



Armstrong Atlantic State University

Department of Nursing



Graduate Program in Nursing

Student Handbook

*Armstrong Atlantic State University
Graduate Program in Nursing*

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Please note: *The policies and procedures in this Handbook are subject to change. Additions or changes will be distributed in class, and posted on the Graduate Program in Nursing Bulletin Board and Web-CT site.*

Armstrong Atlantic State University
Graduate Program in Nursing

INTRODUCTION

This handbook was prepared by the faculty of the Graduate Program in Nursing. This handbook is designed to provide you with information and other materials necessary to your progression in the graduate nursing program. Use your handbook in conjunction with the Armstrong Atlantic State University Graduate Catalog. Keep it in a place where you can refer to it regularly while you are a student in the program.

Anita Nivens, PhD, RN, FNP-BC
Graduate Program Coordinator

Frequently Used Telephone Numbers:

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I. ACADEMIC POLICIES & INFORMATION

AASU HONOR CODE:

The Armstrong Atlantic State University Honor Code protects the integrity of the grading system, making each grade that you receive, and your degree itself, a valuable achievement. Each student is required to abide by the rules of the Honor Code. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for specific information.

GRADING:

The following grading scale has been adopted by the Graduate Nursing Program:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
below 60	F

(Approved: Graduate Nursing Program October 25, 1995)

GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURE:

A student who contests a grade has the right to a grade appeal. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for specific information and appropriate time lines. It is the sole responsibility of the student to follow the correct procedure to appeal a grade.

GRADUATION:

Application for graduation must be completed by the first day of class two semesters BEFORE graduation. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for specific information and appropriate time lines. Students are required to pay graduation fees as determined by AASU.

PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS:

Students must complete the graduate nursing program within seven consecutive years from the date of their initial admission to the nursing program. Students who do not complete the program within this limit must apply for re-admission, meet current criteria for admission, and have their previous credits evaluated. Students who are granted re-admission must meet course requirements in effect at the time of evaluation.

PROGRAM DISMISSAL:

A student who earns two C's will be required to retake one of the courses. Any student who earns a D or F, or a third C will be dismissed from the program. Students who earn a C in a nursing course should meet with their academic advisor to develop an educational prescription to enhance future chances for success. This written prescription will be sent to the student and program coordinator, and placed in the student's file. A student who earns a D or F, or a third C, in a required nursing course will be dismissed from the program.

RE-ADMISSION PROCEDURES:

Student records will be maintained in the Graduate Nursing Program Office for two consecutive semesters. Following this period of time files become inactive; students must apply for readmission on the Application for Admission form provided by the School of Graduate Studies. Please refer to the AASU Graduate Catalog for specific procedures.

REGISTRATION HOLD:

Students are responsible for submitting all documents required for program admission and progression in the Graduate Nursing Program. This includes all annual updates including but not limited to health insurance, liability insurance, CPR certification, health/physical assessment, and HIPPA statements. Students will have a HOLD placed on their registration status and will not be permitted to register until the necessary documents are provided to the Graduate Nursing Program Office. Students may also be administratively withdrawn during the semester in the event expired items are not updated.

STANDARDS OF PROGRESSION:

Students are responsible for meeting all Standards of Progression and Graduation. Please refer to the AASU Graduate Catalog for specific procedures and guidelines.

WITHDRAWALS/INCOMPLETES:

Students who are unable to complete a semester's work due to non-academic extenuating circumstances may:

- A. Withdraw before midterm without penalty and receive a "W" for the course.
- B. Withdraw after midterm and receive a "WF" (Withdraw Failing) which is carried in the cumulative GPA as an "F".
- C. Apply for an "I" (Incomplete) grade by:
 1. Notifying the appropriate faculty of the reason.
 2. Submitting in writing, a plan for meeting course requirements in a timely manner.
 3. Executing the plan with approval of the faculty member to remove the "I" prior to midterm of the following semester. An "I" grade automatically converts to an "F" if this requirement is not met.

II. ACCREDITATION STATEMENT

The Graduate Program in Nursing is approved by the Georgia Board of Nursing. The AASU Department of Nursing is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Accreditation is an indication of public approbation, attesting to the quality of the educational program and the continued commitment of the sponsoring institution to support the program. For further information about the accreditation of the program, please contact the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education at the following address:

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530
Washington, DC 20036-1120
(202) 887-6791

III. ANNUAL UPDATES

The following information **must** be updated annually:

1. Physical examination, PPD
2. CPR Certification
3. Liability Insurance
4. RN License (at time of renewal)
5. Proof of Health Insurance (AASU Health Insurance Waiver)
6. HIPPA/Confidentiality Statement

It is the students responsibility to provide a copy of the above information to the Graduate Secretary to be stored in the students' file.

IV. D.O.N. OFFICE INFORMATION

Department of Nursing Office is located in Ashmore Hall Room 216

Office hours: Monday - Friday 8:15 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Office Phone #:	Diana Kennard:	(921) 344-2553
	Shanika Singley:	(912) 344-2554
	Rita Brownlee:	(912) 344-2588
	Kristy Gose:	(912) 344-2575

Additional evening and weekend hours may be arranged through faculty.

V. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM

Upon completion of the master's degree, the graduate will be able to function as a nurse specialist. The following are Graduate Program objectives:

1. Utilize critical thinking for the development of creative solutions to nursing and health care problems.
2. Utilize effective leadership strategies within interdisciplinary teams to improve the health care delivery system.
3. Design and evaluate research for evidence-based nursing practice.
4. Demonstrate effective therapeutic and professional communication that reflects an integration of communication principles.
5. Develop personal and professional behaviors for role actualization.
6. Formulate nursing strategies that are responsive to needs of diverse populations in a variety of settings.

VI. OUTCOME MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION ANALYSIS

Critical Thinking

Definition	
<p><i>Critical Thinking:</i> A creative skill that is practiced and refined over time. It is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information that has been gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication with others.</p>	
<p><i>Critical Thinking Assessment Tool:</i> This two part instrument measures a total of ten criteria which collectively define the cognitive process of critical thinking. The student's ability to think critically is measured by the assessment of written evidence.</p> <p>The ten criteria are rated on a four-step (0 to 3) scale, with a possible range of 0-30. The standard score range is identified as 0-20. The Critical Indicator, representing an 85% achievement score, is 17.</p>	
Congruence with Philosophy	
<p>Professional nurses utilize critical thinking skills for self-directed judgments and act independently within the framework of their nurse practice act.</p>	
Graduate Nursing Program	
Evaluation Measure	Rationale
<p><u>Adult Nurse Practitioner Track:</u> NURS 8844 Case Study</p>	<p>The Adult Nurse Practitioner case study allows students to demonstrate their ability to develop and analyze differential diagnoses for presenting client symptoms. Clinical decision-making in the management of complex symptomatology provides the student with the foundation for the selection of appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic interventions.</p>
<p><u>Adult Clinical Nurse Specialist Track:</u> NURS 8853: Clinical Practicum Journal</p>	<p>The Adult CNS Practicum Clinical Journal requires the student to gather and analyze information pertinent to the experiences which they encounter in the clinical practicum courses. As the students integrate the roles of the CNS and encounter diverse problems within the clinical setting, they must actively engage in the cognitive process of problem solving and solution development. The critical thinking process becomes visible in the analysis of practicum experiences, and in the student's discussion of the evaluation of their objectives.</p>
<p><u>Nursing Administration Track:</u> NURS 8865: Practicum Journal</p>	<p>This Nursing Administration Practicum Journal allows the student to document clinical activities and achievement of clinical objectives. The journal is also a direct means of communication between the student and the professor including such topics as agency, roles, group dynamics, use of a theoretical model for leadership and evidence of assessment of agency and community needs.</p>
<p><u>Advanced Practice Nursing Track:</u> NURS 8865: Practicum Journal</p>	<p>The ANCC certification exam for NPs measures student ability to collect complex data, analyze these data and develop appropriate action plans. National certification as a nurse practitioner is therefore accepted as student achievement of this outcome.</p>

Communication: Written and Oral

Definition	
<p>Communication: A transactive process which effectively imparts, confers or transmits thoughts, feelings, or information through verbal and nonverbal gestures with another person or persons.</p>	
Congruence with Philosophy	
<p>Professional nurses utilize effective communication skills to develop partnerships with clients and the interdisciplinary health team for the design, implementation, and evaluation of health strategies for the individual, family, aggregate, or population.</p>	
Measurement Instruments	
<p>In developing procedures for measurement of communication skills, the Department of Nursing decided to separate the measurement of oral and written communication. This decision resulted in the generation of two communication instruments: oral and written. Together, these two instruments present a complete assessment of the student's proficiency in communication.</p> <p>Oral Communication Assessment Tool: This instrument measures a total of five criteria, one of which has six parts. These ten criteria collectively define the behaviors and skills necessary for the performance of expected oral communication.</p> <p>The ten criteria are rated on a four-step (0 to 3) scale, with a possible range of 0-30. The standard score range is identified as 0-20. The Critical Indicator, representing an 85% achievement score, is 17.</p> <p>Written Communication Assessment Tool: This instrument measures a total of six criteria. These six criteria collectively define the student's ability to communicate in writing.</p> <p>The six criteria are rated on a four-step (0 to 3) scale, with a possible range of 0-18. The standard score range is identified as 0-12. The Critical Indicator, representing an 85% achievement score, is 10.</p>	
Graduate Nursing Program	
Evaluation Measure	Rationale
<p>All Tracks: NURS 8897/8899: Project or Thesis</p>	<p>The thesis/project experiences allow the student to communicate verbally and in writing the integration and synthesis of the knowledge accumulated in the selected program of study.</p> <p>Evaluation of the oral and written ability to the students profices clear evidence of the student's ability to achieve the expected levels of communication.</p>

Therapeutic Nursing Interventions:

Definition	
<p>Therapeutic nursing interventions: Are based on an ethic of human care that is contextually, socially, culturally, and ethnically relevant to the recipient, At the graduate level it is the strategies that constructively and positively influence the quality of health of individuals, families, groups, communities, and health care systems.</p>	
Congruence with Philosophy	
<p>Professional nursing practice focuses upon therapeutic nursing interventions to provide health promotion, health maintenance, illness prevention, and health restoration.</p> <p>Professional nursing roles include practice, leadership, educator, advocate, researcher, consultant, and change agent.</p>	
Measurement Instruments	
<p><i>Therapeutic Nursing Interventions Tool:</i> This instrument measures a total of five criteria, two of which has multiple parts. A total of nine criteria collectively define the behaviors and skills which have been designated as measurement of therapeutic nursing interventions.</p> <p>The ten criteria are rated on a four-step (0 to 3) scale, with a possible range of 0-27. The standard score range is identified as 0-18. The Critical Indicator, representing an 85% achievement score, is 15.</p>	
Graduate Nursing Program	
Evaluation Measure	Rationale
<p><u>Adult Nurse Practitioner Track:</u> NURS 8844 Case Study</p>	<p>The case study for the Adult Nurse Practitioner student demonstrates the student's ability to select, employ and direct therapeutic interventions for clients with acute and chronic conditions. ANP students integrate understanding of diagnostic and therapeutic health interventions with an advanced perspective of nursing practice.</p>
<p><u>Adult Clinical Nurse Specialist Track:</u> NURS 8852: Clinical Case Profile</p>	<p>The Program of Care allows the adult health CSN student to demonstrate their ability to design, implement and evaluate innovative, and/or population based programs of care to achieve desired quality, cost-effective nurse-sensitive outcomes.</p>
<p><u>Nursing Administration Track:</u> NURS 8864: Practicum Project</p>	<p>The practicum project allows the student to plan and implement therapeutic nursing interventions from an administrative perspective. The project requires the ability to synthesize and integrate both nursing and management concepts to meet the evolving health care needs of a specific population.</p>

Patterns of Employment

Patterns of Employment Data:	
<p>The clinical roles and settings that graduates of Armstrong Atlantic State University Graduate Nursing program occupy after successful completion of the program of study.</p>	<p>Graduate Surveys</p>

Proficiency

Definition	
Proficiency: The possession of the required skill, knowledge and capacity to practice as an RN and APRN.	
Congruence with Philosophy	
The mission is met by development of competent undergraduate and graduate nurses according to professional standards of governance.	
Measurement Instruments	
	National Certification ANP, CNS Critical Indicator 85%
Evaluation Measure Tool	
	Pass Rate of national certification for APRN graduates

VII. FACULTY’S PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The foundation for the beliefs of the nursing faculty is the value placed on the holistic nature of human beings and concern for the quality of human life across the life span.

Person: The Faculty believe:

- Each client is a unique and diverse biological, psychological, and sociological system.
- The client’s developmental level, culture, socioeconomic status, value system, and religion influence his/her perceptions of health care and his/her ability to adapt to the environment.
- The client may be understood as an individual, family, population, or community.

Health: The Faculty believe:

- Health is a state of well being that is dynamic and interactive with the environment.
- Health is individually and collectively perceived and determined.
- Although levels of health may vary, client well being is consonant with an optimal state of health.

Environment: The Faculty believe:

- The global environment in which health care is provided is composed of ever changing internal and external forces that influence the life of an individual, family, population, or community.
- Health care delivery system environments contain social, political and professional forces which influence health policy.

Professional Nursing Practice: The Faculty believe:

- Professional nursing is an autonomous, caring, and collaborative practice.
- Professional nursing is responsible and accountable to self, clients, society, and the nursing profession in accordance with professional standards of governance.
- Professional nursing practice focuses upon therapeutic nursing interventions to provide health promotion, health maintenance, illness prevention, and health restoration.
- Professional nurses utilize effective communication skills to develop partnerships with clients and the interdisciplinary health team for the design, implementation, and evaluation of health strategies for the individual, family, population or community.
- Professional nurses utilize critical thinking skills for self-directed judgments and act independently within the framework of the nurse practice act.
- Professional nursing roles include: practitioner, leader, educator, advocate, researcher, consultant, and change agent.

Education: The Faculty believe:

- Nursing education builds upon a strong scientific, theoretic, and liberal arts base.
- Baccalaureate nursing education is the basis for entry into professional nursing practice.
- Graduate nursing education builds upon baccalaureate education, nursing practice and experiential learning.
- Learning is a lifelong process that is enabled by curiosity and experiential learning which enables students to reach their individual potential.
- Students, as self-directed learners, must actively participate in their learning process.
- The teaching-learning process provides the environment which prepares students to utilize information technologies in evidence based practice and the provision of patient care.
- Faculty/student interactions are imperative for the development of caring and knowledgeable nurse leaders.
- Teaching is enhanced by faculty practice, continuing education, and mentoring.
- Students bring diverse experiences, beliefs, values, behaviors, and willingness to change and grow personally and professionally
- Academic excellence is produced through commitment of students and faculty.
- Innovative technology facilitates expanded access to nursing education.
- Graduate nursing education extends the role and practice of professional nursing and provides the foundation for doctoral education.

Scholarship: The Faculty believe:

- Scholarship includes the scholarship of discovery, integration, application and learning as described by Boyer.
- Research, as scholarship of discovery, represents one component of the total spectrum of scholarship.
- Research activities are responsive to the community of interest.
- A theoretical framework guides research activities which contribute to the knowledge base of nursing.

Service: The Faculty believe:

- Partnerships and service opportunities assist in the improvement of health in Southeast Georgia and the coastal region.
- The service mission is met in a variety of ways including professional practice, consultation, and collaboration.
- The nursing faculty provide technical expertise to the University and to the community.

VIII. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

AASU FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

Graduate students may apply for financial aid through the AASU Financial Aid Office. Contact this office directly at (912) 344-3266 for guidelines.

FEDERAL NURSE TRAINEESHIP

The Department of Nursing is the recipient of a federal grant for supporting graduate student tuition. Criteria for eligibility include full-time study (9 credits) each Fall and Spring semester, and 6 hours in Summer unless in the final year of study. Applications are available in the Department of Nursing and must be submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator by August 1. Reapplication is required for a second year of funding. Additional information is available on Vista.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS LOAN REPAYMENT

The Federally funded program provides support for eligible nurse practitioner graduates. Contact the Graduate Nursing Coordinator for program information.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

Graduate Assistantships are available through the School of Graduate Studies. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credits. Contact the graduate office for specific information at (912) 344-2798.

IX. GENERAL STUDENT POLICIES

AASU DISABILITY SERVICES: Students accepted to Armstrong Atlantic State University who are requesting accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Services. The student must provide documentation of the disability from a qualified professional and the documentation must support the need for the accommodation being requested. The Board of Regents has established criteria in regards to documentation of learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder. These criteria are available in the Office of Disability Services.

ADVISEMENT: Graduate nursing students are assigned a faculty advisor. Students are expected to schedule appointments with assigned advisors during the advisement period each semester. The program coordinator and graduate faculty are also available during posted office hours for consultation and assistance. Student should contact their advisor and schedule appointments whenever necessary.

BOOKS: Required textbooks may be purchased through the AASU Bookstore. Textbook information can be found on the Nursing website.

CHILDREN ON CAMPUS: AASU policy prohibits the presence of children during class activities. Children may not be left unattended in any AASU building campus or on AASU grounds.

CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE: Class attendance is expected of every student. Students are responsible for content discussed or announced in class. Students are also responsible for completing assignments on time. See specific course syllabus for individual course requirements.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT: Each student must annually review and sign the Confidentiality Statement, found under WebCT AASU Graduate Nursing Students Forms, HIPAA.

CLINICAL: Students must complete the required clinical hours for the chosen track. Absences from clinical must be rescheduled. It is the student's responsibility to reschedule clinical with faculty and/or the preceptor regarding missed clinical hours. In order to meet clinical objectives and achieve the program terminal objectives, students must be eligible and acceptable for clinical experiences in all selected clinical agencies. Clinical agencies have the right to refuse admittance of students based on previous clinical behaviors or performance. Students who may be ineligible to complete required clinical expectations will be unable to satisfactorily complete course requirements.

Clinical work must be graded as "satisfactory" in each clinical course for progression. Clinical preceptors provide evaluative input; however, the final clinical grade is the responsibility of the supervising faculty.

Clinical sites are approved by the supervising faculty based on the ability of the site to provide the student with encounters sufficient in number and variety so as to meet the specific course requirements. Students may suggest sites and preceptors for faculty consideration. Students may not be employed by the site during the hours counted as meeting the clinical course requirements. In order to adequately address the broad scope of adult advanced practice, students should anticipate experiences in a variety of clinical settings. Highly specialized practice sites may be used to supplement experiences as deemed appropriate by faculty.

All clinical preceptors must be approved by the faculty. Clinical preceptors must be certified, masters prepared advanced practice nurses with a minimum of one year experience. Nurse Practitioner students may have a precepted experience with a licensed physician with credentials appropriate to course objectives. Preceptors should have a desire to teach as well as clinical time allocated to meet the demands of the experience.

Specific requirements are listed in each course syllabus and students are responsible for adhering to course policy.

DRESS CODE AND PERSONAL APPEARANCES: Students must maintain a professional appearance and demeanor in all clinical agencies:

- A. White lab coat and Graduate Nursing Program name tag.
- B. Fulfillment of all official dress code and professional behavior standards for the specific agency in which learning experiences are conducted.

EQUIPMENT: It is expected that students will have equipment needed to provide client care in clinical settings. NP students must consult faculty advisor for required equipment prior to beginning clinical courses.

HEALTH INSURANCE: Students must show proof of personal health and hospital insurance by waiving the mandatory student health insurance each semester.

LIABILITY INSURANCE: All students must show proof of purchase of professional liability insurance. Students may choose to participate in an AASU student policy that may be purchased for a nominal fee through the Cashier's Office. This insurance policy may be purchased at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters of study. Information and sources of liability insurance may be obtained from the Graduate Nursing Program Office.

NAME TAGS: Name tags may be purchased from an approved vendor, see Graduate Nursing office for details.

NEW STUDENT ADVISEMENT: All students planning to enroll in a graduate nursing program must meet with the graduate program coordinator or assigned advisor. During this initial meeting the faculty and student will complete a Course Sequence Plan.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR:

- Students are expected to be prepared for all class and clinical assignments. They are expected to attend class and clinical on time.
- Students are adults and are responsible for their own behavior and learning. Faculty provide guidance and support for students having difficulty with nursing courses and for those students who seek assistance related to academic improvement.
- Students are expected to exhibit appropriate professional conduct in class, lab, and clinical situations.
- Civility in the classroom/laboratory will be maintained. Students causing disruption will be dismissed from the classroom/clinical environment.
- All students are expected to abide by the Armstrong Atlantic State University Honor Code and Code of Conduct.
- Students are considered representatives of AASU when in classes conducted by guest lecturers or on field trips and, therefore, are expected to dress and behave with consideration for the image they project to the general community.
- Students must be qualified and acceptable to clinical agencies utilized in the program. Some clinical agencies may require criminal background check and random drug screening.
- Confidentiality of patient records and situations will be maintained at all times. No patient chart is to be copied by any technological process. Patient information is not to be removed from any health care agency. Students violating this code will be dismissed from the program.
- Students are responsible for maintaining patient privacy and dignity at all times. Professional decorum extends into many aspects of life. Courteous professional behavior toward faculty, peers, patient/client, staff and healthcare personnel is expected at all times. A first violation will cause the student to be reprimanded, reminded of the code of professional behavior, and the incident will be noted in the student's record. The problem will be discussed with the student. Any further instances of unprofessional or unacceptable behavior will result in dismissal from the Program.

SCHOLARLY WRITING: The Graduate Program in Nursing requires the use of the APA Manual, 6th edition for reference and formal paper documentation and style. The manual may be purchased in the bookstore.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE: The University policies on alcoholic beverages and drugs are described in the Student Conduct Code, which states in part, “The possession or use of drugs (without a valid medical prescription) controlled by the federal Government is prohibited.” In accordance with these policies, the Department of Nursing has adopted the following policy for nursing students in clinical settings:

- If a student reports to clinical under the influence of drugs/alcohol, he/she will not be allowed to remain in the clinical setting that day and the matter will be referred to the Graduate Coordinator for further evaluation. If the student insists he/she is not impaired, he/she has the option of having a drug/alcohol screen done at his/her expense.
- The clinical instructor and the Graduate Coordinator will determine when the student can return to clinical, if the student has been asked to leave the clinical setting due to being under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
- If deemed necessary by the Graduate Coordinator and the clinical instructor, the student will be referred to a certified addiction counselor for evaluation. Further action will depend on the recommendation of the counselor.
- If the addiction counselor believes treatment is necessary, the student may have the option of returning to the nursing program upon completion of treatment. A drug/alcohol screening must be performed with negative results within one week of returning to clinical.
- If the student does not comply with the above recommendations, he/she will be referred to the Head of the Department of Nursing for further actions.
- Based on recommendations of the addiction counselor, the student may need to attend an aftercare program. If such a treatment plan is prescribed, the student must provide the Graduate Coordinator with documentation of attendance.

Detailed documentation of the incident(s) will be written by the clinical instructor and signed by the student indicating the student has read it. The documentation will be placed in the student’s file.

TRANSPORTATION: Students must arrange for their own transportation to and from clinical agencies, and other program-related travel. Students must not provide transportation for clients.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS: Hepatitis and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infections are significant and growing risks in the United States. Health care workers are especially at risk for developing these diseases due to exposure to needle sticks and splashed blood/body fluids. Hepatitis B, which infects thousands of health care workers and kills approximately 200 persons each year, is preventable by immunization. Hepatitis B and HIV+ status can be prevented through the consistent use of UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS. There is no known method to prevent the development of AIDS in HIV+ individuals. Therefore, it is mandatory that efforts be taken to prevent exposure to these diseases. Universal precautions must be followed by students and faculty in the clinical settings.

X. GRADUATE PROGRAM IN NURSING EXAMINATION POLICY, PROCEDURE AND APPLICATION

Comprehensive examinations in the major field of study are required for all candidates for the MSN. This examination tests students’ ability to synthesize and apply knowledge of nursing theory, research, roles and health policy.

ELIGIBILITY

Students applying to take the comprehensive examination must be enrolled in the final semester of course work. Students are eligible to take the comprehensive examination when the following criteria have been met:

- A. Current or previous enrollment in NURS 8897 or 8899.
- B. Current or previous enrollment in all major support and core courses required on the program of study.
- C. Recommendation from the academic advisor.
- D. An approved Program of study form filed in the Department of Nursing.
- E. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
- F. No outstanding grades of Incomplete (I) in major courses.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Examination questions will be developed by the faculty of the Graduate Program in Nursing. Students will be provided with faculty consultation to assist with preparation for the comprehensive examination.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Answers to questions are evaluated by the student's mastery of the following:

- 1. Detailed scope of knowledge and comprehension of research, theory and policy related to advanced nursing practice concepts.
- 2. In-depth analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation of topic(s) of interest.
- 3. Logical, systematic progression of ideas.
- 4. Skilled expression/presentation of thoughts.

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Category 1: Satisfactory: Student successfully meets all required criteria.

Category 2: Remediation required: student is given a directed assignment that must be successfully completed by end of semester in order to meet progression requirements.

XI. MISSION STATEMENT

Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU) was founded as a city college and continues to fulfill an urban mission, teaching a diverse population of traditional and non-traditional students from Southeast Georgia. The overall purpose of the University is to bring students to a better realization of their own intellectual, emotional, and spiritual potential. Consistent with this mission and population focus, the mission of the Department of Nursing at AASU is to educate nurses who are able to address and provide for the health care needs of the people of Southeast Georgia and the coastal region. This mission is accomplished through a multifaceted approach which incorporates education, research, and service. The vision for the Department of Nursing is to facilitate the development of competent, committed, and caring professional nurses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

XII. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Sigma Theta Tau

The purpose of the organization is to recognize and support leadership, scholarship and research in professional nursing. Students who meet eligibility requirements of no less than a 3.5 grade point average and have completed ¼ of their course work may be invited to join Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society for Nursing. For additional information visit the Sigma Theta Tau website at <http://www.nursingsociety.org>. For information of the AASU Rho Psi Chapter visit <http://www.nursing.armstrong.edu/rhopsi/>.

Georgia Nurses Association

The professional organization for Registered Nurses is the American Nurses' Association (ANA). The Georgia Nurses Association (GNA) is a unit of ANA. Registered Nurse students are encouraged to become members of ANA/GNA.

Specialty Organizations:

A number of advanced practice groups are available locally including the Nurse Practitioner Council of Coastal Georgia and the Savannah Clinical Nurse Specialist group. Specialty track advisors post meeting notices and have contact information available. Graduate nursing students are welcome to attend meetings but should RSVP as requested for dinner events.

XIII. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STRUCTURE OF ACCEPTABLE PAPERS

The following *Guidelines for Acceptable Papers* is intended to facilitate the development and formation of papers required in the graduate nursing courses. Graduate student papers must reflect an appropriate level and style of writing, in addition to format and appearance. It is expected that all papers will be word-processed. ***Papers unacceptable in style will not be read or graded.*** Students who may require additional assistance with style or writing format should consult with their course professor ***early in the semester.***

STYLE:

Grammar & Form:

- Correct sentence structure & punctuation (avoids comma splices, fused sentences, misused or omitted apostrophes & semicolons, split infinitives, etc.)
- Correct paragraph structure with clear organized ideas
- Transition sentences or linkages between thoughts
- Smooth flow
- Agreement of subject and verb
- Correct verb forms & verb endings
- Correct use of adverbs and adjectives
- Correct word spelling
- Pronouns are referenced correctly & agree

Documentation and Presentation:

- American Psychological Association, (current ed.), is required for all reference papers
- Adequate number of quality references
- Professional sources appropriate to subject and context
- Current publication appropriate to content; older references used as appropriate for historical or demonstrative purposes only
- Readable: Computer (word processor) generated with a minimum number of errors in style, format and typing

CONTENT:

Clear and relevant introduction
Clear and directed content focus
Depth and breadth appropriate to topic
Clearly identifies scope of paper
Concise, clear, and cogent
Conclusion or summary reflects important points of paper

TITLE PAGE:

The title page for all graduate student papers should utilize the current standard APA format.

XIV. STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

For the Graduate Program in Nursing, two sets of specialty standards were selected to serve as a basis and guide for advanced nursing practice knowledge and skill development.

Adult Clinical Nurse Specialist, Adult Nurse Practitioner, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, and
Advanced Practice Nursing:
Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice (ANA, 2004)

Nursing Administration:
Scope and Standards for Nurse Administrators, 2nd Ed. (ANA, 2004).

XV. UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Armstrong Atlantic State University offers a variety of activities to foster personal and professional growth. Students are encouraged to become involved in areas of interest. Activities available include inter-collegiate sports, religious activities, student government, honorary societies, special interest groups, and professional organizations. Involvement in departmental, college and graduate committees is encouraged.

Graduate nursing students are encouraged to serve on Department of Nursing Committees and the Graduate Nursing Program Committee. For appointment to Department Committees and/or the Graduate Nursing Program Committee, students should contact the Head of the Department of Nursing.

Students are encouraged to participate in formation and implementation of University policy. Student input is provided by membership on the following AASU graduate faculty committees:

1. Graduate Council
2. Graduate Curriculum Committee
3. Graduate Faculty Status and Activities Committee
4. Graduate Academic Policy
5. Graduate Student Appeals Committee

Student representatives to these committees are appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. For appointment to these committees contact the Dean of the Graduate School.

Special Notice

The statements set forth in this Handbook are for information purposes only and should not be construed as the basis of a contract between a student and this information.

While the provision of the Handbook will generally be applied as stated, Armstrong Atlantic State University reserves the right to change any provision listed in this Catalog, including but not limited to academic requirements for graduation, without actual notice to individual students. Every effort will be made to keep students advised on any such changes. Information on changes will be available in the Offices of the Registrar, the Vice President of Student Affairs, and the academic deans. It is especially important that students note that it is their responsibility to keep themselves apprized of current graduation requirements for their particular degree program.

Armstrong Atlantic State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity education institution and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age, religion, disability, or national origin in employment, admissions or activities.