



# ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

*Mennonite College of Nursing*

2017 – 2018

RN TO BSN STUDENT  
HANDBOOK

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## **I. Introduction to Mennonite College of Nursing**

### **A. History of Mennonite College of Nursing**

Mennonite College of Nursing became Illinois State University's sixth academic college on July 1, 1999. The rich heritage of Mennonite College of Nursing began in 1919. For nearly 100 years, the primary mission has been to prepare professional nurses by providing a quality education. This mission continues at Illinois State. Mennonite College of Nursing is located in Edwards Hall.

### **B. Mission, Vision, Philosophy, and Program Outcomes**

#### **1. Mission**

Mennonite College of Nursing at Illinois State University creates a dynamic community of learning to develop exceptionally well prepared nurses who will lead to improve health outcomes locally and globally. We promote excellence in teaching, research, service and practice with a focus on the vulnerable and underserved. We are committed to being purposeful, open, just, caring, disciplined and celebrative.

#### **2. Vision**

The vision of Mennonite College of Nursing is to be a premier college of nursing dedicated to improving local and global health outcomes.

#### **3. Philosophy**

At the heart of the College's philosophy is the belief that all people share a common humanity. Each person must be regarded as having special biological, psychological, sociocultural and spiritual dimensions and possessing the inherent rights and responsibilities of freedom of choice and self-determination. Based on these beliefs, the College strives to grow as a caring community that supports the development of the total individual.

A vital interactive relationship exists between humankind and the environment. Environment affects each person's biological being and extends beyond physical surroundings to encompass roles, relationships, and societal structures. Because all human beings influence and are influenced by their environment, all must assume the responsibility to protect the social and natural environments in which they share.

Health is a dynamic state influenced by individual, environmental and hereditary factors. State of health, which significantly influences quality of life, is shaped by many factors, including an individual's decision-making and behaviors. Pursuit of wellness is the right and responsibility of each person. Nursing holds the potential to strengthen each human being pursuing optimal health and achieving a harmony of body, mind, and spirit.

Nursing is a profession that continues to evolve through research, theory, and practice. Professional nursing, encompassing a range of therapeutic interventions aimed at promoting and restoring health, addresses actual and potential health care needs of individuals, families, groups, and communities. Nursing care is delivered in diverse settings in a systematic manner through use of the nursing process. In providing their professional services, practitioners of nursing manifest role dimensions that are collaborative and independent in nature. Because dynamic social forces influence the nature and scope of nursing practice, critical thinking, effective communication, and caring are abilities required for professional nursing practice in changing environments.

As a profession, nursing adheres to standards of practice and ethical codes as a means of ensuring quality care for all persons. The current Illinois Nurse Practice Act serves as the legal basis for the practice of nursing in the State of Illinois.

Mennonite College of Nursing is committed to cultivating the personal and professional potential of each member of the College community. The faculty believes that learning as a life-long process is promoted when intellectual inquiry, creativity, self-awareness, self-direction, maturity, and responsibility are valued. Learning is a process of developing human potential through the interaction of the individual with the environment. This interaction aims to achieve positive attitude changes, knowledge acquisition, and professional competence.

The faculty of Mennonite College of Nursing believes that the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required for professional nursing are best achieved when built upon a solid foundation of study in the humanities and sciences. The faculty values a liberal arts education, which fosters an understanding of society and provides a humanistic basis for the study of nursing. Baccalaureate nursing education prepares the graduate for the practice of professional nursing and provides the basis for graduate study in nursing. Masters-level nursing education prepares nursing leaders and advanced practitioners, advances nursing scholarship, and provides the foundation for doctoral study.

The College offers a graduate program leading to the Master of Science in Nursing degree. The College offers a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) sequence and a Nursing Systems Administration (NSA) sequence, as well as a post-master's Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Certificate. The College also offers two doctoral programs: the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program.

#### **4. RN to BSN Program Outcomes**

Program outcomes are congruent with the Mennonite College of Nursing mission and vision and have been developed to reflect the professional nursing standards and guidelines presented in *The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2008). Mennonite College of Nursing RN to BSN students will become:

- a. A provider of compassionate patient-centered care who demonstrates a commitment to cultural and spiritual diversity, caring, and advocacy in promoting improved health capacities for individuals, families, and communities across a continuum of care settings.
- b. A steward of resources who adapts to human, financial, material, and regulatory realities to coordinate innovative, effective, quality care.
- c. An empathic communicator who effectively manages health information and evolving communication technologies to improve care coordination in meeting care outcomes.
- d. A collaborator who coordinates care activities among interprofessional members of the healthcare team to impact health outcomes of individuals, families, and communities.
- f. An evolving clinical thinker who uses theory, observation, evidence, leadership skills and practice experience to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities.
- g. An entry-level generalist who integrates knowledge and skills from a liberal education in applying evidence-based solutions to health issues to promote wellness for individuals, families, and communities.

## **II. Academic Policies and Procedures**

### **A. Current Updated License**

Current students of the Mennonite College of Nursing RN to BSN sequence should hold an unencumbered licensure in every state in which the student holds a license and are required to provide evidence of current RN licensure in their state of residence. It is the applicant's/student's responsibility to ensure that the College has a copy on file of the license for the current licensure period. Mennonite College of Nursing reserves the right to verify licensure status.

Should a change in licensure, such as license suspension or revocation, occur, it is the responsibility of the student to provide this information to the RN to BSN Sequence Leader. Students without current licensure are prohibited from participating in any coursework. Failure to report licensure changes will result in disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the academic program.

### **B. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality of patient information is expected. Only relevant information obtained from or about a patient may be disclosed to the healthcare personnel, faculty, and peers involved in the individual's care. Breach of confidentiality can lead to expulsion from the College of Nursing. Confidentiality, HIPAA and Social Media expectations will be reinforced in orientation and a quiz over this knowledge, along with a signature of understanding will be completed.

To understand the limits of appropriate use of social media, it is important to have an understanding of confidentiality and privacy in the health care context. Confidentiality and privacy are related, but distinct concepts. Any patient information learned by the nurse during the course of treatment must be safeguarded by that nurse. Such information may only be disclosed to other members of the healthcare team for healthcare purposes. Confidential information should be shared only with the patient's informed consent, when legally required or where failure to disclose the information could result in significant harm. Beyond these very limited exceptions the nurse's obligation to safeguard such confidential information is universal.

Federal law reinforces and further defines privacy through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). HIPAA regulations are intended to protect patient privacy by defining individually identifiable information and establishing how this information may be used, by whom and under what circumstances. The definition of individually identifiable information includes any information that relates to the past, present or future physical or mental health of an individual, or provides enough information that leads someone to believe the information could be used to identify an individual.

Social and electronic media possess tremendous potential for strengthening personal relationships and providing valuable information to healthcare consumers. Nurses need to be aware of the potential ramifications of disclosing patient-related information via social media. Nurses should be mindful of employer policies, relevant state and federal laws, and professional standards regarding patient privacy and confidentiality and its application to social and electronic media. By being careful and conscientious, nurses may enjoy the personal and professional benefits of social and electronic media without violating patient privacy and confidentiality.

### **C. ISU Code of Conduct**

The faculty, staff, and administration of Illinois State University believe in the values of:

- a. Character
- b. Conscience
- c. Civility
- d. Citizenship
- e. An Appreciation of Diversity
- f. Individual and Social Responsibility

As stated in the Illinois State University Code of Student Conduct: "Illinois State University recognizes that it must create an environment where each student will be free to pursue her or his academic interests without interference from others. This includes upholding the integrity of the academic process as well as providing a community free of disruptions. Their violation will result in disciplinary action." All violations of student misconduct will be addressed through appropriate college and university channels to include Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Please refer to the Illinois State Code of Student Conduct for information including but not limited to academic dishonesty.

### **D. Civility**

The primary purpose of the College is to function as a community of individuals working together in the pursuit of knowledge and the advancement of the nursing profession. Honesty and integrity are of highest regard with members of the nursing profession and it is expected students value and demonstrates these characteristics at all times. The college endorses the following concepts of civility as published in the ANA Code of Ethics:

Provision 1: "The nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual..." 1.5: Principles of respect extend to all encounters, including colleagues. "This standard of conduct precludes any and all 15 prejudicial actions, any form of harassment or threatening behavior, or disregard for the effect of one's actions on others" 3.4: "Nurse educators have a responsibility to....promote a commitment to professional practice prior to entry of an individual into practice" Inappropriate behaviors and incivility will not be tolerated at MCN and will have consequences.

### **E. Academic Dishonesty**

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's placement of his or her name on any academic exercise shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own thought, effort, and study. Academic integrity violations can be found the in the Illinois State Code of Conduct at <http://deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/CodeOfStudentConduct-Revised5.12.pdf>

### **F. Attendance**

Based on the assumption that academic success is the student's primary goal, students are expected to participate in online class discussions, complete all assignments based on specific course requirements, and take required examinations. If unable to attend to the overall course expectations (due dates, assignment requirements, etc.); students are encouraged to contact both their Academic Advisor and RN to BSN Sequence Leader after discussing this with the course instructor to identify continuation or dropping of the course.

## **G. Missed Exams**

In the event of illness or other circumstances resulting in failure to complete an exam by the specified due date, it is expected:

1. The student must contact the faculty member via telephone or email, or in certain situations by significant person, prior to the anticipated failure to complete the exam by the due date.
2. The student must contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange a time for taking the exam.
3. Depending on the length and reason for the absence, the exam must be made up within one week after returning.
4. It is the faculty's decision whether or not an alternate exam will be offered. Faculty will make every effort to accommodate; however, patterns of missed exams and assignments will be monitored. Verification for absences may be required.

## **H. Professional Image**

Nurses are professionals. Appearance and behavior are as much a part of the professional nurse as are professional education, nursing skills, clear mind, abundant energy, empathy, and the intent to facilitate healing. Clothing, hygiene and demeanor all communicate an attitude. It is expected that students, in consultation with faculty, choose grooming styles that do not interfere with patient care. When students dress and act like professionals, then peers, other professionals, and the public will accept them on that basis.

It is the student's responsibility to develop and maintain a professional image. Such an image should be evident in all business and professional settings. Personal appearance and behavior are not only a reflection on the individual, but also on the College of Nursing and the profession as a whole.

## **I. Student Employment**

While the administration and faculty of Mennonite College of Nursing recognize the necessity for many students to be employed while attending the College, it is recommended that students be aware of the rigorous demands of academic study. Students are encouraged to give deliberate consideration to the number of hours committed to employment and the scheduling of those hours so that maximum benefit is obtained from the professional education.

## **J. Computer Requirements**

Technology requirements are regularly updated as technology advances. The current requirements were last reviewed in June 2016. Students entering the Mennonite College of Nursing must have a computer that meets the requirements as noted on the MCN website:

<http://nursing.illinoisstate.edu/studentlife/>. Laptops with wireless capability are not required but are suggested for convenience.

## **K. Student Access and Accommodation Services**

Illinois State University's Division of Student Affairs maintains a unit on Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall. According to their website: "Illinois State University provides a welcoming atmosphere for individuals with disabilities by assisting each in functioning independently within the University community and providing equal access and opportunity in accomplishing educational, professional and personal goals. As a unit of the Student Affairs Division, Student Access and Accommodation Services is the designated office to provide approved

accommodation services for students, faculty, staff, and guests with disabilities. Student Access and Accommodation Services obtains and maintains documentation of disability, certifies eligibility for services, determines reasonable accommodations, and develops plans for providing such accommodations. This is accomplished in a confidential manner to ensure equal opportunity for participation in all courses, programs, activities and employment offered by Illinois State.”

Students may learn more about the office of Student Access and Accommodation Services at <http://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/>

#### **L. Criminal Background Checks**

At the time that students are reviewing this handbook an original criminal background check should have been completed by the students. Students who do not give permission to conduct the criminal background check will be barred from enrollment in the nursing program at Mennonite College of Nursing.

Students unable to participate due to criminal background check results, cannot successfully complete the curriculum.

##### Policy:

Mennonite College of Nursing requires that all nursing students complete criminal background checks. The criminal background checks will be conducted through a company selected by Mennonite College of Nursing. The cost associated with the background check process is the responsibility of the student. It should be noted that students receiving a positive criminal background check, whose offense prohibits them from being hired or maintaining employment at a healthcare employer under the Act, must obtain a waiver from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to continue in the nursing program. The Illinois Department of Professional Regulations will be contacted when this type of offense occurs on a student record.

##### Procedure:

1. Upon acceptance to the nursing program, students will be provided detailed information regarding the procedure for completing this requirement.
2. Students will be required to sign a consent form (Authorization for Criminal Background Investigation and Disclosure/Consent Form) that allows the College to conduct the criminal background check and to release results of criminal background checks to clinical agencies upon their request. Failure to sign the consent form and provide all necessary information shall result in the student being unable to begin or progress in the nursing program.
3. The criminal background check must be completed by the company designated by the college no sooner than 90 days prior to enrollment in the nursing program. Students may NOT use similar reports on file at other agencies to satisfy this requirement.
4. Background checks must be completed by the dates specified. Additional checks may be required if: 1) clinical agencies require criminal background checks more frequently or 2) the nursing student interrupts his/her program for one semester or longer. In such cases, the student will be required to obtain another criminal background check at the cost of the student. The College of Nursing reserves the right to require an additional background check during the program at the college's discretion.

5. Results of Criminal Background checks must be submitted to the College of Nursing. Results will be confidentially maintained by the College of Nursing separate from their academic record. Results will be maintained until the student graduates from the University.
6. The student is responsible for all fees for background checks. Costs may be subject to change and are beyond the control of the University or the College of Nursing.

#### Management of Results:

1. The Assistant Dean or designee will access the electronic report from the selected company.
2. A student whose background check results in a status of “no record” may enroll in nursing courses and continue in the nursing program.
3. A student whose background check results in a positive history (i.e. a background check that results in a criminal history) will be notified by the Assistant Dean or designee as soon as possible. Students may view their own results on the vendor website.
4. The Assistant Dean or designee will meet with the student to verify whether the criminal record is valid or invalid.
5. If the student believes that a record or conviction is erroneous, the student may request a fingerprint-based background check. The student is responsible for the cost of fees for fingerprint checks. If the fingerprint check reveals no criminal convictions, the student may continue in the nursing program and enroll in nursing courses. Results must be received prior to the beginning of the semester for the student to remain enrolled.
6. If the conviction is found to be valid and the offense is on the “crimes that disqualify” list from IDPH, the student will be required to secure a waiver from IDPH.
7. The student is responsible for contacting IDPH (217-782-2913) for instructions and an application for waiver. The process for a waiver may take several weeks or longer. The student may not enroll in nursing courses prior to attaining the waiver.
8. The IDPH waiver must be submitted to the Assistant Dean upon receipt.
9. The student may be allowed to continue in the program only after the IDPH waiver has been received by the Assistant Dean. Enrollment will be based on program capacity and availability of courses. If a waiver is not granted, the student will be withdrawn from the nursing program.
10. The college is not responsible for any student being ineligible for coursework, continued enrollment in the program, or subsequent licensure as a registered nurse.
11. The student is responsible for keeping the college updated on any and all changes in his/her criminal background status. False information or failure to disclose correct information at any time may be basis for dismissal from the program.

#### **M. Drug Testing**

Every student shall obtain a drug test through an approved college vendor. Students who do not provide a drug test or who provide a positive drug test will be removed from the nursing major. Students dismissed from the major for this reason may reapply with no guarantee of admission.

Additionally, when a positive drug test is provided the governing body that oversees the student's RN license (i.e. Illinois Department of Professional Regulations) will be contacted.

#### **N. Family Exclusion Statement**

In the interest of providing optimum learning experiences for students, the following points will be considered in scheduling theory and clinical course section assignments. When possible:

1. Students will not be placed in a theory course or clinical setting where a family member\* serves as faculty for that course or in that clinical course section.
2. Students will not be placed in a theory course or clinical course section in which another family member\* is enrolled as a student.

\*Family member includes a student's spouse, domestic partner, parents, brothers, sisters, and children.

#### **O. Academic Progress Policy**

Students will be dismissed from the major when a student receives a grade of less than a C in any two nursing courses or twice for the same course.

Students who receive less than a "C" in any one nursing course will delay their graduation by a minimum of 1 semester, depending on scheduled course offerings. Additionally, the number of nursing courses that a student may take in the semester following a nursing course failure may be limited.

#### **P. Readmission to the Nursing Major: RN to BSN**

Upon admission to the RN to BSN sequence, all students are expected to maintain consecutive fall-spring enrollment in nursing courses. Any student who has not been enrolled in nursing coursework for more than one fall or spring semester or who has been academically dismissed from the major must reapply to the college. Applicants interested in readmission should contact a College of Nursing academic advisor.

Students will be expected to respond to the following questions in essay format: 1) What specific events or situations contributed to lack of progression in the major? 2) Reflecting back on your involvement with the college and feedback obtained from faculty/staff, what would have you done differently to be successful? 3) What specific action plan do you have to move forward and be successful in the major if readmitted? A professional and/or faculty letter of support will be required for readmission consideration. Upon submission of the essays and letter of support, students will be contacted within 10 business days to arrange for an interview. Readmission applications must be received by June 1 for fall readmission and by January 1 for spring readmission. Summer readmission will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Readmission Committee reviewing the application will be comprised of the Assistant Dean for Student & Faculty Services, the Assistant Dean for the Undergraduate Program, and the RN to BSN Committee Chair or designate. In the event of non-consensus the readmission application will be reviewed with a broader college committee. The following points will guide the committee in making a readmission decision:

<b>Readmission Application Following Academic Dismissal from the Major</b>	<b>Readmission Application Following Non-Academic Dismissal from the University</b>	<b>Readmission Application Following Withdrawal from the Major or University</b>
Application must include student's accurate self-appraisal of factors that contributed to academic dismissal.	Application must include student's accurate self-appraisal of factors that contributed to non-academic dismissal.	Application must include student's accurate self-appraisal of factors that contributed to separation from the major and/or university.
<p>Committee will only consider substantive external reasons that impacted ability to be successful (i.e. family crisis or medical issue, etc...).</p> <p>The student must identify a specific and quantified plan to address factors that contributed to dismissal from the major.</p>	<p>The student must identify a specific and quantified plan to address factors that contributed to dismissal from the university.</p> <p>Students dismissed for ethical violations inconsistent with the values of professional nursing or for reasons that may disqualify them from maintaining licensure as a registered nurse will not be readmitted to the major.</p>	The application must include a thorough summary of factors that contributed to a decision to return to the major.
The student must be in good standing with the university to be readmitted to the major.	The student must be in good standing with the university to be readmitted to the major.	The student must be in good standing with the university to be readmitted to the major.
The student must be held accountable to participate in college support services (i.e. faculty consultation)	The student must identify any resources needed to be successful in the major if readmitted.	The student must identify any resources needed to be successful in the major if readmitted.

*Readmission to the major will be granted on a selective basis.*

*Upon readmission, the Dismissal Policy is modified as follows: Dismissal from the nursing major results when a student receives a grade of less than C in any one nursing course.*

**Q. Grading and Clinical Evaluation Policies**

In Public Health Nursing, the clinical experience is evaluated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory by the faculty. There is no separate grade for clinical. An unsatisfactory performance in the clinical setting

results in a grade of “F” for the course. A grade of “C” (2.00) must be attained to pass any nursing course.

### **III. Advisement**

#### **A. Advising**

Students are responsible for reading all electronic information shared by the academic advisor related to registration and degree requirements. Students are welcome to request an individual advising appointment throughout the semester as needed.

#### **B. Prescribed Plans of Study**

Upon admission to the RN to BSN sequence, students are expected to follow the prescribed plan of study under which the students were admitted. Deviation from the plan requires prior approval from the academic advisor. The college will not be held responsible for issues relating to time to degree or course availability for students who choose to deviate from their prescribed plan independently.

## C. Plans of Study

Full Time Plan of Study for Fall Admits:

### Fall Semester, Year 1

NUR 223	<b>Concepts of Professional Nursing I: RN to BSN</b>	4 hrs	Fall only
NUR 236	<b>Research for Professional Nursing Practice: RN to BSN</b>	3 hrs	Fall only
NUR 227	<b>Health Assessment Across the Lifespan: RN to BSN</b>	3hrs	Fall only
NUR 240	<b>Pathophysiology &amp; Pharmacotherapeutics in Nursing I: RN to BSN</b>	3 hrs	Fall only

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Total = **13 hrs**

### Spring Semester, Year 1

NUR 330	<b>Public Health Nursing: RN to BSN</b>	5 hrs	Spring only
NUR 238	<b>Cultural &amp; Spiritual Dimensions in Healthcare: RN to BSN</b>	1 hr	Spring only
NUR 340	<b>Pathophysiology &amp; Pharmacotherapeutics in Nursing II: RN to BSN</b>	3 hrs	Spring only
NUR 226	<b>Concepts of Professional Nursing II: RN to BSN</b>	3 hrs	Spring only

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Total =**12 hrs**

### Summer Semester, Year 1

NUR 341	<b>Leadership Dimensions in Professional Nursing: RN to BSN</b>	6 hrs	Summer only
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Total =**6 hrs**

*This plan does not include any general education requirements that you have left to complete. You can discuss these requirements with your advisor. Listed below are requirements for graduation:*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31 hours of nursing courses listed above   | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Studies Course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General education courses left to complete | <input type="checkbox"/> Register to Graduate  |

Part Time Plan of Study for Fall admits:

### **Fall Semester, Year 1**

NUR 223	<b>Concepts of Professional Nursing I: RN to BSN</b>	4 hrs	Fall only
NUR 236	<b>Research for Professional Nursing Practice: RN to BSN</b>	3 hrs	Fall only
			<b>Total = 7 hrs</b>

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### **Spring Semester, Year 1**

NUR 330	<b>Public Health Nursing: RN/BSN</b>	5 hrs	Spring only
NUR 238	<b>Cultural &amp; Spiritual Dimensions in Healthcare: RN to BSN</b>	1 hr	Spring only
			<b>Total = 6 hrs</b>

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### **Fall Semester, Year 2**

NUR 227	<b>Health Assessment Across the Lifespan: RN to BSN</b>	3hrs	Fall only
NUR 240	<b>Pathophysiology &amp; Pharmacotherapeutics in Nursing I: RN to BSN</b>	3 hrs	Fall only
			<b>Total = 6 hrs</b>

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### **Spring Semester, Year 2**

NUR 226	<b>Concepts of Professional Nursing II: RN to BSN</b>	3 hrs	Spring only
NUR 340	<b>Pathophysiology &amp; Pharmacotherapeutics in Nursing II: RN to BSN</b>	3 hrs	Spring only
			<b>Total = 6 hrs</b>

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### **Summer Semester, Year 2**

NUR 341	<b>Leadership Dimensions in Professional Nursing: RN to BSN</b>	6 hrs	Summer only
			<b>Total = 6 hrs</b>

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*This plan does not include any general education requirements that you have left to complete. You can discuss these requirements with your advisor. Listed below are requirements for graduation:*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31 hours of nursing courses listed above   | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Studies Course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General education courses left to complete | <input type="checkbox"/> Register to Graduate  |

#### **D. Career Preparation**

Illinois State University offers students supportive resources in career preparation through the Illinois State University Career Center. Located in the Student Services Building on campus, the Career Center offers a variety of services including career fairs, job search, interview preparation, feedback on resumes and cover letters, mock interviewing, and job placement. Students may find additional information at <http://www.careercenter.illinoisstate.edu/>.

#### **E. Submitting Request for Letter of Recommendation**

There is a formal process for requesting a letter of recommendation from a faculty or staff member. In order to ensure that faculty/staff are following FERPA guidelines, it is necessary for you to sign a FERPA waiver when requesting any verbal or written recommendation (even after you graduate). The attached guidelines are suggested steps for students to take so that faculty/staff members have informed information with which to provide your letter of reference. Please use this process when seeking out faculty/staff for a recommendation.

#### **F. Letter of Recommendation Request Form**

(Next Page)



# ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

*Mennonite College of Nursing*

## Student Recommendation Request Form

### Instructions for Students:

- Email faculty/ staff member a request to fill out a **Letter of Recommendation** on your behalf and specify why the student feels this individual is the best person to write this recommendation. Specify if the letter can be submitted on the standard Mennonite College of Nursing Student Recommendation Form (see next page), an alternative form, or if it needs to be a typed letter. If the faculty/staff member agrees to send a letter on your behalf, please proceed to the next steps.

- Complete the FERPA Waiver - Letter of Recommendation form found on the Registrar's web page at <http://www.registrar.ilstu.edu/ferpa/> and send to faculty/staff member.

- Send the faculty/staff member the following information:

*Student Name:*

*Nursing Sequence (i.e. Prelic, Accelerated, RN to BSN, etc...):*

*Year in School/Expected Graduation Date:*

*Today's Date (please allow 1 week minimum):*

*Date Requested by:*

*How many copies of the letter are being requested?*

*Position applying for?*

*Name and address of company (if not specified, the letter will be addressed "To Whom It May Concern"):*

*Is there any specific information you would like for the letter writer to know about you or this position (i.e. certain skills, proficiencies)?*

*Are there clinical instructors that the letter writer can contact about your clinical experience?*

*Does the position or externship have a link or flyer? If so, please include it.*

*Do you have a resume? If so, please send to letter writer.*

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### Instructions for Faculty/ Staff:

- Forward the signed FERPA form to Nancy Wagler at [njwagle@ilstu.edu](mailto:njwagle@ilstu.edu) (or fax it to 309-438-7711) to the MCN Office of Student and Faculty Services. OSFS will put a copy in the student's file and send the original FERPA form to the Registrar's Office.
- Upon receipt of the FERPA waiver complete the student's letter. Recommendations cannot be provided without a FERPA waiver completed.



**Student Recommendation**

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Recommender \_\_\_\_\_

Recommender's Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Recommender: \_\_\_\_\_

I  DO  DO NOT waive my right to view this recommendation.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

How well do you know the Candidate? Check one Slightly  Fairly well  Very well

Under what circumstances have you known the candidate?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Professional Qualities**

Academic Achievements	Superior	Above average	Average	Below Average	Have not observed
<b>Compassionate Provider of Patient-Centered Care</b>					
Student:					
• Serves as a provider of compassionate patient-centered care					
• Demonstrates a commitment to cultural and spiritual diversity					
• Demonstrates a commitment to caring and advocacy in promoting improved health capacities for individuals, families, and communities across a continuum of care settings					
<b>Resource Management</b>					
Student serves as a steward of resources who adapts to human, financial, material, and regulatory realities to coordinate innovative, effective, quality care					
<b>Empathic Communication</b>					
Student:					
• Demonstrates empathic communication					
• Effectively manages health information and evolving communication technologies to improve care coordination in meeting care outcomes					
<b>Collaboration</b>					
Student coordinates care activities among inter-professional members of the healthcare team to impact health outcomes of individuals, families, and communities					
<b>Critical Thinking</b>					
Student is an evolving critical thinker who uses theory, observation, evidence, leadership skills and practice experience to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities					
<b>Generalist</b>					
Student:					
• Demonstrates knowledge consistent with that of a generalist					
• Integrates knowledge and skills in applying evidence-based solutions to health issues					
• Promotes wellness for individuals, families, and communities					

Remarks:

Recommender's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **IV. College Support and Organizations**

### **A. Student Nurses Association**

All students are invited to be a part of one of Illinois State's Registered Student Organizations (RSO): SNA is the Student Nurses Association. All members of the Student Nurses Association must pay a small fee at the beginning of the academic school year. This nominal fee will be collected by SNA officers to cover expenses of the organization. The amount of the fee is determined by the SNA officers and advisors. With a strong commitment to community service and outreach, this group focuses on professional development, good citizenship, unified bonds with faculty, and feedback to the college regarding all aspects of undergraduate programs. Students unable to attend who wish to get involved may refer to meeting minutes that are circulated via the college listserv.

### **B. Sigma Theta Tau**

The Mennonite College of Nursing Honor Society was established in 1988 and became a recognized chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI). STTI is committed to fostering excellence, scholarship and leadership in nursing to improve health care worldwide. Membership to the Xi Pi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau is limited. See the Sigma Theta Tau website for more information.

<http://www.nursingsociety.org/>

### **C. Transcultural Nursing Experiences**

The College of Nursing has a history of association with groups who care for and serve people in need throughout the world. This tradition continues in a formalized academic manner through the Transcultural Nursing Experience. This experience provides an avenue for personal and professional growth beyond the traditional boundaries of classroom and clinical practicums.

Students are given the opportunity to examine nursing care in a location that is culturally different from central Illinois. The experience offers eligible nursing students the opportunity to participate in a 1-2 week transcultural experience, typically during the summer months. Please refer to the Transcultural Experience website to learn about the valuable experiences MCN students have gained through various transcultural nursing travels:

<http://nursing.illinoisstate.edu/prelicensure/transcultural.shtml>

Examples of national and international sites include:

- Austin, Texas
- Vladimir, Russia
- University of Brighton, England
- Londrina, Brazil

Please refer questions about transcultural nursing experiences to:

Melissa Moody, Transcultural Coordinator, [mkmoody@ilstu.edu](mailto:mkmoody@ilstu.edu)

Lynn Kennell, Transcultural Faculty Advisor, [lskenne@ilstu.edu](mailto:lskenne@ilstu.edu)

### **D. Milner Library Services**

Milner Library serves the entire Illinois State university campus and works closely with Mennonite College of Nursing to support the information needs of students, faculty and staff. The library subscribes to over 250 databases including CINAHL (Nursing), PubMed (includes Medline), Health and Psychosocial Instruments (research tools), Joanna Briggs Evidence Based Practice Database,

Cochrane, PsylINFO, and Web of Science. The librarian, who serves as the liaison to Mennonite College of Nursing, has had specialized training and experience in health sciences librarianship and is responsible for developing and maintaining a health sciences book, journal and media collection. Most journals, and a growing number of books, can be accessed electronically from the student's computer either on or off campus. Many nursing videos are available in packages such as Nursing Education in Video, Kanopy Video and Filmmaker's Library. These videos are streamed and can also be viewed from one's computer off-campus.

Milner Library is a federal depository receiving items from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Office of the Surgeon General, the National Institute on Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A large collection of health sciences resources for children and adolescents can be found in the Library's Learning Resource Center. These resources include films, elementary and high school health sciences textbooks, kits, and stuffed animals complete with teeth and toothbrushes designed for teaching oral health.

Sources not available from Milner Library can be obtained free of charge by using the Library's document delivery service. Requested journal articles are normally received within 4-5 days, often within 48 hours, in an email containing a link to the article's PDF.

Students are:

- Able to access, from their on-campus or off-campus computer, PDFs of many required readings by clicking on "Course Reserves" found on the library's homepage. Required DVDs, not streamed for viewing from one's computer, can be requested for in-library use at the check-out counter. A special group viewing room is available on floor 5.
- Able to check out books from Milner Library, or 80 other academic libraries in Illinois, by using their Redbird card as a library card.
- Able to scan materials to a flash drive using the many scanners available in the library. This service is free of charge.
- Able to make arrangements with the Nursing librarian for consultations. Consultations can take place over the phone (309 438-8336), via email or by meeting with the librarian. The librarian can usually assist "drop-ins" who visit her/his office, # 515, on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Milner Library.
- Able to use within the library all undergraduate textbooks purchased and housed in the reference section of the library.
- Able to access a special Nursing Guide available from the library's homepage by clicking on "Subject Guides" found under "Help Videos and Guides".
- Encouraged to make purchase suggestions or provide comments on how the library can better serve them.

Reference assistance is available by contacting the nursing/health sciences librarian via email or calling (309) 438-8336. Instant messaging service is also available from the library's homepage during daytime hours and can be used for general uncomplicated questions.

### **E. Computer Lab**

Mennonite College of Nursing offers a Computer Lab in Edwards 305 to nursing students and faculty for College testing, Success Plan testing and general use. Success Plan testing has priority. Faculty wishing to utilize this lab for classes or testing must contact Lesa Villafuerte in the Assistant Undergraduate Dean's Office to reserve lab. This lab is available to nursing students for work on campus during open lab hours. Hours are posted on the door at Edwards 305 can be obtained by calling the lab at 309-438-2701. The lab is a quiet zone so noise-control is important.

## **F. Mennonite M.E.N. Group**

The Mennonite M.E.N. Group includes an acronym to impress that Mennonite **Men** are **Excellent Nurses**. Men in nursing stand out as a minority but are an important part of the nursing profession. The Mennonite M.E.N. Group is open to all men interested and associated with the nursing profession. The group meets once a month during the fall and spring semesters. Participants are exposed to social networking, including interactions with male students, alumni and professionals. M.E.N. explores the history of men in nursing and invokes discussion about clinical and social issues men encounter as a minority in the profession.

## **V. Evaluations**

### **A. Faculty/Course Evaluations**

Toward the end of each semester, students will be asked to complete online faculty and course evaluation forms. If two or more instructors are teaching a class, an evaluation form will be completed for each. These evaluations are held until after semester grades are submitted to appropriate University personnel. Once the semester grades have been submitted, faculty are given the evaluation data for review. Constructive feedback is used to improving learning in classroom and clinical experience.

### **B. Undergraduate Grading and Clinical Evaluation Policies**

The following grading scale will be used in all undergraduate nursing courses:

Grade	Scale	Grade Point
A	90-100%	4
B	82-89%	3
C	74-81%	2
D	66-73%	1
F	65% & under	0

Combined unit and final exam scores must be 74% or higher in order for students to receive a passing grade in the course. If the student does not accrue 74% on the combined unit and final exams, the student will fail the course with a D or F, depending on the number of points accrued.

In a clinical course, the clinical experience is evaluated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory by the clinical faculty. There is no separate grade for clinical. If the student's clinical performance is satisfactory, the grade for the course is the theory (lecture-discussion) grade. An unsatisfactory performance in the clinical setting results in a grade of "F" for the course. A grade of "C" (2.00) must be attained to pass any nursing course.

### **C. Academic Progress Reports**

Students will receive a Course Progress Report to indicate a performance deficiency if they:

1. Receive a grade less than "C" on a test or major course project.

2. Receive a theory grade less than “C” at any point during the course.
3. Demonstrate unsatisfactory clinical performance.

Students who receive notice of performance deficiencies are responsible for arranging a conference with the instructor within one week of receiving the progress report in order to clarify the problem and identify methods to remedy the situation.

## **VI. Appeals Process**

### **A. Student Grievance**

Mennonite College of Nursing endorses the Student Grievance Process of Illinois State University as outlined in the following website at

<http://www.deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/conflict/conduct/code/>

As outlined in this policy, “A grievance is defined as a complaint arising out of any alleged unauthorized or unjustified act or decision by a member of the University community which in any way that adversely affects the status, rights, or privileges of any student in a substantive way.”

Students can determine if an action can be challenged through the grievance process by contacting Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution at 309-438-8621.

Student Grievance Procedure:

#### Informal Process

- a. If a student has a grievance or complaint, the student should attempt an informal resolution with faculty or staff member in question.
- b. If this proves unsuccessful, the student should seek informal resolution with the Associate Dean.

#### Formal Process

- a. If an informal resolution is not successful, the student may proceed to initiating a formal complaint/grievance.
- b. To initiate the formal process, the student must file a written formal complaint within 30 working days of the alleged grievance. The written complaint must:
  1. Be word processed
  2. Be signed and dated
  3. Include student’s current address and phone number
  4. Be concise and specific, with names and dates wherever relevant and possible
  5. Clearly state the act or decision being challenged
  6. Clearly state why the act or decision is unauthorized or unjust

7. Briefly describe attempts to reach an agreement through informal discussions with the instructor and/or course leaders.
- c. Failure to include all required information will result in a delay of the grievance process. Written complaints will not be reviewed until all information is provided.
  - d. The Associate Dean will review the formal complaint and meet with the student and/or faculty/staff member within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint.
  - e. The Associate Dean will attempt to facilitate resolution of the grievance at the College level. The Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution is available to provide a 3rd party mediator for internal grievance meetings. When this service is requested, the student should contact Community Rights & Responsibilities a minimum of 3 days prior to the scheduled meeting with the Program Director to arrange for a mediator to be present.
  - f. If a resolution is not achieved within the College, a grievance request may be filed by the student with the University Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Office or the Office of Equal Opportunities and Access as appropriate. The Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution is responsible for coordinating the formal student grievance process at the university level. This process exists to provide students an opportunity to request that the University review actions or decisions of University faculty and staff members. The Student Grievance Committee is responsible for reviewing student complaints and investigating cases it deems necessary of investigation.
  - g. Information about the grievance process can be obtained through the Illinois State University Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Office at:  
<http://www.deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/conflict/conduct/code/>

## **B. Final Course Grade Challenge Policy**

Policy (<http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/academic/4-1-20.shtml>)

A student may challenge a final course grade if the student has a reasonable belief the grade was assigned in an arbitrary or capricious manner and is unable to resolve his or her concerns with the faculty member who assigned the grade (refer to Policy 3.3.12A Faculty Responsibilities to Student, in particular items 5 and 6, <http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/employee/3-3-12a.shtml>). This policy applies only to final course grades and does not apply to course work, mid-terms or other grades awarded during a semester.

Before filing a challenge under this policy, the student must discuss his or her concerns with the faculty member and make every effort to resolve the situation. Faculty members must carefully consider the student's concerns and make a reasonable effort to resolve the issues raised by the student.

A student may only challenge a final course grade under this policy, if the student has discussed the concern with the faculty member and can demonstrate that the grade was awarded in an arbitrary or capricious manner. For purposes of this policy, arbitrary or capricious means (a) the assignment of a final course grade was made on a basis other than the student's academic performance in the course, (b) the assignment of a final course grade was based on standards that differ unreasonably from the standards applied to other students in the course, or (c) the assignment of a final course

grade in a manner that substantially or unreasonably departed from the instructor's articulated standards. This policy will not be used to review the judgment of an instructor in assessing the quality of a student's work, to require another faculty member to re-grade or re-examine a student's work, or in cases involving alleged violations of academic integrity.

### Procedure

- a. If after discussion with the faculty member the student believes, in good faith, that the grade is arbitrary or capricious, or if there is an inability to reach the faculty member, the student may challenge the grade by sending a letter to the Associate Dean for Academics no later than 10 business days after the start of the academic semester following the semester for which the grade was awarded. This letter must (a) identify the course, program, semester, and faculty member that awarded the grade; (b) state the basis of the challenge, including all facts relevant to the challenge and the reasons the student believes the grade is arbitrary or capricious; (c) indicate the date(s) the student consulted with the faculty member regarding his or her concern(s) and summarize the outcome of those discussion(s); and (d) attach any supporting documentation the student believes should be considered in the challenge, including the syllabus.
- b. Upon receiving a written challenge to a final course grade, the Associate Dean shall forward a copy of the challenge to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member then has 10 business days from receipt of the challenge to provide a written response. The student will receive a copy of the faculty member's response; however, any information that would violate the privacy rights of other individuals will not be released to the student.
- c. The Associate Dean will review the submissions and, if necessary, investigate to determine if the grade was arbitrary or capricious based on the definition outlined in this policy. A written decision will be issued to both parties within 10 business days.
- d. Both parties have a right to appeal the Associate Dean's decision by filing a written appeal within 5 business days to the Office of the Provost in writing. The written appeal should state the basis for the appeal and attach all relevant written documentation.
- e. The Provost shall have a standing committee designated as The Final Course Grade Committee which consists of three members (Three faculty members and two students) appointed by the Provost (or designee). The students would be recommended to the Provost by the SGA. Care shall be taken that no member of the committee know either party in the complaint. The Final Course Grade Committee will review the submissions and may, at the Committee's discretion, decide to hear statements from the parties. Following deliberations, the Committee will issue a recommendation to the Provost (or designee) indicating: 1) whether the Committee finds the grade to be arbitrary or capricious and 2) the Committee's recommendations for the disposition of the appeal. The Committee recommendation will be issued within 5 business days of the Committee's decision.
- f. The Provost (or designee) will review the Committee recommendation and render a final decision in writing to the student, the faculty member, and the chair within 5 business days of receipt of the Committee recommendation. The Provost's decision shall be final without further appeal.

This policy supersedes any provisions in the student code of conduct immediately.

## **VII. Health**

### **A. Health Insurance Requirements**

All full time and part time Mennonite College of Nursing RN to BSN students are required to carry adequate health/accident insurance during the entire period of participation in the RN to BSN sequence. Coverage must be privately procured as students in the RN to BSN sequence are not eligible for the University's Group Health Insurance Plan. Proof of student health insurance will be verified at the beginning of each academic year. Preventative health issues, injuries, illnesses, and/or other conditions associated with being a nursing student are the sole responsibility of the student. Financial obligations relating to the health of the student should be processed through the student's health insurance policy. Any remaining financial obligations are the responsibility of the student. If a student cannot verify proof of insurance, the student will not be allowed to register for any college course until the deficiency is met. Changes in health insurance plans should be immediately reported to the student's academic advisor.

### **B. Health and Safety Compliance Requirements**

All students entering the Nursing Program are expected to be in compliance with all Health Requirements of the broader university and Mennonite College of Nursing. These requirements include, but are not limited to the following: immunizations, blood titers, TB skin test, influenza vaccination, and a drug test. Given that some clinical sites will require students to provide verification that they have completed certain immunization requirements, students are responsible for providing a copy of the health record directly to the clinical agency requesting the information. Therefore, it is vital that students keep a copy of ALL immunization records in a secure file for easy access at all time when enrolled in nursing courses.

Note that these requirements are subject to change at any time period during the academic year as dictated by clinical placements. Compliance with all health requirements is expected. Those students not in compliance with these requirements by specified timeframes may NOT register for courses, participate in courses and/or clinical until deficiencies are completed.

### **C. Change of Address**

All students need to notify the MCN academic advisement office regarding any changes in address or telephone numbers to ensure students receive proper mailings. Students must also update their information through the Go.IllinoisState portal.

### **D. Absence Due to Illness or Injury**

The college expects regular participation in online learning activities. In the event that a student needs to be absent from online discussion/testing due to illness or injury, it their responsibility to contact the appropriate person as soon as possible to inform them of the absence.

#### **a. Notification of absence from on-line course(s):**

- Notify the appropriate faculty member(s) of absence due to illness or injury.
- Discuss impact of prolonged absence with faculty member(s) and academic advisor to determine if a change in the plan of study is warranted. Note that changes to the plan of study may extend time-to-degree.

## **VIII. Graduation**

### **A. University Degrees with Distinction**

The student must have completed at least 50 semester hours\* at Illinois State University to be eligible for a degree with distinction. Students who have an accumulated GPA of 3.90 through 4.00 are graduated summa cum laude; those with a GPA of 3.80 through 3.89 are graduated magna cum laude; and those who have a GPA of 3.65 to 3.79 are graduated cum laude. Transcript notations of graduating cum laude, magna cum laude, and summa cum laude are based on the cumulative GPA after the student's final semester. Although students may earn degrees with distinction, they will only be awarded at the end of the summer term.

\* An exception to the 50 completed hour requirement is in place for the RN to BSN and Accelerated sequences due to the timeframe in which those sequence program hours are earned. Despite not meeting the 50 hour requirement at the time honors are calculated, these students will receive honors recognition at the May commencement ceremony if they have the qualifying GPA as noted above.

### **B. College Awards**

Each year a student and faculty are recognized with college – specific honors and awards at the May Commencement Ceremony. Students will be given the opportunity to vote for these student and faculty awards in April. The following award description identifies the criteria for the student award.

#### Outstanding RN to BSN Achievement Award:

The recipient of this award demonstrates through program on-line communications and academic excellence their outstanding ability to professionalize the human capacity to care, utilize essential problem solving methodology, effectively communicate in all professional interactions, and demonstrate professional practice in nursing through the application of theory-based knowledge.

### **C. Application for Graduation**

Students must apply for graduation prior to specified deadlines. In general, students should apply to graduate no later than four months prior to their anticipated graduation date. Students should refer to the Graduation Services website <http://www.graduationservices.ilstu.edu/> for specific information about graduation.

### **D. Commencement Ceremony**

Students graduating from Mennonite College of Nursing are invited to attend Commencement ceremonies at the time designated by the University. RN to BSN students graduating in August may participate in the May Commencement ceremonies. Students are invited to purchase commemorative nursing pins through the college which will be handed to them at their Commencement ceremony. Information about nursing pins will be provided to students several months prior to Commencement ceremonies.