HANDBOOK FOR BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

MISSION
The nursing program at Texas A&M University-Central Texas offers nursing education to the registered nurse on the baccalaureate level, to serve the diverse population of Central Texas which includes the military and their families. The nursing faculty prepare excellent nurses to practice in acute care settings or outpatient services, or give them the tools to continue in the pursuit of advanced degrees.

GOALS
• Innovative web-based course delivery and evaluation methods
• Educating registered nurses on the baccalaureate level to advance in their career and/or attend graduate nursing programs
• Promoting service learning activities in practicum-based courses

RESPONSIBILITY
Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the policies and information contained in this handbook. Every effort has been made to make this publication as complete and accurate as possible, but changes may occur at any time. The 2017-2018 Student Handbook was prepared by Carolyn A. Ramsey, Nursing Program Director/Asst. Lecturer at A&M-Central Texas.

This handbook is available through the Nursing Program. A&M-Central Texas, an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer and Educator, is committed to excellence through diversity, and is a member of the Texas A&M University System since 2009. Copyright ©2009 Texas A&M University-Central Texas.

ACCREDITATION
Texas A&M University-Central Texas is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award baccalaureate, master’s, and specialist degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of A&M-Central Texas.

The baccalaureate degree in nursing at A&M-Central Texas is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) (http://www.aacnnursing.org/CCNE).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
The student learning outcomes of the B.S.N. program are based on Competency Goals Statements from The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice, American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Baccalaureate Essentials</th>
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<tr>
<td>Examine professional nursing from historical and contemporary perspectives, including the philosophy and theoretical foundations that define professional nursing practice.</td>
<td>Essential VIII: Professionalism and Professional Values.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Define personal, professional, and cultural values as influences upon nursing practice.</td>
<td>Essential VIII: Professionalism and Professional Values.</td>
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<td>Identify the use of nursing informatics from multiple perspectives within nursing practice.</td>
<td>Essential IV: Information Management and Application of Patient Care Technology</td>
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<td>Develop the skills to complete a comprehensive health assessment of an individual of any age.</td>
<td>Essential IX: Baccalaureate Generalist Nursing Practice.</td>
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<td>Apply research findings for critical thinking in case management, integration of pathophysiology, psychosocial, cultural concepts and professional values to coordinate care in a variety of settings</td>
<td>Essential III: Scholarship and Evidence-Based Practice. Essential IX: Baccalaureate Generalist Nursing Practice.</td>
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FINANCIAL AID
A&M-Central Texas University offers student financial aid in the form of loans, grants, work opportunities, and scholarships. For more information regarding financial assistance, please contact our Financial Aid staff.

LIBRARY
- Warrior Hall 1001 Leadership Place, Killeen, TX 76549
- Phone: (254) 519-5798
- Website: http://tamuct.libguides.com/index

Professional librarians and staff are available to assist students with the use of library resources and services.

STUDENTS’ ROLE and PARTICIPATION IN INSTITUTIONAL DECISION MAKING
Students provide input into the decision-making process through the Student Government Association. Student representatives may serve on standing university committees. Various advisory groups and committees, many of which include students, are formed to address specific issues. In addition, the university encourages students not serving on formal bodies to express their ideas and suggestions so that they may be considered in the making of policy decisions. Contact the Department of Student Affairs to join the Student Government Association. Student representatives will be appointed or elected to serve on university committees.

Nursing student representatives are selected each fall for a one-year term to represent the nursing students. They attend a portion of faculty meetings and are given an opportunity to offer suggestions. They are also involved with pinning ceremonies.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
GENERAL
- Students are responsible for adhering to all the requirements in both the Texas A&M University-Central Texas Student Handbook and in the Texas A&M University-Central Texas Nursing Student Handbook.
- Students are responsible for reading the syllabi and guidelines for each nursing course and seeking clarification from the course instructor. Students are responsible for following course guidelines.
- Students are expected to be prompt for any synchronous online meetings and are responsible for all material presented and assigned.
- Assignments will be posted on the date due unless prior arrangements are made with the appropriate instructor. If a paper is submitted late, points will be deducted from the grade of the paper. If a paper is deemed incomplete by the instructor, the paper may be returned to the student to correct; late points will be deducted as indicated.
- It is the student’s responsibility to discuss questions concerning grades on written assignments or examinations with the appropriate instructor.
- Essential Competency Requirements of the Nursing Student. All students accepted into the Nursing Program are expected to have the following six competencies in order to effectively and safely perform the responsibilities of a nursing student:

Analyze a real work problem and develop a proposed solution using the concepts of leadership and management.


Identify means by which professional nurses affect quality of health care delivery based on political, legal, ethical, and policy issues.


STUDENT SERVICES
All of the student services available to A&M-Central Texas students are also available to nursing students. These can be found in the Student Handbook. The following list is not all inclusive.

BOOKSTORE
The bookstore is located by the main entrance of Founder’s Hall.

- Phone: (254) 200-1447.
- Email: tamuct@bkstr.com.
- https://www.bkstr.com/tamuctstore/home/

COUNSELING SERVICES
- Warrior Hall Room 207L
- Phone: (254) 501-5956 (Monday-Thursday 8 am - 5 pm)
- Fax: (254) 519-8703

Many employees and students encounter a variety of personal, social, and academic issues that may call for assistance beyond advice provided by friends and family. The Counseling Center provides confidential counseling and education to all A&M-Central Texas employees and currently enrolled students at no additional cost, in order to facilitate the retention, adjustment, and development of members of the university community. Counseling can assist in achieving personal and educational goals and provide an opportunity to have a professional counselor listen empathically, help clarify ideas and concerns toward resolving new or long-standing problem situations, as well as provide useful learning and self-management skills, and improve relationships. Services include individual, group, and relationship counseling, crisis and consultative sessions, and informational presentations about health issues. There are no additional fees for employees and currently enrolled students. The Counseling Center also serves the campus community through consultation and outreach services. Counseling is also available to family members of students and employees as well as community members through the counseling services practicum training clinic, The Community Counseling and Family Therapy Center. The practicum clinic offers low sliding-scale fees for counseling offered by graduate-level practicum students who are supervised by licensed faculty members. Please contact counseling services for further information regarding this clinic.
• Motor Skills: Candidates should have sufficient motor function so that they are able to execute movements required to provide general care and treatment to patients in all health care settings.

• Sensory/Observation: A candidate must be able to acquire the information presented through demonstrations and experiences in the basic and nursing sciences. He or she must be able to observe a patient accurately, at a distance and close at hand, and observe and appreciate nonverbal communications when performing nursing assessment and intervention or administering medications. The candidate must be capable of perceiving the signs of disease and infection as manifested through physical examination. Such information is derived from visual images of the body surfaces, palpable changes in various organs and tissues, and auditory information (patient voice, heart tones, bowel and lung sounds).

• Communication: The candidate must communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, patients, family, and other professionals. He or she must express his or her ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively in oral and written forms.

• Cognitive: A candidate must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, and synthesize in the context of undergraduate nursing study. The candidate must be able to quickly read and comprehend extensive written material. He or she must also be able to evaluate and apply information and engage in critical thinking in the virtual classroom and clinical setting.

• Behavioral/Emotional: A candidate must possess the emotional health required for the full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all assignments. In addition, he or she must be able to maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff, and other professionals under all circumstances including highly stressful situations. The candidate must know that his or her values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and experiences affect his or her perceptions and relationships with others. The candidate must be able and willing to examine and change his or her behavior when it interferes with productive individual or group relationships. The candidate must possess skills and experience necessary for effective and harmonious relationships in diverse academic and working environments.

• Professional Conduct: Candidates must possess the ability to reason morally and practice nursing in an ethical manner. Candidates must be willing to learn and abide by professional standards of practice. He or she must possess attributes that include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and tolerance. Candidates must be able to engage in patient care delivery in all settings and be able to deliver care to all patient populations including but not limited to children, adolescents, adults, developmentally disabled persons, medically compromised patients, and vulnerable adults. Texas A&M Health Science Center Nursing Student Handbook (2009-2010).

• Failure to comply with a directive of a university employee acting in the realm of his/her authority will be considered misconduct and subject to disciplinary action.

ABSENCE POLICY
Class attendance, whether online or face to face, is an important factor for academic success and each student should accept the responsibility for regular attendance. A&M-Central Texas recognizes each student as an adult with adult attitudes and responsibilities and further recognizes the unique relationship between faculty and students and the responsibility each has toward the other.

The following guidelines have been structured for implementation of A&M-Central Texas’s student absence policy: Student absences are considered by the university to be a matter strictly between the individual student and faculty member. The faculty member has the responsibility and authority to determine if make-up work can be done due to absences. Students may request make-up consideration for valid and verifiable reasons such as illness, death in the immediate family, legal proceedings, or participation in sponsored university activities. It is the responsibility of students who participate in university-sponsored activities to obtain a written explanation for their absence from the faculty/staff member responsible for the activity.

ADMISSIONS
GENERAL EDUCATION AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Texas A&M University-Central Texas is an upper-level university; therefore, the core curriculum/general education courses and nursing prerequisites must be taken at another institution. Core curricula may also be accepted from other institutions. Students may enter the nursing program with up to six (6) semester credit hours of courses remaining.

ADMISSION to the university
All students must be admitted to the University according to applicable policies at the time of application found in Undergraduate Catalog Admissions Requirements (http://catalog.tamuct.edu/undergraduate-information/undergraduate-admission-requirements).

ADMISSION to the Nursing Program
Requirements for admission to the Nursing Program include:
1. Admission to A&M-Central Texas;
2. Have an unencumbered Texas Registered Nursing license, or of a Compact State, or be in the last semester or an Associates of Nursing Degree program; and
3. Have completed the non-nursing courses for the BSN degree. As an exception, may have up to six (6) hours remaining.

HOW to APPLY for PROGRAM ADMISSION
1. Submit Application to the Nursing Program (Appendix A) (https://www.tamuct.edu/coas/docs/nursing/Nursing-Student-Handbook-TAMUCT-RNtoBSN.docx) to Department Chair.
2. Submit a reference form (Appendix B) (https://www.tamuct.edu/coas/docs/nursing/Nursing-Student-Handbook-TAMUCT-...
Students may progress in the program when the following conditions are met:

1. A minimum grade of C in all required nursing courses.
2. Students must complete a minimum of 30 hours from A&M-Central Texas.
3. Maintenance of an unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse in the state of Texas (or Compact State) through the duration of time in the program.
4. Students must request permission to repeat a nursing course due to failure or withdrawal.
   a. A letter of petition must be written to the Nursing Department Chair and must include:
      i. The reason for withdrawal or failure to successfully complete the course.
      ii. Steps which the student will take to ensure successful completion of the course when repeated.
      iii. Date corrective steps will be completed.
   b. The department chair will take into consideration:
      i. The student's overall academic performance, GPA on required courses, and review the transcript for a pattern of withdrawals, and the number of repeated courses.
      ii. The student's plans for corrective action and reasons for failure. The feasibility of the plan is also assessed.
      iii. The student file, to determine adherence to the program standards and performance in the present or previous courses.
   c. If permission is granted to repeat a course, it will be on a space available basis.
   d. Students who earn below a grade of C on any two courses in the nursing program will not be eligible for progression.
5. Students must complete the Nursing Program within five (5) calendar years.

**READMISSION POLICY**

Students who have an interruption, as defined as, an inability to achieve a passing grade, withdrawal, or non-enrollment, must gain permission before taking any nursing course.

1. If the absence was due to a health problem, a physician's clearance must be submitted in order to return to classes.
2. Students must have the appropriate prerequisite courses to progress and meet with an advisor prior to registering to develop a degree plan to determine if all curricular and program requirements are met.
3. If the student has been out two long semesters or more, the student must also:
   a. Submit a completed nursing program application;
   b. Adhere to the most current catalog requirements;
   c. Fulfill any requirements specified by the Nursing Director.

**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**NURS 3300. Professional Role Transitions. 3 Semester Credit Hours.**

(WI) Apply critical thinking skills to examine personal and professional growth, the nurse's role in professional practice, and philosophies of professional nursing. Nursing theories, the foundations of professional nursing practice, are examined. The concepts of nursing informatics are explored as they interface with ethics, cultural competency, and health promotion concepts. These explorations are accomplished utilizing communication technologies such as, learning management systems, the Internet, library electronic databases, and online seminars. Information technology resources are employed for students to demonstrate skills in electronic communications that are essential to professional nursing practice and that require basic competencies in nursing informatics.

**NURS 3304. Nursing Research. 3 Semester Credit Hours.**

(WI) This course is a study of basic research methodologies and an examination of the professional nurse's role in evidence-based practice. Students employ high level critical thinking and informatics skills to explore, identify, and critically appraise the credibility of Internet sources and library electronic databases to gather relevant evidence across professions that answer questions about nursing practice. Through this examination, students increase their awareness of the impact of culture and ethics on the research process and evidence-based practice.

**NURS 3307. Health Assessment. 3 Semester Credit Hours.**

In this course, the concepts and principles underlying the assessment of the health status of culturally diverse individuals are presented. Emphasis is placed on reviewing and renewing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills to obtain health histories and discover physical and psychosocial findings in the well person. Emphasis is placed on health assessment as a systematic and organized examination that will provide accurate data to form valid nursing diagnoses and plans of care. Practicum experiences allow students to enhance comprehensive health assessment and analysis skills. Prerequisite(s): NURS 3300.
NURS 3317. Pathophysiology for the Registered Nurse. 3 Semester Credit Hours.
The focus of this course is to understand the pathophysiologic basis for disease processes in adults and children. Central concepts will address symptoms, treatment, and prognosis. The major direction of this course will be on clinical application of findings that underlie pathogenesis and provide a basis for evidence-based practice. The course is specifically designed to meet the needs of nursing students.

NURS 3330. Nursing Care of Older Adults. 3 Semester Credit Hours.
In this course the aging process will be examined with a focus on risk reduction and disease prevention in the older adult. The concept of healthy aging will be explored. Strategies for health promotion, restoration, and maintenance of the older adult will be examined. Expected professional nurse competencies in providing and directing culturally sensitive care of the older adult across the wellness/illness continuum will be emphasized. Prerequisite(s): NURS 3300.

NURS 4212. Professional Issues for the Registered Nurse. 2 Semester Credit Hours.
This course provides opportunities for analysis of elements that reflect the progressive development of the role of the professional nurse. It formalizes a framework that integrates the issues of political action, socio-legal concerns, multiculturalism, and ethical models into nursing practice through the debate process. Prerequisite(s): NURS 3300.

NURS 4405. Care of Individuals and Families. 4 Semester Credit Hours.
This course emphasizes the importance of the professional nurse's engagement in ethical and evidence-based practice. Students examine nursing care management concepts as they apply critical thinking skills to integrate the concepts of pathophysiology, pharmacology, psychosocial behavior, and cultural competence to coordinate quality and safe care in a variety of settings. Students experience the nurse educator role as they employ teaching and learning principles and nursing informatics to initiate interventions with individuals and families that highlight health promotion activities. Practicum experiences are individualized. Prerequisite(s): NURS 3300.

NURS 4410. Leadership and Management for the Registered Nurse. 4 Semester Credit Hours.
In this course, theories and principles of human behavior in organizations are examined, including an exploration of leadership roles in professional nursing practice. Students analyze concepts that reflect the progressive development of the nurse leader who applies critical thinking and information technology skills to evidence-based practice. The role of the nurse leader as an inter-professional team member is also examined. The importance of the nurse leader as a role model for continued professional growth through lifelong learning is emphasized. Issues related to political action, socio-legal concerns, cultural diversity, and ethics in professional nursing practice are explored with an emphasis on the advocacy role of the nurse. Practicum experiences are individualized. Prerequisite(s): NURS 3300.

NURS 4506. Community Health. 5 Semester Credit Hours.
In this course, students are introduced to public/community health nursing practice and the role of systems in the care of culturally diverse populations. The role of the professional nurse as part of an inter-professional team in health promotion, disease prevention, and management of chronic health problems in community settings is explored. Students apply critical thinking and information technology skills to develop and implement evidence-based projects that positively impact the quality of life of identified populations. Practicum experiences are individualized. Prerequisite(s): NURS 3300.

GRADING AND EVALUATIONS

GRADING
A four-point (4.0) grading system is utilized in Nursing. The grading scale is as follows:

- A: Excellent, Four grade points per credit hour 90 - 100
- B: Good, Three grade points per credit hour 80 - 89
- C: Fair, Two grade points per credit hour 70 - 79
- D*: Poor, One grade point per credit hour 60 - 69
- F*: Failure, No grade points Below 60
- I: Incomplete, No grade points
- NR: Not Reported
- W: Withdrawn

* Minimum academic requirements for retention in the program are a grade of “C” in all courses. A grade of “D” is considered a failing grade in the Nursing Program. Students may be advised to seek other degree options after unsuccessfully repeating a course.

An “I” must be completed before the end of the subsequent semester in which the “I” was given. The grade of “I” will automatically become an “F” if not removed within the prescribed time limit; however, an extension may be requested by the instructor when the request for an Incomplete Grade form is submitted with the submission of grades, provided that a definitive time frame for completion is presented. An extension will be granted only for circumstances beyond the control of the student.

A grade of incomplete will be marked on the grade roster at the end of the term. It is the responsibility of the instructor to initiate and complete a Change of Grade form. The instructor will complete a Request for an Incomplete Grade form that is filed with the Registrar's Office, which includes a statement of the instructor's reason for giving an incomplete and a statement concerning the remaining work to be completed in a specified time frame. A copy of the form will be sent to the student.

EVALUATION OF FACULTY, COURSES, AND PROGRAM

- Student participation in faculty, course, and program evaluations is both the student's right and responsibility. The process of evaluation is viewed as the student’s opportunity for input into curriculum development and the assessment of faculty effectiveness and student learning needs. Students are therefore encouraged to participate in all evaluations which will be completed at the end of each semester.
- The evaluations are anonymous.

DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

Any of the following disciplinary actions may be utilized with students in an effort to correct academic deficiencies and/or unprofessional conduct. Professional conduct is marked by honesty and ethical behavior, accountability, confidentiality, professional conduct and courtesy, safety, responsibility within the academic institution and clinical agency, and competency and growth. The disciplinary actions which are invoked will depend on the severity of the infraction (an act of omission or commission) and potential result of the student's actions(s).
The disciplinary action taken will also depend on whether there is a pattern of behavior demonstrated.

Written Warning
• A faculty member will meet with the student to discuss an area of concern. The concern and corrective action, if needed, is documented and signed on a Faculty/Student Interaction Form (Appendix B).
• The original of the interaction form is kept in the student’s file. A copy will be given to the student and the faculty member. The Nursing Program Director and course leader will be notified of the written warning.

Contract
• When a corrective action is indicated, a written contract will be formulated.
• The contract will include a description of the concern and a plan of action to correct the problem(s) and/or requirements to be met, as well as the expected time period/limit for the plan of action.
• The contract will also state the consequences for failure to meet the stipulations and/or further violation of professional standards, which may include course failure and inability to progress in the program.
• Follow-up will take place at the end of the period specified on the contract. The faculty member and student will meet to evaluate the disciplinary action. The results will be stated in writing on the interaction form.

Disciplinary Action is addressed in the A&M-Central Texas Student Handbook and is to be followed by students in the Nursing Program.

Disciplinary Appeal: An appeal procedure is available for students. The formal appeal procedure is outlined in the A&M-Central Texas Student Handbook. In order to appeal, a formal written request must be made to the Director of Student Affairs and the Associate Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs within 48 hours after the disciplinary decision has been rendered.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES
General Grievance Policy
Prior to filing a formal grievance, students are encouraged to attempt to resolve the concern directly with the individuals involved. Students will find that most situations can be effectively addressed in this manner. In general, students wishing to review the action of an individual or department should direct their questions to the persons responsible for the individual or department. Students are provided opportunities to address complaints and grievances through established university procedures for the following: sexual harassment, employment, admissions to the university, disciplinary action, parking citations, academic matters (including grade disputes), and disability accommodations, etc. Procedures for handling specific concerns should be followed.

• Any student wishing to file a grievance shall notify the Associate Director of Student Conduct of that complaint in writing.
• The written notice should state specifically what the grievance is, giving the name, address and telephone number of the student, specific date(s) and, if possible, of any other persons allegedly involved either as witnesses or participants. The student should also state specifically what remedy the student seeks.
• The written grievance must be signed by the student, hereinafter referred to as the complainant, and filed within 30 university working days of the alleged incident. Determination as to whether complaints filed after this deadline will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
• An investigation, as may be appropriate, shall follow the filing of the grievance. In most instances, the investigation shall be conducted by the Associate Director of Student Conduct. These rules contemplate informal but thorough investigations, affording all involved parties an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the grievance. The investigation process generally is completed within 30 university working days from the time the written allegation is filed.
• A written determination as to the validity of the grievance and a description of the resolution, if any, shall be issued by the investigator and a copy forwarded to the complainant.
• The investigator shall maintain all files and records relating to the grievances filed for one calendar year.
• The right of a student to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint so filed shall not be impaired by the student’s pursuit of other remedies, such as filing of a complaint with the responsible federal department or agency.

PRINCIPLE of EQUAL EDUCATION POLICY
In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, A&M-Central Texas has an abiding institutional commitment to the principle of diversity in all areas. In that spirit, admission to A&M-Central Texas and any of its sponsored programs is open to all qualified individuals without regard to any subgroup classification or stereotype. These benefits include such matters as financial assistance, recruitment, and any type of personnel service.

GRADUATION and PINNING
GRADUATION
To receive a Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University-Central Texas, a student must complete the following requirements:

• The student must complete all of the requirements for a degree as set forth in the University catalog at the time of admission to the nursing program.
• Residency Requirement
• Writing Proficiency Requirement
• GPA Requirement
• Core Curriculum Requirements
• The student must complete all the degree requirements within five (5) years from admission to the nursing program.
• The student must complete all courses required for the Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing with a minimum grade of “C”.

Application for degree and commencement participation must be completed by the published deadline. Regalia may be purchased from the university bookstore.

PINNING/RECOGNITION CEREMONY
The pinning ceremony is a traditional part of the rite of passage in the nursing profession.

• The details of the pinning ceremony will be decided by student representatives and a designated faculty member.
• Special recognition and awards may also be delivered at this time.
• The pins are purchased much like a class ring and are made available for the ceremony.
• The ceremony will be held before graduation.