This handbook belongs to: ______________________________

My academic advisor is: ______________________________

Advisor’s Office: ______________________________

Office Telephone: ______________________________

WTAMU website: www.wtamu.edu

Department of Nursing Web site: www.wtamu.edu/nursing

Texas Board of Nursing: www.bon.texas.gov

West Texas A&M University Department of Nursing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, handicap, or national origin. West Texas A&M University, according to Affirmative Action Goals, encourages qualified men, women, and minorities of all ages to apply.

Revision and review dates:

Department of Nursing Office Personnel

Department Head: Dr. Helen Reyes  
OM 311D  
(806)-651-2631  
hreyes@wtamu.edu

Assoc. Dept. Head Grad. Nsg.: Dr. Collette Loftin  
OM 309D  
(806) 651-2653  
cloftin@wtamu.edu

FNP Program Director: Dr. Angela Phillips  
BNLC 105  
(806) 651-2662  
aphillips@wtamu.edu

Administrative Secretary: Betty Hill  
OM 313  
(806) 651-2959  
bhill@wtamu.edu

Admissions Counsellor: Deanna Moore  
OM 311  
(806) 651-2630  
dmoore@wtamu.edu

Director, BNLC: Lisa Robinson, MSN, RN  
ET 167-B  
(806) 651-4806  
lgrobinson@wtamu.edu

Department of Nursing fax: (806) 651-2632
# Table of Contents

- Members of the Graduate Faculty ................................................................. 5
- Vision, Mission and Philosophy ................................................................. 6
- MSN Goals and Outcomes ........................................................................ 8
- Student Learning Outcomes ..................................................................... 9
- MSN Curriculum ...................................................................................... 10
- Schedule of Graduate Courses ................................................................. 11
- Overview of MSN Program ....................................................................... 13
- Academic Advising .................................................................................. 16
- Immunization Requirements ..................................................................... 18
- Admission and Progression ..................................................................... 19
- Comprehensive Exams ......................................................................... 23
- End of Program Practicum Evaluations .................................................. 24
- Thesis Guidelines ................................................................................... 26

## Appendices

- Graduation Checklist ............................................................................ 39
- Comprehensive Examination Information ............................................. 40
- FAQs regarding Praxis & Practicum courses ........................................ 45
About Your MSN Handbook (MSNH)

The MSN Handbook (MSNH) has been designed to provide information about the intents, policies, and procedures for the MSN curriculum and program. The MSN program is an integral part of the university and the graduate school and the policies and procedures for the nursing graduate program are aligned with those entities. The handbook contains information about policies and procedures adapted to the nursing graduate program.

Members of Graduate Faculty:

Dr. Lisa Davis               OM308E       651-2641
Dr. Collette Loftin          OM309D       651-2653
Dr. Angela Phillips          BNLC 105      651-2662
Dr. Helen Reyes             OM311D       651-2950
Dr. Kristin Kuhlmann        BNLC 106      651-2636
Mrs. Kathy Shipp            BNLC 104      651-2649
Department of Nursing
Mission, Vision, & Philosophy

MISSION
As an integral part of its parent institution, the Department of Nursing is committed to serving as the principal academic center for baccalaureate and graduate nursing education for a multi-state region. Our mission is to be a student-centered, learning community dedicated to developing professional and academic leaders in nursing and to serve our constituents through educational programs that engage students, provide high quality nursing services, demonstrate evidence-based nursing practice, and produce nursing scholarship.

VISION
The West Texas A&M University Department of Nursing envisions a health care system in which all persons receive quality care in an atmosphere of respect for human dignity. Scholarly nursing practice will be integral to such system. The undergraduate and graduate programs will promote the many ways of knowing that contribute to the Art of Nursing.

PHILOSOPHY
The faculty of the Department of Nursing believes humans are unique, holistic, and multidimensional beings who are valued in their uniqueness and are deserving of respect and dignity. Human beings have a right to self-determination and to make informed choices. They also have a right to competent advocacy when their abilities for self-determination and choice are impaired.

We believe that health is the dynamic state of interactions among mind, body, and spirit. Health is uniquely experienced by each person and exists in any of many conditions.

We believe that nursing is a practice discipline requiring the scholarly use of scientific, ethical, aesthetic, and personal ways of knowing (the Art of Nursing). Nurses use the many ways of knowing to enable persons to bring body, mind and spirit into harmonious relationship.

We believe that the environment is the biological, physiological, personal, spiritual, social, cultural, and political context in which persons experience health. The environment is not a separate entity, but an integral component of the human experience.

We believe caring, commitment, honesty, integrity, dependability, respect, responsibility, accountability and initiative are values, which are central to nursing scholarship. We believe that the teaching and learning of nursing is both an individual and community enterprise. Learners and teachers have role responsibilities, which foster informed participation, open communication, critical thinking, and community building.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS OF AN MSN
You are embarking on a new and exciting learning experience in this Masters’ program. Graduate level work may be a bit different from your experiences as an undergraduate, however.
Graduate education reflects mastery in an academic discipline which MAY result in an additional certification (e.g. FNP), but it is an academic discipline first. It is distinct from your undergraduate work in that, in addition to applying existing knowledge, you will be expected to generate new knowledge. You will be expected to employ, in all classes, a theoretical framework, a deep understanding of research methodology, and critical analysis. Learning, in the classroom, clinical setting and online is more self-directed. Graduate students are held to a higher standard than undergraduate students and are expected to demonstrate better research skills (e.g. conducting exhaustive reviews of current professional literature), and more in depth and applied knowledge.

Creativity and critical thinking are encouraged in all graduate level work. The graduate program recognizes that, upon graduation you will be considered an expert in nursing. The components of the graduate curriculum are carefully designed to insure the development of new knowledge, hone communication skills (oral and written), develop new ideas and encourage intellectual growth. One of the expectations of the American Academy of Colleges of Nursing (ACCN) is that graduate schools build on previous knowledge to include sciences and the humanities. A goal of the WTAMU graduate nursing program is to incorporate sciences and the humanities in each course. It is through the study of the humanities in particular that a broader understanding of the human condition is achieved, and through this broader understanding, more holistic care can be provided. In short, graduate nursing education is about more than just nursing, or perhaps more appropriately, through graduate education, nursing is understood more deeply for what it is, both the doing of nursing, and the being of a nurse.

It is also a goal of the WTAMU graduate nursing program to foster freedom of inquiry. Your experience as an undergraduate may have been prescriptive in specifics of course requirements, such as length of papers, how many references, and/or a specific topical outline for the paper. That is not necessarily true in graduate school. The faculty want you to explore deeper, to go “outside your comfort zone”, to be creative. Therefore, paper guidelines may seem vague. That is purposeful on the part of the faculty in order to foster in depth, critical, creative review. It also fosters close collaboration with the faculty regarding these learning opportunity. It is thru this relational experience that some of the richest learning takes place—which cannot be achieved it limited to specific objectives and expectations. Of course this requires flexibility on the part of both the learner and the faculty, but can be the most rewarding and exciting part of the learning process. Faculty are often asked how many references are required for a specific paper or project and the standard answer, without meaning to be flippant at all, is “as many as it takes”. It depends on the topic, the available literature, the depth and breadth of the literature accessed, how well it addresses the topic at hand, the age of the resource, and many more variables. The expectation is an exhaustive review so that you are confident in the depth and breadth of the resources to inform your paper or project.
Department of Nursing Strategic Goals

1. Develop processes, programs and facilities necessary to provide the students of the Department of Nursing with a superior student-centered learning experience.
2. Recruit and retain increasing numbers of students in nursing who will graduate from our programs, assume leadership roles in society, and meet the nursing workforce needs of the region and state.
3. Recruit, develop, and support a faculty and staff that embody the core values of the Department of Nursing and the university and support their missions and goals.
4. Support individual scholarly and/or creative accomplishment in the Department of Nursing and develop into a “Center of Excellence” with increasing cross-departmental and college collaboration in these and other emerging areas.
5. Strengthen external relations and support of the Department of Nursing and the university with alumni, friends of the university, local and regional constituents, and legislative and governmental entities.
6. Baccalaureate and master’s nursing graduates will demonstrate achievement of the expected student learning outcomes and the expected aggregate outcomes.

Program Outcomes:

1. FNP certification pass rate will be 80% or higher
2. Graduation rates for MSN will be 90% within 5 years of admission to the program.
3. Graduation rates for post-MSN certification will be 90% within 3 years of taking the first FNP course.
4. Alumni satisfaction is in the top 50% of ranked peer institutions.
5. Comprehensive exam pass rate of 90%.
6. Thesis pass rate of 90%.
Accreditation
The WTAMU graduate nursing program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the accrediting arm of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). As such the graduate curriculum is designed using the AACN Essentials of Masters Education for Advanced Practice Nursing and is also congruent with the NTF criteria.

Individual Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Nursing Coursework</th>
<th>Examples of methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 1</td>
<td>NURS 6303, NURS 6322, NURS 6306 synthesis/thesis</td>
<td>Theoretically based written papers using latest evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 2</td>
<td>NURS6321, NURS6314, NURS 6306 and synthesis/thesis</td>
<td>Practicum logs which include reflective journaling addressing outcomes specific to the course and role specialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 3</td>
<td>All nursing courses and synthesis/thesis</td>
<td>On-line and in-class seminars based on current evidence based practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 4</td>
<td>All practica and synthesis/thesis</td>
<td>Objective examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 5</td>
<td>All coursework, practica and synthesis/thesis</td>
<td>In-class presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 6</td>
<td>All coursework, practica and synthesis/thesis</td>
<td>Community based presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 7</td>
<td>NURS 6318, all practica and synthesis/thesis</td>
<td>Dissemination of current research in a variety of modes to include writing newspaper articles, policy change recommendations to area institutions, presenting workshops, in-services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 8</td>
<td>All coursework and synthesis/thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 9</td>
<td>All coursework, practica and synthesis/thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Comprehensive MSN (Online)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Cr. Hr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6303(O)</td>
<td>Theories for Nursing</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6317(O)</td>
<td>Nursing Research</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6318(O)</td>
<td>Nursing Populations and Settings</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6320(O)</td>
<td>Pathophysiology</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6325(O)</td>
<td>Advanced Health Assessment</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6384(O)</td>
<td>Pharmacotherapeutics</td>
<td>3-2-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6314(O)</td>
<td>Advanced Nursing Education and Leadership</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6322(O)</td>
<td>Bioethics and Advocacy</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6324(P)</td>
<td>Scholarly Clinical Praxis</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6323(P)</td>
<td>Role Practicum in Area of Concentration</td>
<td>3-1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELECTIVE</td>
<td>ELECTIVE Supporting Role Specialization</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6301</td>
<td>Thesis I or 6000-level course supporting role specialization</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Elective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6302</td>
<td>Thesis II or 6000-level course supporting role specialization</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Elective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6120(O)</td>
<td>Research Synthesis (required for non-thesis students only)</td>
<td>1-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL(MINIMUM) CREDIT HOURS = 39-40**

### FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER (Classroom)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Cr. Hr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6303(O)</td>
<td>Theories for Nursing</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6317(O)</td>
<td>Nursing Research</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6318(O)</td>
<td>Nursing Populations and Settings</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6320(O)</td>
<td>Pathophysiology</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6315(C)</td>
<td>Advanced Assessment for Nurse Practitioners</td>
<td>3-2-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6384(O)</td>
<td>Pharmacotherapeutics</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6611(C)</td>
<td>Family Nurse Practitioner Primary Healthcare I</td>
<td>6-3-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(135 cl hrs.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6712(C)</td>
<td>Family Nurse Practitioner Primary Healthcare II</td>
<td>7-3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(180 cl hrs.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6713(C)</td>
<td>Family Nurse Practitioner Primary Healthcare III</td>
<td>7-3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(180 cl hrs.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6316(O)</td>
<td>Issues: Nurse Practitioner Role Development</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6120(H)</td>
<td>Research Utilization Project</td>
<td>1-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(required for non-thesis students only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6490(P)</td>
<td>Capstone Clinical Practicum (180 cl hrs.)</td>
<td>4-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL(MINIMUM) CREDIT HOURS = 46**

(O) Online  
(H) Hybrid (meets 2-3 times on campus during semester)  
(C) In Class (meets weekly in long semester)  
(P) Practica (requires clinical/field experiences)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FULL COURSE LISTING</th>
<th>FA</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>SU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6120 Research Utilization Project (non-thesis only) (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6301 Thesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6302 Thesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6303 Theories of Nursing (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6317 Nursing Research (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6318 Nursing Populations &amp; Settings (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6320 Pathophysiology (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6384 Pharmacotherapeutics (O)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6315 Advanced Assessment for Nurse Practitioners</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6325 Advanced Physical Assessment (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6314 Advanced Nursing Education and Leadership (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6322 Bioethics and Advocacy (O)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6323 Role Practicum in Area of Concentration (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6324 Scholarly Clinical Praxis (Incl. Informatics) (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 5333 Holistic Nursing (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 5326 Nurse Coaching (O)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6321 Student Engagement in Nursing Education (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6326 Nursing Informatics (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6392 Special Topics in Nursing (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6316 Advanced Anal. Issues in Nsg. (O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6490 Capstone (FNP)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6611 FNP I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6712 FNP II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurs 6713 FNP III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Course Requirements for PostMaster’s FNP Role and Semesters Offered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6320 Pathophysiology*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6384 Pharmacotherapeutics*</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6315 Advanced Assessment for Nurse Practitioners*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6316 Issues: Nurse Practitioner Role Development</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6611 Family Nurse Practitioner I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6712 Family Nurse Practitioner II Pediatric and Adolescent</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6713 Nurse Practitioner III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6490 Nurse Practitioner Capstone Practicum</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total of 27-36 credit hours including transfer credits (Includes 675 clock hours of clinical practica)

Courses in *italics* are prerequisites to Family Nurse Practitioner I, II, and III. NURS 6316 may be taken concurrently with Capstone.

*A student who has one or more of the requisite courses on his/her MSN transcript(s) may receive credit toward the FNP requirements if those courses have been taken within *five years* of enrollment in the post Master’s course of study and if they correspond to the WTAMU course descriptions.*
Overview MSN Program

Degree Options
MSN Students may select a comprehensive MSN or Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) MSN.

Comprehensive MSN —with this degree, students are prepared to function at an advanced nursing practice level in complex environments to include: educational roles, administrative roles, and advanced clinical roles. This degree allows students to tailor their nursing education around specific role specializations. Students will take the advanced clinical nursing courses of Pathophysiology, Pharmacotherapeutics and Advanced Assessment to enhance clinical practice at an advanced level. Additional degree requirements prepare graduates to fill roles in administration and/or education. Praxis will be personalized to address each student’s specific learning objectives. Students in this degree option are encouraged to do a thesis rather than the electives if they plan to continue toward a doctorate. The thesis helps prepare for dissertation writing. However, a thesis is not required for the comprehensive MSN. (39-40 credit hours)

Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)—with this specialization, students are prepared for advanced practice nursing providing primary healthcare in diverse areas. (i.e. underserved areas, hospitals, clinics, independent practice.) This results in improved access to primary healthcare for all. Students in this role take nursing core and role specialization courses. Electives are not required because of the expanded credit hours necessitated by the 675- clock hour practicum. (46 credit hours).

Post Master’s FNP is designed as a certificate course of study that enables practicing nurses with an MSN to prepare for credentialing as an FNP. Upon completion of the prescribed course of study, the student’s transcript indicates that he/she has completed the educational preparation as regulated by the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners. Students are then eligible to prepare to take a national FNP certification exam.

The WT master’s program intends to encourage the development of collegial nursing scholarship. Classroom design for the MSN degree emphasizes seminar style, discussions, and group process. Collegial critique is encouraged. You are encouraged to discuss ideas for papers and projects in class and with peers in order to clarify and focus your ideas. It is expected that your final plans for assignments will be discussed with course faculty prior to completion.

Some online courses are offered as well as online support for on-campus courses. All WT online and hybrid courses are indicated by Section 70. Be sure to contact your faculty for class meeting days of hybrid courses. You are encouraged to communicate with your faculty in class and via e-mail or phone. E-mail addresses are shared at your discretion to dialogue with peers. WTAMU uses a platform designed for online courses; it is also used to disseminate course syllabi and other course communication for the in class, hybrid and practica courses.
Most of your syllabi are available prior to the first day of class via WT BuffAdvisor.

NOTE: Graduate faculty require all written work to be completed using Microsoft Word. Other word processing packages will not be acceptable.
Plan of Study
Each student consults with the academic advisor to design a Plan of Study (Degree Plan) that supports their role specialization upon approval by the Associate Dept. Head for Graduate Nursing Studies, College Dean, and Graduate Dean. The Plan of Study is filed at the Graduate School and becomes the basis for the graduation check by the Graduate School. Changes in courses may be made after filing, as long as they are approved by the student’s advisor and the Associate Dept. Head for Graduate Nursing Studies. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain a copy of the approved plan from the academic advisor.

In addition, each graduate student will complete, with their advisor, a Department of Nursing Plan of Study for their role specialization. This plan of study will help the student and their advisor track course progression and plan for effective sequencing of coursework to maximize the learning experience.

Changes in Plan of Study (obtained from advisor)
If it becomes necessary for the student to make changes in the plan of study, a Degree Plan Change form must be completed and approved by the adviser, college Dean, and Dean of the graduate school. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate the filing of this form with the academic advisor.

Students with a Disability
An alternate form of administration of any examination will be available to students who have appropriately followed the procedure for disabled students (See WTAMU Student Handbook).

Filing for Graduation
It is the student’s responsibility to be informed of the filing dates, graduation application dates, and fees required for graduation. This information is available from the Graduate School Office in the Kilgore Research Center, and is printed in the class schedule bulletins. Students are responsible for meeting all deadlines associated with graduation and the completion of the degree. All students who wish to receive a diploma must file for graduation even if they do not intend to attend the graduation ceremony. A graduation checklist is available at Appendix A.

Traineeships
The Department of Nursing applies for federal traineeship yearly and usually receives notification by summer for the following fall. We cannot predict that we will receive the funds, the amount, or the conditions for granting the funds. Letters of information are mailed to eligible students late spring/summer. Students desiring a university scholarship or financial aid should contact the University Financial Aid Office for information. Paid positions as a graduate assistant or research assistant may be available from time to time. Students interested in such assistantships should see the Department of Nursing department head.
**University Financial Aid**
The U.S. Public Health Department has money available for students who agree to pay back in working in health shortage areas. Information is shared on the Graduate Bulletin Board and is available through the Internet. It is possible new funding will appear as the nation addresses the nursing shortage.

**Communication**
Each student is responsible for completing requirements of their plan of study; meeting all deadlines required by the department of nursing, the graduate school, and the university, and for initiating contact with the academic advisor should any problem arise associated with progression or completion of the master’s degree.

Students must keep the Graduate School and the Nursing Department informed of changes in address and telephone numbers, and the status of nursing licensure. Notification of changes should be in writing to the Registrar, Dean of the Graduate School and the Assoc. Dept. Head of the Nursing Graduate Program respectively. Change in name is done in person at the Registrar’s Office, 1st Floor, Old Main. A marriage license or divorce decree is necessary for a name change. Changes in address or phone can be made on-line to the Registrar’s Office.

Communication with faculty can be accomplished several ways:
- e-mail is the most efficient.
  - First initial, lastname@wtamu.edu
  - Example: jdoe@wtamu.edu
- Phone: may leave a voice mail message speaking clearly with a call back number.
- Fax: Department of Nursing Fax 806-651-2632

**ACADEMIC ADVISING AND THE STUDENT’S FILE**
Each student is assigned an academic advisor from the graduate nursing faculty. The advisor will assist in the preparation of your Plan of Study and advise you prior to each registration period. Students meet with advisors by phone, e-mail, or office visit to discuss their plans for the following semester. The advisor then “green lights” you; which allows you to register online from home or the computers in the JBK or other spots on campus. Students also meet with their advisor if they wish to amend their Degree Plan. Changing one’s Degree Plan will only be considered on an available space basis and is not guaranteed once admitted to course work.

Each student has an academic file in the Department of Nursing and one in the university Graduate School Office. Students are responsible for seeing that the appropriate information has been submitted to both.
Academic Advisement and Student Record

It is the student's responsibility to provide the documentation and information required in the student folder and to keep this information up to date. Following is a checklist of information that must be filed in each student folder.

- Application to the Department of Nursing
- Plan of Study
- Transcript of Statistics Grade
- State Nursing License Number
- Evidence of current immunizations/titers
- Evidence of current CPR certification
- Undergraduate Degree Transcripts (Not required for Graduates of WTAMU BSN Program)

Some file items (Td, TB, Influenza, CPR, RN licensure and liability insurance) will require periodic updating. It is the student’s responsibility to insure that the academic file is current. There will be a restriction on course registration for students with files that are not current.
# IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NURSING STUDENTS

The Department of Nursing MUST have a photocopy of completed immunizations and screening prior to the FIRST DAY OF CLASSES. Required Vaccinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccination</th>
<th>Schedule for Vaccinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tetanus-diptheria toxoid (Td/Tdap)*</td>
<td>One (1) dose of Tdap is required within the last ten (10) years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles*</td>
<td>Students who were born on or after January 1, 1957, must show, prior to patient contact, acceptable evidence of vaccination of two (2) doses of measles-containing vaccine administered since January 1, 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubella*</td>
<td>Students must show, prior to patient contact, acceptable evidence of vaccination of one (1) dose of rubella vaccine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumps*</td>
<td>Students who were born on or after January 1, 1957, must show, prior to patient contact, acceptable evidence of vaccination of one (1) dose of mumps vaccine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B*</td>
<td>Students shall receive a complete series of hepatitis B vaccine prior to the start of direct patient care or show serologic confirmation of immunity to hepatitis B virus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella (chickenpox)*</td>
<td>Students shall receive two (2) doses of varicella vaccine unless the first dose was received prior to thirteen years of age or a serological test that is positive for varicella antibody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TB Test - Mantoux</td>
<td>On admission to the Department of Nursing and annually during clinical courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Influenza Vaccine</td>
<td>Students will be required to have an annual flu vaccine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, see the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention dated December 26, 1997, Vol. 46, and the *Supplement to Hospital Infection Control*, January, 1998; or call the Texas Department of Health Immunization Division, 1-800-252-9152.


Rev. 11/14
WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY - DEPARTMENT OF NURSING
Admission Requirements: including recent changes from legislature & graduate school. (see university catalog for detailed requirements)

Application Procedure—obtain forms online, or by e-mail or regular mail from us. Submit appropriate forms (including transcripts if not WTAMU graduate) to:

University
Graduate School
Department of Nursing

Very early response
Nursing "Secondary Admission" is included in the graduate school application
Approved Statistics Course (leveling course) must be taken prior to admission

International applicants must go through the international student office prior to admission. Transfer applicants must meet residency requirements.

Removal of Conditional Admission Status
If admitted conditionally, the student must supply all of the required information listed on the letter of admission from the nursing department on or before the day of registration for the first semester of enrollment.

Students who were admitted conditionally by either the graduate school or the department of nursing must complete 12 hours of graduate courses with a minimum of a grade of B in each course taken. Failure to do so after completing 12 hours will result in suspension from further graduate study. Conditional nursing admission may have leveling course work assigned before progression in graduate course work is permitted.

Registered Nurse Licensure:
Graduate students are responsible for possessing a verifiable unencumbered Texas Registered Nurse License or be registered in the state in which they practice. Students are responsible for notifying the department of any change in their licensure status throughout their enrollment. Failure to do so is grounds for immediate dismissal from the graduate program.

Admissions/progression policy:
Students in the graduate program of the Department of Nursing at WTAMU must earn a grade of B or higher in graduate nursing courses. A grade of “C” or lower is considered a failing grade and necessitates repeating that course prior to progressing in the program. This course must be retaken at WTAMU and will not be considered transferable from any other institution of higher education. Two grades of “C” or lower in any graduate courses will result in the student’s dismissal from the program.
Students who drop a graduate level course for any reason after the 12th class day (or after the 4th class day during summer sessions) must submit a letter requesting reinstatement to the graduate nursing program. Reinstatement is not guaranteed and requests for reinstatement are considered on a case by case basis.

**Progression in the nursing graduate program:**
If a nursing course is listed as a co-requisite for any other nursing course, withdrawal from one of the co-requisite course requires an immediate withdrawal from the associated co-requisite course.

**Grounds for Dismissal**
1. Failure to meet academic requirements.
2. Clinical/practicum performance that does not uphold professional and state board nursing standards.
3. Failure to report change in status of registered nurse license. A change in status, even if reported, might result in dismissal.
4. Earning a grade less than B in two nursing graduate courses.

All graduate students are reminded that as Registered Nurses they are expected to practice within the scope of their state Nursing Practice Act. Any deviation from this Act may result in disciplinary actions, including the possibility of suspension, probation or dismissal from the graduate nursing program or university. Students are further reminded that unprofessional conduct and violations of the Texas Nursing Practice Act may be reportable to the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners.

**Transfer Credit**
It is possible for a student to transfer up to 12 semester credit hours of the required credit hours (exclusive of thesis and independent study) toward the master’s degree. Only courses in which the student earned an A or B may be transferred and all transfer courses must be approved by the assoc. dept. head for graduate nursing, college Dean, and graduate school Dean. Credit hours obtained more than 6 years prior to enrollment cannot apply toward a master’s degree. Eighteen hours of course work at the 6300 level must be taken at WTAMU. Previous coursework in pathophysiology, advanced physical assessment, and/or pharmacotherapeutics, whether done at WTAMU or another university, **cannot** be applied to the FNP role specialization unless the program of study can be completed within a six year time frame from when the first of these courses was begun.

**Time Limitation for Course Credits**
Master’s degree requirements must be completed within a period of **six years** beginning with the date the first degree credit course is taken. If courses taken prior to enrollment are transferred for credit, the time limit is calculated from the date of the first transferred course.

**Course Work Experiences and Expectations**
At the graduate level students can expect the seminar format for most classes. Classroom interactions are less information distribution and more analysis and critique of information.
Class participation is expected and evaluated; therefore, it is essential that each student come to class having critically read the assigned material. The quality of class participation is generally evaluated on the basis of the student’s defensible position about the class issue or topic. Professional experiences are often a starting point for analysis of a topic, however, the graduate student is expected to participate in class beyond his/her past experience and extend his/her thinking to include theories, research, or a scholarly search for new solutions.

**Nametags and Photo IDs**
Graduate students doing their practica must wear a WTAMU Department of Nursing nametag. These can be ordered through the Bivins Nursing Learning Center at a cost of $11.00 each. Students need to allow at least three weeks for delivery. All nametags have the WTAMU emblem, the student’s name, WTAMU Department of Nursing, RN, BSN credentials if desired. An order form for nametags is provided on page 20 of this handbook.

**Independent Studies**
Independent study courses may not be taken as a substitute for course work designated on the plan of study. Independent studies will be approved only for experiences that enhance research skills, role specialization or otherwise meet a student’s unique learning needs. The student desiring the independent study must first seek academic advising. Upon approval of the academic adviser, the student should then identify an appropriate graduate faculty member to guide and evaluate the independent study. The student is required to meet with the faculty member throughout the semester at times mutually agreed on. The student must show evidence of working on the independent study throughout the semester and must complete the study within one semester.

**Incomplete Grades**
In general, incomplete grades are intended for use only in the event of serious illness or extreme personal crisis of the student or household member. In precepted practica, an incomplete may be necessary due to time constraints of the preceptor. The student must sign a request for the incomplete and establish, with the course instructor, the time requirements for completion of the course. WTAMU allows one year for the completion of the course before the incomplete becomes an F, however, it is strongly recommended that the date for completion be established as the minimum time required to complete course requirements. It is the student’s responsibility to maintain contact with the faculty member regarding progression on the incomplete and to notify faculty of any circumstances hindering progression.
Name: ___________________________________________________
Credentials: _______________________________________________
(e.g. RN, BSN   RN, CEN   RN, CCRN   etc.)

Print your name carefully!
Send this form along with a check for $11 to:
Lisa Robinson RN, MSN
WT BOX 60969
Canyon, TX 79016

Mailing address for nametag delivery:
_______________________
_______________________
_______________________
_______________________

For faster processing - put your Buff Id number on your check.
It may take up to 4 weeks to receive your nametag - please order early!
Comprehensive Examination--All graduate students at WTAMU are required to pass a comprehensive examination in the department of their major. Graduate faculty in the department of nursing have made the decision that Comprehensive Examinations will be comprised of a written comprehensive examination.

Comprehensive Examinations are administered at the end of Fall and Spring semesters and taken the semester the student plans to graduate. Local students will sit for comprehensive examination on a scheduled day in the computer lab of the Bivens Nursing Learning Center (BNLC). Distance students will sit for the exam in a department approved proctored setting in their community. If the student plans to graduate in a summer term, the student will complete the comprehensive examination during the preceding spring semester. The comprehensive examination allow students to demonstrate meeting the program learning outcomes of using nursing’s unique body of knowledge to improve patient care. It consists of three questions which address the learning outcomes listed on page 8 of this handbook.

In addition to comprehensive examination/thesis, all students will have a capstone practicum experience. Scoring rubrics for these experiences are provided for the Comprehensive MSN (major code 5703/5713) and the Family Nurse Practitioner (major code 5707/5717) on the following pages.

Additional information regarding the written comprehensive exam including a study guide is located in Appendix B.
Student: _________________________________________________________________
Faculty Member: ______________________________________ Date: ________________

Required Score: 40 (80%)     Earned Score Faculty Member: _______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Criteria</th>
<th>0=no behaviors evident</th>
<th>2=20% behaviors evident</th>
<th>4-40% behaviors evident</th>
<th>6=60% behaviors evident</th>
<th>8=80% behaviors evident</th>
<th>10=100% behaviors evident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Learning Outcome 3**
**Ethical Decision-Making**
Practice ethical decision making by identifying and analyzing ethical dilemmas and assuming responsibility for one’s own practice.

**Learning Outcome 4**
**Operationalize professional role development** by implementing advanced nursing practice in role specialization. This can include but not be limited to fiscal and human resource development, quality improvement, staff development, instructional design, informatics, clinical proficiency, evidence-based practice, and acting as advocate, consultant, and collaborator.

**Learning Outcome 6**
**Cultural Competence**
Appreciate human diversity in health and illness by assuring that systems meet the needs of populations in a culturally relevant manner.

**Learning Outcome 7**
**Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes**
Recognizes and acts as a part of an interprofessional team.

**Learning Outcome 8**
**Integrate Clinical Prevention and Population Health**
Integrating health promotion and disease prevention by utilizing epidemiological data in developing and evaluating culturally competent nursing care.

Faculty Member Signature: _________________________________________________

Elaboration *(please continue on separate page):*
Department of Nursing  
Graduate Nursing Program  
Practicum Evaluation – Family Nurse Practitioner (5707/5717)

Student: _________________________________________________________________

Faculty Member: ______________________________________ Date: ________________

Required Score: 32 (80%)     Earned Score Faculty Member: __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Criteria</th>
<th>0=no behaviors evident</th>
<th>2=20% behaviors evident</th>
<th>4=40% behaviors evident</th>
<th>6=60% behaviors evident</th>
<th>8=80% behaviors evident</th>
<th>10=100% behaviors evident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Decision-Making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice ethical decision making by <em>identifying and analyzing</em> ethical dilemmas and <em>assuming</em> responsibility for one’s own practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Learning Outcome 4,9              |                        |                          |                          |                          |                          |                           |
| Operationalize profession role development of Family Nurse Practitioner by *implementing* advanced practice as clinician, teacher, researcher, advocate, consultant, collaborator, and manager of systems. |

| Learning Outcome 6                |                        |                          |                          |                          |                          |                           |
| Cultural Competence               |                        |                          |                          |                          |                          |                           |
| Appreciate human diversity in health and illness by *assuring* that systems meet the needs of populations in a culturally relevant manner. |

| Learning Outcome 7                |                        |                          |                          |                          |                          |                           |
| Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes |                        |                          |                          |                          |                          |                           |
| Recognizes and acts as a part of an interprofessional team. |

| Learning Outcome 8                |                        |                          |                          |                          |                          |                           |
| Integrate Clinical Prevention and Population Health |                        |                          |                          |                          |                          |                           |
| Integrating health promotion and disease prevention by *utilizing* epidemiological data in *developing and evaluating* culturally competent nursing care |

Faculty Member Signature: _________________________________________________

Comments:

25
Thesis Committee Guidelines – WTAMU Department of Nursing

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for the functioning of thesis committees in the Department of Nursing, WTAMU. These guidelines augment the guidelines provided by the Graduate School, WTAMU. Development of a thesis committee, the function of the thesis committee, and thesis defense expectations are included. Thesis is accomplished during the final two semesters of study and consists of conducting original research.

Thesis Committee

Appointment of the Committee

A student who expresses interest in completing a thesis will be directed to the Associate Department Head for Graduate Studies, Research, and Grants. The student will complete the application for thesis prior to meeting with the Associate Department Head (Appendix A). The Associate Department Head will guide the student in selecting a thesis chair and thesis committee based on faculty expertise in either subject matter or methodology. The student will then get approval from the members of the thesis committee (Appendix B).

The two thesis courses (NURS 6301 and NURS 6302) should coincide with the students projected last two semesters of coursework in the nursing graduate program.

Number of Members

Each master's thesis committee shall be composed of a minimum of three members. A fourth and/or fifth member may be added to the committee when deemed appropriate/necessary to provide required expertise.

Committee Membership

Committee membership can include faculty from outside the nursing department, but the thesis chair must be a graduate faculty of the Department of Nursing. In order for a member to chair a thesis, he/she must have previously served as a second or third member of a thesis committee.

Thesis Committee Responsibilities

The initial responsibility of the committee is to meet and determine the feasibility of the topic and the thesis plan or proposal, and to permit the student to proceed only after such determination has been made. The committee shall sign off on the student's plan or proposal and a copy should be kept in the student's file in the department. The signing of this document signifies that the student has permission to proceed with the study as outlined in the plan.

The committee shall determine whether the student's research is subject to the university policy on research on human or animal subjects and advise the student accordingly.

The committee shall determine the adequacy of the bibliography.

The committee shall review and approve the methodology and any instrument or questionnaire used in data collection.
Committee members are responsible for reviewing thesis drafts, and providing feedback in a timely manner. Depending on circumstances, there should be no more than a two-week turnaround review time for each of the committee members to review the manuscript for a thesis. In addition, committee members should meet periodically, as determined by the thesis chair, to discuss progress of the student. The student need not be present at such meetings, but may upon request.

The responsibility of the committee as a whole is to examine the student's work and to meet and make a final determination of the acceptability of the thesis, and to arrange for any oral defense of the thesis in accordance with Graduate School policies.

It should be communicated to the student that it is their responsibility to observe graduate deadlines for the submission of draft and final copies of the thesis. A reasonable amount of time (not more than two weeks) should be allowed for each of the committee members to review the manuscript.

The Chair

The committee chair should inform the student regarding proprietary interests and ownership of data or research product as appropriate, and reach agreement about potential publication of this material. Formal written memoranda of understanding are desirable. This needs to be done as early in the process as possible, preferably at the time the proposal is accepted.

The student and the committee chair, insofar as it is possible, should arrive at an agreement on an approximate time schedule, including meetings of the committee, for the accomplishment of thesis/dissertation-related work for each semester or term that the student is engaged in such work. The committee should meet throughout the thesis process. The chair shall have primary responsibility for the supervision of the student's work, setting deadlines, and guiding the student's progress.

The chair shall assume the role of "principal investigator" when the student's research involves human subjects and shall insure the student has completed CITI/ethics training as part of the completion of the Institutional Review Board application process. The chair shall ensure that Graduate School policies in this area are carefully observed.

The chair shall inform the student of university regulations regarding the need to maintain continuous enrollment while working on the thesis.

The chair shall inform the student of the Graduate School process for completion of thesis.

In consultation with the other members of the committee, the chair shall determine the final grade on the thesis and see that it is properly reported to the Associate Department Head. The Associate Department Head will provide appropriate notification to the Graduate School.

The chair is responsible for evaluating the student's progress before assigning an "IP" and final grade for thesis. All “IP” grades will be changed, by the Chair, once the student has successfully defended their thesis.

The chair shall inform the student of the APA style manual along with any deviations for the style manual required by the department for formatting the thesis.
Disputes

In the event that a dispute or disagreement arises between a student and a member of the committee or between members of the committee, the committee chair shall call a meeting of the committee and the student for the purpose of resolving the problem.

If the dispute cannot be resolved through this process, or if the proposed solution is unacceptable to the student or one of the committee members, the committee should consult the Associate Department Head. If the dispute remains unresolved, the Department Head and Dean, Graduate School may be consulted.

Termination of the Committee

The committee has completed its obligations when the final manuscript has been approved by the Graduate Dean, each member has signed the approval page for the publication copy of the thesis/dissertation, and the thesis/dissertation grade is recorded. If the student fails to progress, the thesis chair may terminate the committee.
Application for Thesis
WTAMU Department of Nursing

Student: ___________________________  Date: ______________

Student ID#: ___________________________

Proposed Research Project (Include topic, research question/hypothesis and methodology):

TOPIC:
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

RESEARCH QUESTION/HYPOTHESIS:
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

METHODOLOGY:
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________
Signature
Thesis Committee Assignment
WTAMU Department of Nursing

Candidate:______________________________________________  Date:__________________

ID#________________                                      Estimated Date of Graduation:__________________

The above student is advanced to candidacy, is in good standing at WTAMU, Graduate School, and Department of Nursing, and is recommended for thesis NURS 6301 assignment.

The student and committee members have read the thesis guidelines of the Graduate School and approve the following proposed topic:

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Human subjects training has been completed:  Yes/No/NA  (circle one)  Date:____________________
IRB approval has been obtained:  Yes/ No/ NA   (circle one) Date:____________________

Committee
Chair

____________________________________  _______________________________________
Print Name                                                                                   Signature

Members

____________________________________  _______________________________________  
Print Name                                                                                   Signature

____________________________________  _______________________________________  
Print Name                                                                                   Signature

____________________________________  _______________________________________  
Print Name                                                                                   Signature

Approved:

_______________________________________
Associate Department Head, Graduate Studies, Research and Grants
Purpose of the Thesis

The Thesis is the alternative to the Research Paper in the Graduate Nursing Program. It offers the opportunity to (1) access and critically review current and relevant literature regarding a specific research question through the lens of a theoretical framework, (2) design and complete a research project at the master’s level, and (3) determine how the findings from the study will improve nursing practice. The master’s thesis does not have to be independent or original research, but should be the new application of ideas. The Thesis and the related oral comprehensive examination (Oral Comprehensive Examination) offer the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to write, and communicate orally (AACN Essentials for Master’s Education). The thesis must be written using the guidelines of the WTAMU Graduate School. Following are the nursing requirements:

Developing the Research Idea

1. The student is encouraged to initiate a meeting with the Assoc. Dept. Head for Graduate Nursing early in the semester prior to enrolling in thesis. Once the topic and methodology are approved, the student may be referred to graduate faculty with expertise in the content area or the methodology for course enrollment. Meetings with the graduate coordinator or other graduate faculty are encouraged to facilitate this process. Should human subjects review be necessary, the student will assure that the IRB forms are completed and approved by the IRB Committee before collection of any data.

2. Once the thesis has been completed and the thesis chair and the graduate student are satisfied that it is ready, paper copies of the final draft will be forwarded to other graduate faculty at least 10 working days prior to thesis defense.

3. The Oral Comprehensive Examination (defense), will be scheduled within the last two weeks of the semester. At the Oral Comprehensive Examination:
   a. The student will make a formal presentation of the thesis (approximately 20 - 25 minutes)
   b. If the oral comprehensive exam is opened to those outside the committee, questions will be entertained by the graduate student (10 minutes), after which the guests will leave the room.
   c. The graduate faculty members will engage in scholarly discussion with the graduate student until their questions about the study have been satisfactorily addressed.
   d. The graduate faculty members will confer in private, and students will be informed by letter of their performance on comprehensive examination. The student’s score will be determined by averaging the scores from the graduate faculty.
   e. The outcomes of the oral comprehensive examination are: approval with editorial changes, conditional approval with substantive changes, and approval denied. Note: a thesis may only be defended two times.
4. Upon approval, all graduate faculty members will sign the “Thesis Title Page” and the “Report of Comprehensive Examination” (forms found in the appendices of the Graduate Handbook for the Nursing Programs). It is the responsibility of the student to bring a copy of the forms, printed on final draft paper (at least 3½% bond) to the oral comprehensive exam ready for signature.
QUALITATIVE THESIS GUIDELINES

Utilize thesis guidelines for the Graduate School Thesis Approval Form with Signatures
Dedication (if any)
Thesis Title Page
Acknowledgements (if any)
Abstract
Table of Contents (including appendices)
List of Tables
List of Figures

Chapter I: Introduction

The introduction to the thesis provides the reader with an understanding of the phenomena being studied, its significance to the nursing profession, and the research question. The thesis should address the following areas fully:

1. Identification of the phenomena of interest
2. Description of the author’s interest in the phenomena
3. Identification of the purpose of the study
4. Identification of the research question
5. Sensitizing definitions of the concepts surrounding the phenomena
6. Description of the significance of the study to the nursing profession
7. Proposed theoretical framework that will guide the study
8. Identify assumptions and limitations (please note that the design or paradigm cannot be a limitation, so do not identify small sample size associated with qualitative research as a limitation)

Chapter II: Integrative Review of the Literature

For the thesis, write an introductory paragraph that identifies the areas that will be addressed. These areas should contain at a minimum the research literature regarding the theoretical framework and the concepts inherent in the research question(s). Each of these areas should be addressed under its own subheading. The following areas of the research literature are to be discussed under each subheading:

1. Comparison of the Quantitative Research Literature: Compare the research articles to one another, looking for points of agreement and disagreement – paying attention to author/purpose of the study and its significance to nursing, major findings, populations, independent and dependent variables, measurement tools, data analysis, rigor of the study, significance, and effect size

2. Comparison of the Qualitative Research Literature: Compare the research articles to one another, looking for points of agreement and disagreement – paying attention to author, purpose of the study and its significance to nursing, research questions, qualitative paradigm used, aspects of rigor, and themes that emerge.
3. **Synthesis of the Relevant Literature:** Integrated discussion of the major findings and their application to an issue of significance to nursing. Consolidate major areas of agreement and disagreement from both the quantitative and qualitative literature relevant to the student’s project. Discuss ways in which the qualitative and quantitative research confirms or contradicts each other.

4. **Summary:** Discuss the existing state of literature, identify gaps in the knowledge base, and make a link to your study.

**Note:** In qualitative studies it is expected that the review of literature will be expanded upon conclusion of the study to explore concepts that have emerged through the study.

**Chapter III: Methods**

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of how the study was conducted including:

1. Introductory paragraph outlining the material that will be included in the chapter
2. Overview of the qualitative paradigm through which the phenomena has been studied, including the philosophical background of the paradigm
3. Description of the setting
4. Description of the researcher’s process for gaining access to the population
5. Criteria for inclusion in the study
6. Plan for data collection and analysis
7. Presentation of ethical considerations
   a. Describe the review process that was used
   b. Discuss the risks and benefits, and identify steps taken to minimize any risks
   c. Place examples of cover letter(s) and /or consent forms in Appendices

**Chapter IV: Results**

The results chapter is written upon completion of the study, and provides the reader with a full description of the findings of the study. This chapter will include:

1. An introductory paragraph to overview areas discussed in the chapter
2. Description of the sample characteristics
3. Description of data analysis procedures Results for each research question(s), reported according to the paradigm used: themes that emerged, propositions or theories that emerged, etc. The author should write this section using thick, rich description including quotations that explicated the themes or categories
4. Additional findings that are not related to the research question(s).
5. Discuss the methodological rigor of this study.
Chapter V: Discussion

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of how the researcher interprets the findings, implications for further study, additional review of the literature that was done upon completion of the study to address emerging concepts, and relevance to the profession of nursing. It should address these areas:

1. Introductory paragraph
2. Interpretation of findings
3. Literature review for concepts emerging during the study that were not addressed in the original review of literature
4. Relevance of findings to the nursing profession
5. Identification of specific recommendations for additional research

References
Appendices
QUANTITATIVE THESIS GUIDELINES

Utilize thesis guidelines for the Graduate School
Thesis Approval Form with Signatures
Dedication (if any)
Thesis Title Page
Acknowledgements (if any)
Table of Contents (including appendices)
List of Tables
List of Figures

Chapter I: Introduction

The introduction to the thesis provides the reader with an understanding of the problem being studied, its significance to the nursing profession, and the research question(s) and hypotheses. The thesis should address the following areas fully:

1. Background and significance of the problem
2. Statement of the purpose of the study
3. Clear delineation of the research question(s) and / or hypothesis(es)
4. Proposed theoretical framework that will guide the study
5. Definitions of major variables or concepts, both theoretical and operational
6. State major assumptions, limitations, and delimitations

Chapter II: Integrative Review of the Literature

For the thesis, write an introductory paragraph that identifies the areas that will be addressed. These areas should contain at a minimum the research literature regarding the theoretical framework and the variables being studied. Each of these areas should be addressed under its own subheading. The following areas of the research literature are to be discussed under each subheading:

1. **Comparison of the Quantitative Research Literature:** Compare the research articles to one another, looking for points of agreement and disagreement — paying attention to author/purpose of the study and its significance to nursing, major findings, populations, independent and dependent variables, measurement tools, data analysis, rigor of the study, significance, and effect size
2. **Comparison of the Qualitative Research Literature:** Compare the research articles to one another, looking for points of agreement and disagreement — paying attention to author, purpose of the study and its significance to nursing, research questions, qualitative paradigm used, aspects of rigor, and themes that emerge.
3. **Synthesis of the Relevant Literature:** Integrated discussion of the major findings and their application to an issue of significance to nursing. Consolidate major areas of agreement and disagreement from both the quantitative and qualitative literature relevant to the student’s project. Discuss ways in which the qualitative and quantitative research confirms or contradicts each other.
Summary: Discuss the existing state of the literature, identify gaps in the knowledge base, and make a link to your study.

Chapter III: Methods and Procedures

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of how the study was conducted, including:

1. Introductory paragraph outlining the material that will be included in the chapter.
2. Description of the research design
3. Description of the setting
4. Discussion of the measurement methods
5. Describe each measurement tool, its scoring, and level of data provided
   a. Attach copies of all measurement instruments in Appendices
   b. Attach letters of permission to use measurement instruments in Appendices
   c. Discuss evaluation of validity and reliability of each measurement tool
6. Discussion of procedures
   a. Explain in detail treatments used
   b. Provide step-by-step description of procedures
   c. Place samples of data collection forms in the Appendices
7. Discussion of the proposed methods of data analysis
   a. Statistical testing proposed for each question and/or hypothesis
   b. Plans for data management (use of computerized statistical program?)
8. Presentation of ethical considerations
   a. Describe the review process that was use.
   b. Discuss the risks and benefits, and identify steps taken to minimize any risks
   c. Place examples of cover letter(s) and/or consent forms in Appendices
9. Discussion of limitations

Chapter IV: Results

The results chapter is written upon completion of the study, and provides the reader with a full description of the findings of the study. This chapter will include:

1. Introductory paragraph outlining the material that will be included in the chapter
2. Description of the sample characteristics reflected in the data
3. Description of the results of statistical analysis for each research question or hypothesis
4. Address issues of reliability and validity of your instruments as they performed with your sample in this study (this is a significant piece of this chapter).

Chapter V: Discussion

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of how the researcher interprets the findings, implications for further study, and relevance to the nursing profession. It should address these areas:

1. Introductory paragraph
2. Interpretations of major findings
3. Discuss conclusions
4. Relevance of findings to the nursing profession
5. Identification of specific recommendations for additional research
6. Conclusion

References
Appendices
Appendices
Appendix A

Graduation Checklist
✓ Have met Requirements for the Master of Science in Nursing Degree (MSN):
  □ 39-40 credit hours for Administration & Education Role Specializations, 46 hours for the Family Nurse Practitioner Role
  □ 18 hours at the 6300 level taken at WTAMU (these 18 hours do NOT include transfer in credits)
  □ Minimum grade of B in all graduate courses
  □ Degree completed within 6 years from date of first course listed on plan of study for MSN degree. This includes any courses transferred in.
  □ Thesis or non-thesis option
  □ Pass Comprehensive Examination (research utilization project or thesis, oral presentation )
  □ In good standing with State Board of Nursing
✓ Current Degree Plan, forms have been processed for any changes from original degree plan.
✓ Course work including practicum completed.
✓ Comprehensive Examination- Synthesis:
  □ Intent to enroll in thesis or research utilization project; thesis will be enrolled in for a minimum of 2 consecutive semesters prior to graduation; research utilization project must be enrolled in fall or spring semester of projected graduation semester; if planning to graduate in August, synthesis must be completed spring semester
Graduations are held May, August and December
✓ Comprehensive oral exams are scheduled April and November. Discuss Synthesis/Thesis paper plans prior to due date with advisor
  □ Oral presentation of synthesis/thesis
✓ Thesis filed in Graduate Office by due date (for those who selected thesis option)
✓ Apply for graduation—must do in order to have a diploma made even if you do not plan to participate in the ceremony. Apply at least by semester plan to graduate: Oct. 1, March 1, July 1.
✓ Order cap, gown, hood for graduation ceremony (last 2 items or ordered at bookstore)
✓ Order WTAMU pin (order in October or February)
Appendix B
MSN Comprehensive Exam Study Guide

Purpose
The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to ensure that the student is able to demonstrate mastery of the following MSN Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes.

MSN Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes
Upon program completion, the graduate will be prepared to:
1. Incorporate the sciences and humanities into an MSN practice.
2. Demonstrate organization and systems leadership.
3. Incorporate quality improvement and safety into practice.
4. Translate and integrate scholarship into practice.
5. Utilize informatics and healthcare technology into practice.
6. Shape healthcare policy and advocacy.
7. Engage in interprofessional collaboration.
8. Synthesize disease prevention strategies and population health promotion.
9. Practice at the level of a Master’s prepared nurse.

Planning for Success
Successful completion of the graduate nursing program is based upon synthesis and application of master’s level advanced nursing knowledge taught throughout the program. The comprehensive exam validates that the MSN Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes have been met and knowledge synthesis has occurred.

To study for comprehensive exams, a thorough review of all major core courses is required. Additionally, students are reminded that the best source of review material comes from the list of recommended study textbooks. Students are cautioned not to limit their study resources to summaries of the concepts listed in the study guides below. It is recommended that you utilize your course notes and textbooks from your previous courses.

Testing Procedure
The MSN Comprehensives exams are offered fall and spring. Dates for testing are posted in at the beginning of each semester in the NURS 6120 course. MSN Comprehensive exams are written at the BNLC and are limited to four hours. Students are required to have a Buff Gold Card to sign into the testing room and access the computer. Each exam is blindly graded by at least two faculty members. Students who are unsuccessful will be required to register for NURS 6120 in the next semester that it is available. The exam will be made up of three (3) essay questions. Each question will be answerable in about two double spaced pages.
Research Component Study Guide

Students completing the Master of Science in Nursing degree at WTAMU should be able to:

1. Identify a researchable problem and explain the process and purpose of a review of literature.
2. Generate research questions from theory and practice.
3. Develop a researchable problem statement (PICO/PICOT) or research question and justify that problem selection.
4. Relate research design (experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, descriptive, etc.) to the project objectives, research question(s) and hypotheses.
5. Discuss the validity and reliability of data collection measurements/instruments.
6. Identify and define sampling techniques and strategies as these apply to the research process.
7. Compare and contrast qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and be able to provide a rationale for their use in a research project.
8. Identify and differentiate independent and dependent variables in a variety of research problem statements.
9. Interpret statistical methods employed in research studies. Be able to derive meaning and interpret statistical findings. Examples include p value, confidence interval, effect size, and power.
10. Differentiate between statistical and clinical significance.
11. Describe an approach (systematic plan) for applying research findings in practice setting, including evaluation of outcomes.
12. Describe the purpose and objectives for evidence-based practice as contributing to the development of nursing science.
13. Appraise research studies for quality and level of evidence. Be able to discuss the following: a) type of research, b) need for the study, c) theoretical framework, d) sampling technique, e) study design, f) strengths and limitations of the findings, g) interpretation of outcomes, and h) recommendations for practice or future research.
14. Discuss considerations for inclusion of articles in the review of literature section.

You should expect to be asked to discuss any of the above concepts in detail as well as provide substantive examples and/or analysis of research studies and findings for application in practice.

List of Recommended Research/Statistics Textbooks - Only one textbook is needed.

Any general research and statistics textbook written for the graduate level nurse will suffice for
comprehensive exam preparation. In addition to reviewing a recommended textbook, we suggest students evaluate published research articles located in the Cornette Library database for concepts from the above list.


**Theory Component Study Guide**

The purpose of theory is to guide nursing research and practice, so the theory should reflect a reality that is substantial and significant. In other words, it should possess clinical or practical importance. Students must understand the underlying premise of a theory in order to appropriately apply that theory to the research process. Select two or more (nursing or borrowed) theories that you feel will guide you professionally and review the following information about each so you can discuss how best to incorporate use of theory into a practice or research problem. Consider the following list of theories/theorists:

Nursing:
Jean Watson’ Caring Theory
Rosemary Rizzo Parse Human Becoming Theory
Margaret Newman – Theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness
Betty Neuman Systems Model
Nola Pender – Health promotion Model
Martha Rogers's Science of Unitary Human Beings
Swanson – Theory of Caring
Boykin and Schoenhoffer – Nursing as Caring
Patterson and Zderad – Humanistic Nursing
Vulnerability Model
Borrowed:
Transtheoretical Model
Health Belief Model
Travis Wellness Model
Systems Theory

Application of Theory in Professional Practice

1. Is the theory clear and consistent? Explain.

2. What are the major concepts of the theory and how are they defined?

3. Are relationships described for these concepts?

4. What assumptions, values, and/or beliefs underlie the development of the theory?

5. Does the theory address a problem that is essential to nursing practice?

6. How might the selected theory serve as a framework for a research question?

7. How does the theory help identify meaningful and relevant areas for study?

8. Does the theory provide a plausible approach to management of health problems and/or health promotion?

9. Does the theory help to generate a nursing diagnosis and how would it be usable in a plan of care?

10. Compare and contrast two nursing theories.

11. Appropriately apply a health promotion theory to a given situation (for example, an individual, family, or community healthcare issue or problem).

You should expect to be asked to discuss any of the above concepts in detail as well as provide substantive examples of application of theory in practice. Additionally, you should be able to compare the selection and application of diverse theories under similar circumstances i.e. discuss how a project will change based on theory selection.

List of Recommended Theory Textbooks – Only one of the following theory textbooks is necessary.

Any general nursing theories textbook written for the graduate level nurse will suffice for comprehensive exam preparation. In addition to reviewing a recommended textbook, we
suggest students evaluate published research articles located in the Cornette Library database for application of selected theory.


---

**Population Health Study Guide**

1. Know basic epidemiological data such as IMR, longevity rate, top 3 causes of death for state of residence and US. Know top 3 cause of death of third world countries (in general).

2. Know and discuss meaning of IMR, Causes of death at local, national and global level.

3. Differentiate between incidences, prevalence, Case fatality Rate (CFR), and index case. Endemic, epidemic, pandemic, epidemiological designs, epidemiological triangle, chain of infection and web of causation. Be able to discuss, apply, and utilize these concepts in a case scenario.

4. Apply a community needs assessment to a case study.

5. Discuss issues related to health literacy and vulnerable populations from a local, national, and global perspective.

6. Discuss health care policy from the global perspective.

7. Be able to identify multiple elements that affect healthcare policy decisions.

You should expect to be asked to discuss any of the above concepts in detail. Additionally, be able to discuss planning necessary for conducting a community needs assessment as well as for utilizing any of the above. or for any of application of the information above.
**Recommended Textbook**

Any general nursing public health or population’s textbook written for the graduate level nurse will suffice for comprehensive exam preparation. In addition to a textbook, it is considered very helpful for students to review NURS 6318 course notes and websites referenced within the course.


Any general nursing public health or population’s textbook written for the graduate level nurse will suffice for comprehensive exam preparation. In addition to a textbook, it is considered very helpful for students to review NURS 6318 course notes and websites referenced within the course.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Point Scale</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Student’s Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All required information is clearly and completely provided.</td>
<td>All required information is addressed and factually correct. Substantive response with logical framework.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses are supported by examples, details and illustrations</td>
<td>Examples, details or illustrations demonstrate comprehensive and in depth understanding of topic explored.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking is evident</td>
<td>Demonstrates exemplary ability to evaluate and interpret information. Comprehensive analysis. Illustrates outstanding ability to solve problems systematically.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to synthesize component ideas into a viable solution is evident</td>
<td>Outstanding ability to assemble evidence for solution creation. Conclusions are logical and reflect an informed evaluation of evidence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation, grammar, sentence structure reflect graduate level writing</td>
<td>No errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, usage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>8-7</th>
<th>6-5</th>
<th>4-3</th>
<th>2-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All required information is clearly and completely provided.</td>
<td>One or more elements of required information are omitted or in error. Response clearly related to question posed.</td>
<td>Two or more elements of required information are omitted or in error. Most of provided response is clearly related to question posed.</td>
<td>Required information not provided and/or information provided is not clearly related to question posed.</td>
<td>X2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses are supported by examples, details and illustrations</td>
<td>Examples, details or illustrations demonstrate evidence of basic level of understanding of topic explored.</td>
<td>Examples, details, or illustrations are simplistic and demonstrate some evidence to support assertions, however may lack appropriate application.</td>
<td>No examples/illustrations are provided or are inaccurate.</td>
<td>X2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking is evident</td>
<td>Demonstrates high level ability to evaluate and interpret information. Fairly comprehensive analysis. Illustrates clear ability to solve problems systematically.</td>
<td>Demonstrates adequate ability to evaluate and interpret information at basic level. Analysis lacks full development. Illustrates limited ability to solve problems systematically.</td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate ability to evaluate and interpret information. Analysis is simplistic and fails to demonstrate ability to solve problems systematically.</td>
<td>X2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to synthesize component ideas into a viable solution is evident</td>
<td>Minor errors in assembling evidence for solution creation. Conclusions generally logical, with minor errors of reasoning.</td>
<td>Multiple errors in assembling evidence for solution creation. Conclusions have some logic but contain multiple errors of reasoning.</td>
<td>Does not demonstrate ability to assemble evidence for solution creation. Does not relate supporting evidence to topic.</td>
<td>X2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation, grammar, sentence structure reflect graduate level writing</td>
<td>No errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, usage</td>
<td>One or two errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, usage</td>
<td>Noticeable errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, usage.</td>
<td>Abundance of errors in grammar, pronunciation, sentence structure, ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student ID Number __________________________

Scorer ______________________________

TOTAL _____/72
Praxis and Practicum Requirements for Comprehensive Students

Praxis and Practicum are basically field experiences. In praxis, you explore a clinically focused issue in which you are interested or which is occurring in your place of employment. In Practicum, you explore an issue based on your role specialization (Nursing Education, Leadership, Management, etc.) Praxis is taken when you have completed the 6 core course (Theory, Research, Populations, Pharmacotherapeutics, Pathophysiology and Advanced Assessment) or concurrently with the last of these courses. A caveat to this, Pharmacotherapeutics, Pathophysiology and Advanced assessment must be completed BEFORE you enroll in Praxis. Practicum is taken during your last semester and serves as your graduate capstone course.

Because this is a field experience, not directed at direct patient care, you do not need a preceptor in either praxis or practicum. You will be directed by the instructor in the course. Both can be completed in your place of employment and may be completed within the scope of your job description. Neither require travel to WTAMU. You can complete both at your place of residence. If you are not currently employed as a nurse, you will need to find resources for this field study. This might be partnering with a clinic to explore issues related to, for example, childhood asthma. Your instructor will guide you through this when you enroll in the course. The syllabi reflect in detail the specific requirements for these courses, but here is a brief overview of what to expect:

Praxis. Praxis is clinically focused regardless of your role specialization. You will be asked to focus on a particular clinical issue - something that piques your interest. For example, you might be the Director of an ICU unit and notice an increase in incidence ventilator acquired pneumonia, or read about a new management protocol which would require a change in practice on your unit. Perhaps you have a lot of new hires who need more instruction in care of the patient with ventilator acquired pneumonia. Perhaps you just believe you want to reduce the incidence to a level below national norms. You would explore this. That could include staff meetings for input, research of practices in other hospitals, walking rounds specific to this issue, etc. etc. - with some end product in mind, such as a new protocol, developing and presenting refresher courses, recommending equipment changes, etc., etc. You will be required to keep a log and participate in short activities online as well. You will develop three specific objectives related to the clinical issue and how you address it. If this is a real world issue, you would just keep a log regarding time spent and answer some thought provoking questions regarding the process. Again, if this is specifically work related, you may present the issue to your supervisor and even get release time in order to complete this in depth clinical review. Otherwise, you can be flexible in when and how you complete the requirements of the course.

Practicum. Practicum is similar but is your capstone experience for the program. In it, your question and objectives will specifically address your role specialization (leadership/management, education, holistic nursing, etc.). In education, an objective could be to negotiate with a local nursing school to present a guest lecture on some area of expertise, or lead seminars, or develop an online teaching module. In holistic nursing, you might focus on a
need for self-care to address the issue of nursing burnout or “compassion fatigue”. In both courses you are required to log at least 90 clock hours. This includes time spent researching the issue, planning and conducting staff meetings, developing a protocol or in-service, presenting it—basically all the time needed to see the project to its fruition. You will find that it is very easy to accumulated 90 hours as you well know in your current role when trying to effect change or address population health as a whole. This can easily be accomplished on your own time, or actually in conjunction with your work duties if working on a work related issue. Again, specifics about the course requirements in these two field experiences will be in the course syllabus, but this should provide guidance in course sequencing and semester planning.