denied by the Academic Dean of Nursing, the student may appeal to the Provost/SVPAA. The student must present a written rationale and specific evidence to support the request. The information must be submitted to the Provost/VPAA within 3 days of the Academic Dean of Nursing's decision. The Provost/SVPAA will make the final decision regarding the appeal.

### **4.10 Accessibility Services Accommodations**

#### **4.10.1 Academic Accommodations from the Accessibility Services Office**

Merrimack College provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students who have, or think they may have a disability are invited to contact the Accessibility Services Office via the online request form found on the [Accessibility Services](#) website, or by visiting the Accessibility Services Office on the third floor of McQuade Library.

Students are encouraged to contact the office of Accessibility Services as soon as possible. Students already registered with Accessibility Services are encouraged each semester to request their letters to be printed so they can deliver them to instructors personally. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

Students can request their letters via this link: [Requesting Letters for Professors](#)

#### **4.10.2 Testing Center Process**

All students who have been approved for exam accommodations should go to the following link to request that their exams be taken in the testing center (about a week before the exam date): [Testing Center Requests](#).

## 4.11 Academic Integrity Policy

Merrimack College, the SNHS, and the DON demand the highest level of integrity of students in their various academic and clinical requirements. Plagiarism and various forms of cheating are serious offenses and are not tolerated. Policies and procedures for dealing with these types of offenses are in place at the college level and are communicated in the Merrimack College Academic Integrity Policy found in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

## 4.12 Student Review of Academic Records

Any nursing student wishing to examine their education record should review the College's policy regarding compliance with the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#).

## 4.13 Communication Practices

### 4.13.1 Merrimack College Email

The official communication channel to all students, faculty, staff and administration is the College-assigned email account. All members of the College community are responsible for reading materials sent via electronic mail. This includes official announcements or policies that affect operations of the College. Lack of awareness of emails sent by the College will not be accepted as a reason for failure to comply with information in the message and can lead to disciplinary measures as described in the "Student Conduct Process" section of the Merrimack College Student Handbook. The College will also send information through printed communication as determined by the Office of Communications.

If you have questions about your Merrimack email account, please contact the Information Technologies Help Desk in McQuade Library or call ext. 3500 or email [askit@merrimack.edu](mailto:askit@merrimack.edu). Communication with nursing majors will also be done primarily through email at Merrimack College. Students are responsible for checking their Merrimack College email, including winter and summer breaks. Students should maintain their email accounts to allow important communications to be received and reviewed in a timely manner.

## 4.14 Professional / Ethical Conduct

The faculty of the DON demonstrate high standards of professional, ethical behavior by adhering to the American Nurses Association's (ANA) Scope and Standards of Practice and the Code of Ethics for Nurses along with the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN) Nurse Practice Act. It is expected that all students demonstrate high standards of professional, ethical behavior in the classroom, clinical, lab, service-learning settings, and on campus. Students are expected to be compassionate, polite, and demonstrate respect for human dignity at all times. Students must also follow clinical agency and DON policies as well as federal and Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulations. The faculty reserves the right to recommend the withdrawal of a student at any time, without prejudice, who does not maintain an acceptable level of behavior, as defined by the ANA Code of Ethics, ANA Scope and Standards of Practice, Massachusetts BORN Nursing Practice Act, Federal regulations (e.g., HIPAA), and clinical agency/DON policies.

#### **4.14.1 ANA Code of Ethics Provisions (2025)**

Provision 1 - The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.

Provision 2 - A nurse's primary commitment is to the recipient(s) of nursing care, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.

Provision 3 - The nurse establishes a trusting relationship and advocates for the rights, health, and safety of recipient(s) of nursing care.

Provision 4 - Nurses have authority over nursing practice and are responsible and accountable for their practice consistent with their obligations to promote health, prevent illness, and provide optimal care.

Provision 5 - The nurse has moral duties to self as a person of inherent dignity and worth including an expectation of a safe place to work that fosters flourishing, authenticity of self at work, and self-respect through integrity and professional competence.

Provision 6 - Nurses, through individual and collective effort, establish, maintain, and improve the ethical environment of the work setting that affects nursing care and the well-being of nurses.

Provision 7 - Nurses advance the profession through multiple approaches to knowledge development, professional standards, and the generation of policies for nursing, health, and social concerns.

Provision 8 - Nurses build collaborative relationships and networks with nurses, other healthcare and non-healthcare disciplines, and the public to achieve greater ends.

Provision 9 - Nurses and their professional organizations work to enact and resource practices, policies, and legislation to promote social justice, eliminate health inequities, and facilitate human flourishing.

Provision 10 - Nursing, through organizations and associations, participates in the global nursing and health community to promote human and environmental health, well-being, and flourishing.

#### **4.14.2 Professional Behavior in the Classroom, Clinical, Simulation and Lab Environment Policy**

The following behaviors are reflective of professional standards of conduct:

- Attending each class, simulation, lab and clinical experience as scheduled
- Arriving on time and being well-prepared for each type of learning environment
- Staying in the classroom, simulation, skills lab and clinical for the entire learning experience
- Silencing and putting away cell phones
- Refraining from side conversations with classmates
- Being attentive to and respectful of the faculty facilitating the learning experience
- Being attentive to and respectful of classmates discussing questions, cases, scenarios, skill performance or issues raised during the learning experience
- Notifying the professor or clinical instructor, well in advance, in the unusual circumstance that the student will be late, unable to attend the learning experience or unable to meet the learning experience requirements
- Being respectful of all Nursing, Nutrition & Public Health Department and School of Nursing & Health Sciences administration, faculty and staff
- Acting with integrity in all situations.

#### 4.14.3 Expected Professional Communication

It is expected that students be respectful in all communications with administration, faculty, staff, peers, and clinical staff. Students must be open to feedback and demonstrate incorporation of feedback into their academic, simulation, skills lab and clinical work. Students are expected to communicate any class, simulation, skills lab and/or clinical absence(s) to appropriate faculty **prior** to the meeting time(s).

Inappropriate behavior by a nursing student will be referred to the DON's leadership council and may result in a written warning or performance report, course failure, or dismissal from the Nursing Program.

### 4.15 Use of Social Media Policy

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) means that patients hold the rights over their own health information, and it establishes rules and limits as to who can receive it. HIPAA calls this kind of privacy information “protected health information” and defines it as “the term given to health data created, received, stored, or transmitted by HIPAA-covered entities and their business associates in relation to the provision of healthcare, healthcare operations and payment for healthcare services” (HIPAA Journal, 2020, paragraph 3).

According to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) (2018), confidential information can be shared only under three specific circumstances:

1. the patient has provided informed consent;
2. in situations in which it's legally required, or
3. when failure to disclose the information could result in significant harm.

Breaches of patient confidentiality or privacy on social media platforms (whether intentional or inadvertent) can occur in many different forms, including:

- Sharing of videos or photos of patients taken inside a healthcare facility, even if they cannot be identified, without written consent
- Sharing of photos, texts or videos that reveal room numbers or patient records
- Descriptions of patients, their medical conditions, and/or treatments
- Referring to patients in a degrading or demeaning manner
- Posting of gossip about patients

A violation of patient confidentiality occurs as soon as a nursing student shares information (or even the slightest detail – no matter how insignificant) with someone who is not authorized to receive such information. Examples include reflecting on the severity of a car accident victim's injuries or commenting on the amount of medication that a patient has been prescribed.

Merrimack College students must not only maintain patient confidentiality and privacy but also serve to represent the College in a positive manner. This is also expected in the simulation and skills labs, where both student performance and simulation scenarios are held confidential and not shared, verbally, in writing or via electronic/social media, outside of the learning experience. Inappropriate use of social/electronic media and HIPAA violations can lead to disciplinary action, which can, in the most serious cases, lead to dismissal from the Nursing Program.

Students are expected to become familiar with the proper use of social media and are encouraged to use the following resources to further educate themselves:

- The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) brochure: [A Nurse's Guide to the Use of Social Media](#)
- ANA's [Social Media Principles](#)

## Section 5: Clinical Policies, Procedures, Standards

### 5.1 Nursing Good Moral Character Statement

All prospective nursing students should familiarize themselves with the statutory requirements of licensure in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts prior to matriculation in the Nursing Program. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing Licensure Policy 00-01, Determination of Good Moral Character includes the following:

- It identifies specific criminal convictions, which **will permanently exclude an individual from initial nurse licensure in Massachusetts**, due to the horrific nature of the crime;
- requires initial nurse licensure applicants to be conviction-free, for a minimum of five years, before the submission of an application for licensure;
- requires the disposition of any criminal conviction to be closed, for a minimum of one year, before the submission of a nurse licensure application; and
- requires all criminal cases to be closed at the time of application.

The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing publishes an information sheet on [good moral character](#).

Prospective nursing students who intend to apply for licensure in states other than Massachusetts are encouraged to contact the appropriate authority in those states to ensure that they will meet the requirements for licensure application in those states. Please contact the Undergraduate Director of Nursing with any questions about this policy and how it may affect your ability to be licensed as a registered nurse in Massachusetts.

To obtain the contact information for the nursing professional licensing boards, please go to this [link](#).

If you wish to review your state's Board of Nursing Professional Licensure Requirements, please go to this [link](#).

Students are responsible for reviewing the [professional licensure requirements](#) for the state they wish to be licensed in.

### 5.2 Drug and Alcohol Policy for Nursing Students in Clinical Experiences

A vast majority of clinical agencies used for student clinical experiences require students to undergo drug screening prior to taking part in clinical rotations. In order to comply with the requirements specified in the affiliation agreements with these clinical agencies, Merrimack College requires all nursing students to complete yearly drug screens during the following times and as needed/required per clinical agency:

- After the first year, each student is required to be drug screened no later than August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year prior to entering their second, third or fourth year of the nursing program.
- Additional testing may be required as dictated by the clinical agencies. Students attending these facilities will be notified in advance.

The drug test and results must be completed **prior** to the start of the semester. If the student's clinical site requires additional testing (additional drugs being tested for or within 6 months versus one year), students must comply with these additional requirements as requested by the clinical site.

Students may need to complete these drug tests at their expense. The College reserves the right to not refund tuition in the event that a positive drug test results in the student becoming ineligible for clinical placement.

Students refusing to be tested or with a test result indicating the use of an illegal drug or controlled substance without a legal prescription will be referred to the Clinical Coordinator or designee and are subject to disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the Nursing Program.

Students who are taking prescription medication may test positive. In these cases, the provider reviewing their test results will contact them. The student will be asked about the prescription medication they are on as well as who the prescribing clinician is. This information will be considered when determining whether a "positive" test has been satisfactorily explained. The drug tests will be completed using the Castle Branch Protocol for compliance with documented health requirements.

Although not licensed, when nursing students practice in the clinical setting, they do so in accordance with the rules and regulations that pertain to registered nurses through the Board of Registration in Nursing in the state of Massachusetts under 244 CMR. Specifically related to drugs and alcohol, students will follow 244 CMR 9.03: Standards of Conduct for Nurses (36) Practice While Impaired. A nurse licensed by the Board shall not practice while impaired.

Students who engage in the improper or illegal use of drugs pose a risk to patients, other students and staff, as well as faculty. The College has the right to dismiss and/or suspend any student whose conduct compromises patient safety. If a clinical instructor, preceptor or staff of a clinical facility suspects that a student exhibits impaired behavior or judgment in the clinical setting, the instructor/preceptor reserves the right to dismiss the student from the clinical unit and follow the specific agency policy for practicing while impaired. In such an instance, the instructor/preceptor must document their observations of student behavior on the "Student Suspected Impairment Form" and also contact the Clinical Coordinator, who will then follow-up with the course coordinator and the Undergraduate Director of Nursing or designee.

## **5.3 Technical Standards for Nursing Majors**

### **5.3.1. Technical Standards Summary**

In addition to didactic courses, nursing education requires students to complete clinical components that involve caring for patients. This section outlines the Nursing Program's expectations for the student's participation and adherence to the required technical standards in the classroom, laboratory, simulation and clinical settings.

The Nursing Program does not discriminate against qualified students with disabilities from being enrolled as nursing students. Please see the on reasonable accommodations (Section 5.3.2, page 37) and how they interact with the technical standards of this program.

On occasion, a student's ability to meet the technical standards may change during the course of the program. In such circumstances, students should notify the Clinical Coordinator and Course Coordinator as soon as possible. For example, students who have a significant illness, injury, hospitalization, or surgery (e.g., concussion, mononucleosis, broken leg) that renders them unable to meet the technical standards during the time they are in clinical learning experiences. Students must be cleared to return to the clinical setting by their healthcare provider. The technical standards must be reviewed and signed by the healthcare provider (use the Returning to Clinical Form- Appendix 3) and then submitted to the Clinical Coordinator prior to students returning to the clinical setting.

Essential eligibility requirements for participation in the Nursing Program include the following technical standards:

### **Observation/Communication**

Visual, auditory, smell, tactile or functional equivalent ability sufficient to observe, assess, monitor and respond to health needs of patients in a variety of clinical settings.

Capacity to accurately obtain and use data for oral and written communication, use sounds, visual images, verbal and nonverbal communication to inform patient care

Ability to accurately, clearly and timely record information in both oral and written form and effectively communicate with sensitivity to patients, families and colleagues in the healthcare organization

### **Physical/Motor**

Sufficient physical abilities to move through lab, simulation and clinical settings, execute motor movements and perform manually based diagnostic procedures (auscultation, palpation, etc.) required to provide general and emergency patient care

Sufficient gross and fine motor abilities to provide therapeutic nursing interventions safe and effectively to maintain safety and security standards

Sufficient motor skills to meet requirements specific to the RN scope of practice

### **Intellectual/Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative**

Critical thinking sufficient for clinical and academic judgment

Sophisticated problem-solving skills including mathematical calculations, reasoning, analysis and synthesis

Ability to learn through a variety of modalities including didactic, laboratory, simulation and clinical settings, individual and team based learning, preparation of oral and written reports, use of technology to support academic and clinical work

Ability to integrate and assimilate complex information from multiple sources in varying amounts and multiple education experiences in a timely fashion in order to formulate accurate patient assessments and management plans

Ability to comprehend spatial relationships and three-dimensional relationships of structures

### **Behavioral/Social**

Students must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment and the completion of all academic and patient

care responsibilities. The ability to develop mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients and healthcare team members is essential. The ability to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical practice, adaptability to changing environments, flexibility, compassion, integrity, motivation, interpersonal skills and concern for others is required.

Interpersonal ability to interact appropriately, sensitively and compassionately with individuals, families and groups.

Ability to demonstrate appropriate judgment in decision-making in order to maintain the safety and security of patients and to behave appropriately with patients, staff, students and supervisors.

Ability to function and adapt effectively under physically demanding workload, long hours, and in times of physical and mental stress. Display flexibility and openness to changing environments and integrate constructive feedback given the classroom, lab, simulation, and clinical settings.

Ability to engage in respectful, mature and healthy patient-provider relationships.

### **Ethics and Compliance with Applicable Laws and Policies**

Students must be able to understand the basis and content of both general and healthcare ethics. Students whose performance or judgment is impaired by prescribed or illicit medications, abuse of alcohol or other substances and who cannot meet the technical standards are not suitable candidates for admission, progression or graduation from the program. It is expected that students will maintain a high level of personal integrity, acting ethically and lawfully in their academic, professional and personal lives.

### **5.3.2 Reasonable Accommodations**

The Accessibility Services Office provides reasonable accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. For more information on receiving reasonable accommodations through the Accessibility Services Office, [please visit their website](#).

## **5.4 Safe Practice Policy**

Safe clinical practice is a mandatory requirement of students in the Nursing Program as defined by the program outcomes and individual course outcomes. Unsafe practices are any actions that could cause harm, injury, or jeopardize the safety and wellbeing of an individual (client, family member, health care practitioner, staff, peers, faculty or self). These practices involve behaviors that threaten or violate the physiological or emotional (including spiritual and cultural domains) safety of an individual. Unsafe behaviors in the clinical setting may include acts of omission or commission and/or conduct that causes faculty to question the student's potential for safe practice. The clinical instructor is responsible for ensuring students maintain safe practice. Due to this, any student not able to provide safe and effective care to clients will be dismissed from the clinical experience. Clinical dismissal will equate to a clinical absence and will also result in a clinical performance report and conference.

Unsafe/inappropriate clinical (including simulation and skills lab settings) behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to:
  - correctly identify client(s) prior to initiating care,
  - perform pre-procedure safety checks of equipment, invasive devices or client status,
  - recognize violations in aseptic technique,
  - follow the “rights” of medication administration,
  - receive appropriate supervision when performing nursing actions,
  - report significant findings in client status,
  - seek help when needed in the provision of client care
  - maintain client confidentiality,
  - maintain professional boundaries with clients/families,
  - act upon recommendations designed to remediate clinical deficiencies,
- Inappropriate/misuse of side rails, bed/chair alarms, wheelchairs or other equipment.
- Medication errors (actual and /or near-miss).
- Lack of proper protection of the client, which results in or leaves a client vulnerable to injury.
- Physical and/or emotional abuse or neglect of clients.
- Providing clients with inappropriate or incorrect information.
- Being in clinical while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Lack of physical or mental health required to provide comprehensive client care and to interact professionally with the client and the health care team.
- Excessive utilization of faculty time to ensure safe practice, to the detriment of other students in the clinical rotation.

## **5.5 Professional Behavior Policy**

It is expected that students act in accordance with a high standard of professional behavior in the classroom, clinical, simulation lab, skills lab, and campus settings. Professional nursing behavior is defined by the American Nurses’ Association Scope and Standards of Practice, the Code of Ethics for Nurses, and the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing Nurse Practice Act. In addition, students must abide by clinical agency policies, federal regulations (i.e., HIPAA), the Merrimack College, and DON policies.

Unprofessional behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Dishonesty,
- Lack of accountability,
- Habitual or unexplained tardiness (defined as greater than once),
- Failure to comply with and maintain all clinical requirements,
- Failure to notify faculty/preceptor in advance of inability to attend class/clinical/simulation/skills lab,
- Failure to respond to faculty communication, and
- Verbal or non-verbal language, actions, or voice inflections (i.e., inappropriate personal hygiene, dress or personal boundaries; breach of confidentiality; use of profanity/degrading or disrespectful comments) that:
  - compromise rapport and working relations with clients, family members, staff, peers, or faculty,
  - compromise contractual agreements and/or working relations with clinical affiliates, or
  - constitute violations of legal/ethical standards.

## **5.6 Unsafe, Unethical, and/or Unprofessional Behavior**

Unsafe, unethical and/or unprofessional behavior (as defined in sections 5.4 and 5.5) in a clinical or nonclinical setting will not be tolerated and may result in:

- A behavior verbal warning,
- A behavior warning conference and written report,
- A behavior conference and either a clinical performance deficiency or critical incident report,
- Immediate course failure,
- Immediate clinical failure from the clinical nursing course (student is not allowed to continue), and/or
- Dismissal from the Nursing Program.

Nursing faculty are responsible to evaluate and determine the seriousness of student unprofessional and unsafe behaviors. If the incident warrants course, clinical failure and/or dismissal from the program the Nursing leadership council, in coordination with the Office of the General Counsel and Office of the Provost, will meet to review the evidence and make a final determination.

## **5.7 Client Privacy, Confidentiality and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act**

Each student is responsible for keeping all client information strictly confidential in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996. This federal law, first introduced to the student in NUR1550, addresses clients' rights and ethics by mandating the confidentiality and privacy of all client information. All client information, regardless of form (e.g., verbal, hard copy, film, electronic), is confidential and may be relayed only to those individuals authorized to receive it. Unauthorized access, use or disclosure of client information is illegal. After the initial introduction in NUR1550, students will be educated annually regarding HIPAA via the Massachusetts Computerized Clinical Placement (CCP) clinical orientation. It is required that students know and abide by HIPAA. Students who violate HIPAA will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Nursing Program.

## **5.8 Student Confidentiality**

Learning should take place in a safe environment where students are not afraid to ask questions, provide answers, and demonstrate or perform various skills. Student experiences in the classroom, clinical, skills laboratory, simulation laboratory and other collaborative situations where peer observation/participation takes place, therefore, is to remain strictly confidential. It is unethical for students to share information about the performance of peers outside of the experience itself. The unauthorized release, inappropriate exchange or mishandling of confidential peer information, regardless of form (electronic, written, and verbal), is a violation of policy and may be grounds for disciplinary action.

## **5.9 Policy on Transportation Related to Clinical Settings**

Students are responsible for their own transportation, and all associated costs (i.e. parking), to and from clinical sites beginning the first semester of the sophomore year. The potential to carpool with peers in the same clinical group does exist and can help with expenses. Students have some independent experiences (e.g., operating room or hospice experiences) as early as first semester third year and will need to have a car or use other forms of transportation to get to the clinical site(s).

## 5.10 Student Professional Liability Insurance

Nursing students involved in clinical experiences need coverage by a professional liability policy. Merrimack College holds a professional liability policy covering all students enrolled in a course with a clinical component. The policy only covers students functioning in the role of a Merrimack College nursing student. Some clinical agencies may require students to have their own professional liability insurance. If this is the case, the student will be required to purchase student nurse liability insurance.

## 5.11 Standard Precautions Policy

Students are required to use “Standard Precautions” with all client interactions to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms that cause infections. An introduction to standard precautions takes place in NUR1550. After the initial introduction, students will be educated annually regarding the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard via the Massachusetts Computerized Clinical Placement (CCP) clinical orientation.

## 5.12 Administration of Medication Policy

Student nurses are required to seek supervision from their instructor or preceptor while preparing and administering all medications. Students are never to prepare or administer medications with staff nurses at the facility.

Direct supervision by the instructor or preceptor is required for the following:

- Preparing narcotics, anticoagulants, and insulin for administration in the hospital setting
- Administering medications with a dosage that must be calculated.
- Administering medication to a child who is 12 years old or younger.

Direct supervision is required while preparing and administering **ALL** intravenous medications. This includes the flushing of saline locks. Intravenous medications are administered in accordance with the agency policy, which can vary from institution to institution.

Never is a student allowed to prepare or give medication during resuscitation, through an epidural route, or if student administration is prohibited by the agency policy.

## 5.13 Dress Code/Personal Appearance for Clinical/Simulation/Lab Settings

Students must look and dress professionally whenever in the clinical, simulation and laboratory settings. Students are to follow the dress code as noted below. If a clinical agency specifies requirements not covered by these guidelines, students must follow the agency policy. Students not following the dress code will be asked to leave the clinical, simulation or laboratory area, which will be counted as a clinical/lab absence.

### All Agencies:

**Student Identification:** Students will wear a nametag that identifies them as a Merrimack College Student Nurse. Students can purchase name tags from the DON. Health care facilities may also have their own identification badge that the students will be required to wear.

### **Agencies where a uniform is required and in Simulation/Skills Lab:**

**Uniform:** The nursing student uniform consists of a navy-blue scrub top and pants with the option for a short length white or blue lab coat. All uniforms are bought from the approved vendor and embroidered with the school emblem. **A plain white or blue** crew, mock or turtleneck top beneath the scrub top is permissible. Uniforms should be freshly laundered and wrinkle-free when worn.

**Shoes:** Shoes must be clean, in good condition, **plain white or black in color**, have a closed front and back, and have flat rubber or other quiet soles. Plain white or black athletic sneakers are permissible provided they have no additional color embellishments.

**Hair:** Hair must be pulled back, neat and off the face. Men must be either clean-shaven or with neatly trimmed facial hair.

**Nails:** Fingernails need to be natural, neatly trimmed without any polish.

**Jewelry:** A watch with a second hand is required (no Apple watches permitted in a clinical setting). Additional jewelry is not recommended in clinical settings for safety and infection control purposes.

Additional guidance may be outlined in course syllabi.

### **Additional Guidelines:**

- Merrimack College name badge, watch with a second hand, stethoscope, blood pressure cuff, black pen, penlight, goggles, and bandage scissors are required.
- Gum chewing, cologne and perfume are not allowed.
- False eyelashes **are not** permitted.
- Cell phones for personal use are not allowed in health care facilities or community settings associated with clinical experiences.

### **Agencies where a uniform is not required:**

Nursing students should look professional while in any clinical setting where the uniform is not required. Therefore, each student is required to abide by the following dress code:

- Wear professional dress street clothes
  - Clothing should always be neat, clean, wrinkle-free and appropriate
  - Shoes should have a closed heel and toe.

## **5.14 Clinical/Skills Lab/Simulation Lab - Policies and Expectations**

### **5.14.1 Punctuality and Preparedness**

It is the expectation that students attend all clinical, skills lab and simulation lab sessions. Students are expected to arrive at these sessions **on time** and to be **fully prepared** to participate in the experience. If a student is not prepared to provide appropriate care (e.g., pre-clinical paperwork not complete, inability to discuss and deliver client care, inappropriate dress, lack of clinical tools such as stethoscope), the clinical instructor, after consultation with the course or Clinical Coordinator, may remove the student from the clinical or lab area.

Not being fully prepared to participate in the clinical, simulation or lab experience **will result** in a written clinical performance deficiency report for **each** offense. All missed hours will need to be made up as per the clinical attendance policy.

Showing up to clinical, simulation or lab late will result in a verbal warning for the first offense and a written clinical performance deficiency report for the second offense.

#### **5.14.2 Failure to Notify of Lateness or Absence**

Failure to notify clinical faculty of lateness or absence will result in a written clinical performance deficiency report.

#### **5.14.3 Clinical Attendance Policy**

Simulation experiences are considered a clinical day, and this same policy applies to assigned simulation days. Students who are absent from clinical, skills lab or simulation lab, for any reason, jeopardize their ability to meet the course outcomes, which may result in course failure.

Students must contact the Clinical Coordinator within **one hour prior** to the start of the clinical day if they feel unable to attend clinical. If a student, after consultation with the clinical coordinator, needs to miss a clinical, the student is responsible for notifying the clinical instructor (and preceptor if in Capstone) immediately. Each clinical faculty member will communicate instructions to their clinical group regarding the procedure to follow in the event of a clinical absence. In the event of a clinical absence:

- **All missed time must be made up.**
- The student will receive an incomplete course grade until all clinical hours are made up.
- The student must complete the clinical made-up day(s) before the next semester begins.
- The Clinical Coordinator will arrange clinical make-up at a time mutually agreeable to faculty, student and agency.

##### **5.14.3.1 Procedure for Excessive Clinical Absences:**

- Faculty will report all clinical absences to the Nursing Clinical Coordinator.
- If a student does not attend 20% of their clinical course hours, the student will not be allowed to continue in the course.

##### **5.14.3.2 Unavoidable Absences:**

In the event of a severe illness, hospitalization or injury, the student must notify the Clinical Placement Coordinator as soon as possible and present a letter from a healthcare provider. Prior to being able to return to the clinical setting, the student must provide the Clinical Placement Coordinator documentation from their healthcare provider that they are cleared to return to the clinical setting.

### **5.15 Use of Mobile (e.g., Smartphone, iPad) Devices in Clinical/Lab Settings Policy**

Mobile devices are becoming increasingly important for accessing clinical information and standards of care in the clinical setting. Students are expected to follow agency-specific policies and guidelines regarding the use of mobile devices in clinical settings.

- No cell phones and/or personal electronic devices are allowed in the Simulation Lab unless required/requested by the Simulation Faculty/Instructor.
- When not required, these devices should be placed in silence mode and stowed with personal belongings prior to the start of the training.
- Under no circumstances are students to use mobile devices for personal business while providing client care or reviewing client information in the clinical setting. Students are prohibited from taking photographs/videos while in any type of clinical affiliation setting.
- All students are responsible for following HIPAA guidelines when using mobile devices.
- The sending or receiving of texts, photos or other types of messages during clinical, simulation or skills lab is not permitted unless students are directed to do so by faculty.
- Failure to follow this policy will result in the student receiving a performance report.

## 5.16 Performance Reports

### 5.16.1 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)\*:

**Policy:** Faculty may initiate a PIP when a student fails to meet any **noncritical/nonessential** clinical evaluation criteria. The Clinical Coordinator (CC)/Undergraduate Nursing Program Director (UNPD) will monitor and file all PIPs. The student must meet the clinical evaluation criteria, as per stated timeframe on the PIP, in order to progress in the Nursing Program.

**Definition:** Initiation of a PIP occurs when a student fails to meet any noncritical/nonessential competency. This report is used if the student consistently does not meet the required competency (ies) (e.g., is not prepared or is late for clinical more than once).

**Procedure:**

1. The clinical instructor will confer with the student and contact the CC upon initiation of a PIP.
2. The clinical instructor and student will complete and review the appropriate form.
3. The CC, current clinical Instructor, and course coordinator will formulate a plan of action for the remainder of the semester, which the student must follow and achieve in order to progress.
4. The completed PIP form will be given to the CC who will place it in the student's record. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure the PIP is followed so that the associated competency(ies) is/are met by the stated time frame.
5. If an individual student has received **FIVE (5)** PIPs during the course of their academic nursing program, the CC/UNPD and involved faculty will review the findings and present to the Nursing Leadership Council to determine what action should be taken based on the information available.
6. If the decision allows the student to continue in the program the CC, the current clinical instructor and UNPD will formulate a plan of action for the remainder of the semester, which the student must follow and achieve in order to progress.
7. PIPs will be removed from students' records upon successful completion of the program.

**\* Maintaining up to date clinical requirements is a professional responsibility. A PIP will be given to any student who does not meet these requirements at any point in time throughout the program.**

### 5.16.2 Clinical Performance Deficiency Report (CPDR):

#### Policy:

Faculty may initiate a CPDR when a student fails to meet **essential** clinical evaluation criteria. The CC/UNPD will monitor and file all CPDRs. The student must meet the clinical evaluation criteria, as per stated timeframe on the CPDR, in order to progress in the Nursing Program.

#### Definition:

A clinical performance deficiency is one in which the student fails to meet an **essential outcome** identified in the individual clinical evaluation tool for each nursing course.

#### Procedure:

1. The clinical instructor will confer with the student and contact the CC when a CPDR is initiated.
2. The clinical instructor and student will complete the appropriate form.
3. The CC, current clinical Instructor, and course coordinator will formulate a plan of action for the remainder of the semester, which the student must follow and achieve in order to progress.
4. The completed CPDR form will be given to the CC, who will place it in the student's record. It is the responsibility of the student to follow the improvement plan on the CPDR so that the associated essential competency(ies) is/are met by the stated time frame.
5. If an individual student has received **three (3)** CPDRs during the course of their academic nursing program, the CC/UNPD and involved faculty will review the findings and present to the Nursing Leadership Council to determine what action should be taken based on the information available.
6. CPDRs will be removed from students' records upon successful completion of the program.

### 5.16.3 Critical Incident Report (CIR):

**Policy:** A Critical Incident Report (CIR) will be initiated by the clinical instructor whenever a critical incident (or near incident) occurs.

**Definition:** A critical incident is when a student is involved in an event (or near event) that placed (or could have placed) a client at risk for serious harm. This includes, but is not limited to, non-adherence to the Administration of Medication policy and all **critical competencies** identified in the clinical evaluation tools by the symbol “\*\*”. One or more CIR may be grounds for dismissal from the Nursing Program depending upon the severity of the incident.

#### Procedure:

1. The clinical instructor will:
  - a. Inform the student and the CC, as soon as possible after the incident, that a CIR will be issued. At that time, the student has the opportunity to discuss the incident.
  - b. decide, in consultation with the CC, whether the student may return to any clinical setting before a meeting can be arranged. The student is notified immediately of this decision.
  - c. arrange a meeting with the student, CC/UNPD, and course coordinator to discuss the incident as soon as possible after the event.
  - d. have completed the CIR to share with the student, CC/UNPD, and course coordinator at the scheduled meeting.

2. The student will complete the Student Section of the CIR prior to the meeting.
3. The course coordinator, clinical instructor and CC/UNPD will present the CIR at the first scheduled Leadership Council meeting (Closed Session) after the event or at an emergency meeting of the Leadership Council if the student has not been permitted to return to clinical practice.
4. The Leadership Council will discuss the CIR and decide whether the student can continue in the course and/or Nursing Program.
5. If the decision allows the student to continue in the program the CC, current clinical Instructor, and course coordinator will formulate a plan of action for the remainder of the semester, which the student must follow and achieve in order to progress.
6. CIRs will be removed from students' records upon successful completion of the program.

#### **5.16.4 Requesting Lab Skills Practice:**

When faculty or students identify clinical knowledge/skills in need of improvement or areas that do not meet the standards identified in the Clinical Evaluation, the Request for Lab Skills Practice Form is used to request a practice session. Obtain Request for Lab Skills Practice Form [here](#).

A Request for Lab Skills Practice Form can be initiated by either a student or nursing faculty/lab staff. Once initiated, a plan of action is developed in collaboration between the student, course/clinical faculty (when applicable), and laboratory faculty. The plan outlines the area(s) of concern, action to be taken and a time frame in which the plan goals should be accomplished.

#### **Procedure:**

1. A Request for Lab Skills Practice Form can be initiated by the following individuals and under the following circumstances.
  - a. The student self-identifies the need for additional clinical coaching / assistance / deliberate practice.
  - b. The clinical faculty observes that a student is performing marginally in the clinical setting and requires more practice (e.g., medication administration).
  - c. The clinical faculty has identified a clinical deficiency/weakness in the performance of essential or critical clinical skills/behaviors, and a PIP, CPDR, or CIR has been administered. Lab practice is identified as part of the plan to help the student achieve clinical competency.
  - d. The simulation/lab instructors have identified unsuccessful achievement of clinical skills/behaviors in the lab or simulation portion of a course.
2. The person initiating the form completes it and places it in the mailbox located on the Lab Coordinator's office door.
3. The Lab Coordinator will reach out to the student to set up a time to meet and develop a plan.
4. If a student who has been referred for failure to meet clinical expectations remains unable to overcome the deficiencies or meet the outcomes, the course and clinical faculty and the CC will be made aware.

## 5.17 Policy for Senior Preceptorship Placement in a Specialty Unit

Students wishing to be in a specialty unit for preceptorship\*, other than a medical-surgical unit, must meet the following criteria:

1. An overall GPA of 3.0 or higher by the end of the junior year.
2. A course grade of B (3.0) or higher in medical surgical nursing and in the specialty area of interest.
3. Approval from Medical/Surgical instructor to be in a specialty preceptorship (beginning with class of 2024).
4. Fully updated Castle Branch account will be required to send your application in for a placement.

\*Number of clinical absences will be taken into consideration.

## 5.18 Nursing Skills and Simulation Lab Ground Rules

We in the DON are committed to having your laboratory/simulation experiences support you in achieving the knowledge, technical skills, and behaviors required of a registered nurse. While in laboratory and simulation spaces, we ask you to observe the ground rules for participation as outlined in “Laboratory and Simulation Laboratory Ground Rules for Participation”. Here are a few reminders:

1. Dress as you would for clinical (See Personal Appearance/Dress Code for Clinical Simulation/Lab Settings section)
  - a. Wear your student uniform, including appropriate shoes (no open-toed or open-heeled shoes)
  - b. Bring all tools that you would normally have at clinical; with the exception of a pen (e.g., stethoscope, penlight)
2. Bring all additional materials, as per your instructor (e.g., pre-scenario work, iPad, textbook). If you do not have all of your materials/are not prepared, you may not be allowed to participate and will be sent home. Being sent home is considered a clinical absence and will warrant a performance report.
3. Observe frequent hand hygiene practices. This includes the use of 20 seconds of friction/rubbing with soap and water or the use of the alcohol-based hand sanitizer product.
4. When applicable and directed, students will follow additional infection control guidelines mandated by the simulation staff and Merrimack College which may include wearing a mask during the training.
5. All participants and instructors/faculty will treat each other with mutual respect. This pertains to verbal and non-verbal language, arriving on time to participate in scheduled training, and individual behaviors.
6. The DON laboratories are NOT a latex free environment. Latex free gloves are available for your use/protection when using the equipment.
7. No food, drink or gum is permitted in the simulation/laboratory spaces.
8. No pens allowed in the lab - pencils only. Pens will permanently stain the manikins.
9. Please do not interfere with the learning experiences of other groups using the laboratory, classrooms, and/or simulation spaces.
10. Students are not permitted to touch any equipment in the Simulation Lab except for equipment with which they are directly working. Students will be held responsible for damage to the equipment as a result of not following Simulation Lab policy and procedure. Misuse of any equipment by any student will result in dismissal of that student from the Simulation Lab and potential CPDR completion.
11. Students must sign two (2) forms prior to participation in simulation yearly.
  - a. Ground Rules for Participation Form
  - b. Audio/Visual Consent

12. Students are not permitted in the computer control/observation area unless directed by the instructor.
13. Students will maintain confidentiality regarding the performance of other students in the Simulation Lab.
14. Each participant is responsible for leaving the simulation/laboratory spaces clean and organized for the next group:
  - a. Place unused items on the bedside table next to the workstation or on tables in the back of the room.
  - b. Place waste and trash in the appropriate receptacles.
  - c. Wipe down hard surfaces (tables, chairs, bedside tables, etc.) with approved antimicrobial wipes, following direction from the laboratory/simulation staff.
  - d. Return tables/chairs/beds/stretchers to their original position in the rooms.
  - e. Be sure to collect all personal belongings before leaving.
  - f. Close the door to the simulation/laboratory space when leaving for the day.
15. If you discover that any of the equipment is broken or not working as you think it should, please contact the supervising faculty member, the Simulation Technician or the Lab Coordinator.

## **5.19 Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Procedure**

This procedure outlines the management of exposure to bloodborne pathogens and body fluids in the clinical setting for students of the Nursing Program. It applies to students of Merrimack College DON who may have come in contact with Blood/Body fluids and/or a bloodborne pathogen. It outlines mechanisms to avoid exposure and the reporting and management post-exposure to blood/body fluids. See [Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Procedure](#) for full scope and details.

## **5.20 Latex Allergy Procedure for Students**

The faculty and staff of the Merrimack College Nursing Center are committed to supporting the development of knowledge, skills, and behaviors in a safe learning environment. While every effort has been made to create a latex-free learning environment in the Nursing Center, it is possible that there may be some contact with latex-containing equipment or supplies while in the simulation laboratory spaces.

The following actions will be initiated prior to the student's first nursing course and then as needed.

- Indicate the presence of a known latex allergy/sensitivity below. Documentation of known latex allergy/sensitivity will be filed with the Clinical Coordinator: [Latex Allergy Procedure for Students](#). In those instances where a latex allergy has been indicated, the student will be contacted by the Clinical Coordinator. The following actions should be initiated:
  - Student will be given literature on latex allergies;
  - Student will be counseled regarding acceleration of sensitivity with repeated exposures;
  - Student will be encouraged to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet as suggested by NIOSH;
  - Student should carry and have available any medications (i.e.: Diphenhydramine, Epinephrine "Epi-pen") prescribed to manage the latex allergic/sensitivity reaction;
  - Student should inform all faculty of the known latex allergy/sensitivity prior to the lab/simulation/clinical-based learning experience; and
  - Student will be responsible for sharing information about themselves regarding latex allergy with the respective clinical agency.

## Section 6: Advising, Student Services & Governance

### 6.1 Advising by The Lucey Center for Academic and Career Advising

The Lucey Center for Academic and Career Advising provides a dedicated advisor for the department of nursing. The Lucey Center Advisor is assigned to all nursing students and works in close collaboration with the undergraduate nursing program director, to provide students with guidance on course selection and ensure timely progression through the program. The nursing advisor will also engage students based on a tiered model of support, tailored to their academic, career, financial and personal needs. The Nursing Advisor in the Lucey Center for Academic and Career Advising will facilitate deeper faculty mentorship through introductions and structured programming by class year, major or professional pathways. This will allow for career development to be more closely integrated with classroom learning, networking and job readiness.

The O'Brien Center for Career Development will continue to engineer and develop the tools, resources and programs for the community, equipping advisors with everything they need to best support our students. This centralized advising model provides faculty with the opportunity to spend more time and space serving as mentors to students, providing guidance about career paths and academic opportunities

### 6.2 College-Wide Academic Services

For more information on academic services offered through Merrimack College, please visit [this link](#).

#### 6.2.1 Tutoring

The SNHS offers a tutoring program for many courses with integrated labs, and other select courses where students have traditionally struggled with the subject matter. Opportunities are available to work with nursing tutors, as well as teaching assistants, who are a combination of upperclassmen and graduate students. The tutoring program offers students a chance to ask questions about course material, get more hands-on time with classroom technology, and a chance to work on additional activities and assignments, which help to create a more concrete understanding. There are multiple spaces on campus for the tutors to meet including in labs specific to particular courses, student lounges, student study rooms, and a tutoring room.

### 6.3 Mack Force Central

The Mack Force Central is a resource available to the Merrimack community to answer questions and provide direction, covering everything from class registration to parking to meal plans and graduation requirements. Mack Force Central is currently undergoing exciting renovations, with completion anticipated during the fall 25' semester. While the work is in progress, the space is open and accessible. Once finished, the refreshed area will feature a welcoming, modern environment designed to serve our community.

Students, faculty, staff and families can contact the Mack Force via email at [mackforce@merrimack.edu](mailto:mackforce@merrimack.edu) or by phone at 978-837-MACK (6225) and can visit Mack Force Central in person on the first floor of McQuade Library.

## 6.4 Hamel Health Center and The Counseling Centers

Students who have physical ailments can access [Hamel Health Center](#), located at 477 Andover Street across from the main entrance to the campus. Students in need of mental health and wellness support can access the [Office of Counseling and Wellness Education](#) located on the 3rd floor of Sakowich Center. Twenty-four-hour assistance is available via phone. [The Counseling Center](#) offers students in-person, 24/7 Teletherapy ([UWill](#)), and after hours support. Additional online resources can be found on the office's [website](#) offering a wide variety of campus educational programming to promote health and wellness, including workshops, seminars and groups.

## 6.5 Student Leadership and Participation in Nursing Program Governance Policy

Nursing students will have the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the Nursing Program through multiple avenues.

1. **Student Class Representatives:** Each cohort of students will elect student class representatives (SCR), as well as alternates, each fall. Elected representatives can run for re-election in subsequent years, as many times as desired. Elections will be organized by the nursing administration for the first year, with subsequent elections organized by the current SCR and nursing administration.
2. The SCRs will represent their class in attendance at the monthly DON meetings.

### **Responsibilities of the SCRs include:**

- a. Act as the spokesperson for their class cohort. Prior to each monthly DON meeting, the SCR queries their cohort for issues, concerns, questions and/or suggestions;
- b. Attend DON monthly meetings. If unable to attend the meeting the SCR will notify the alternate, communicate discussion points from their class, and request that the alternate attend;
- c. Apprise faculty at the DON of class issues, concerns, questions and/or suggestions and relay information obtained at the DON meetings back to classmates;
- d. Assist in recruiting student volunteers for various SNHS and DON activities, such as open house and admitted student days;
- e. In September of the Junior and Senior years, assist nursing administration in communicating information for students to serve on the additional nursing faculty committees (curriculum, evaluation, nursing simulation & informatics).

### **3. Student Representation on Other Nursing Faculty Committees:**

Various committees exist within the DON. Serving on these committees gives the student a unique opportunity to participate in academic and College governance. The opportunity to serve on one of the DON faculty committees occurs in the fall of junior and senior years. The standing committees/meetings with student representation include:

1. Curriculum Committee
2. Evaluation Committee
3. Nursing Simulation & Informatics Committee.

**Responsibilities of the Student Committee Representatives include:**

- a. Attend the specific faculty committee meeting as scheduled. If unable to attend will notify the alternate and request that the alternate attend; and
- b. Participate in discussions/provide input from a student perspective.

To become a student representative on a nursing faculty committee, interested junior and senior nursing students will address a letter to the Nursing Program Administrator by October 1. The letter will describe the committee the student is interested in serving on and the rationale and qualifications for wanting to serve. The Chair of each Nursing Committee will select one primary and one alternate to serve on each committee.

## Appendix 1: Student Signature Verification



**MERRIMACK COLLEGE**  
SCHOOL OF NURSING & HEALTH SCIENCES

### Department of Nursing

#### 25/26 Traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing Student Handbook

I (print your name) \_\_\_\_\_  
have received, read, and understand the policies and procedures in the Traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing 25/26 Student Handbook of Merrimack College. By signing this I hereby agree to follow and adhere to these policies. I understand that the content of this handbook, including policies and procedures, are subject to change and revision.

I will uphold the requirements of the Merrimack College Department of Nursing (DON) Social Media Policy, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and any other federal or state laws regarding confidentiality.

I agree to report any violations of confidentiality that I become aware of to my clinical instructor, course faculty, Clinical Coordinator and/or to the Interim Undergraduate Nursing Program Director.

Failure to adhere to these policies may result in probation, suspension or dismissal from the Merrimack College Nursing Program and/or legal prosecution under the requirements of HIPAA.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I expect to graduate in Year: 20\_\_\_\_\_

*Submission of this signed page is required for progression in the Nursing Program. Please upload this signed form yearly to your CastleBranch/Exxat Account.*

*Thank you!*