

Master of Science in Nutrition Science Handbook

The School of Nursing (SON) Master of Science in Nutrition Science Handbook presents the policies and procedures that guide and govern the School's MSNS program; information to assist in planning your academic program; and facilities and resources within the School of Nursing and across the University.

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INTRODUCTION

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The University of Pennsylvania values diversity and seeks talented students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds. The University of Pennsylvania does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, citizenship status, age, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected class status in the administration of its admissions, financial aid, educational or athletic programs, or other University-administered programs or in its employment practices. Questions or complaints regarding this policy should be directed to the Executive Director of the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs, Franklin Building, 3451 Walnut Street, Suite 421, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6106; or (215) 898-6993 (Voice). The University of Pennsylvania values diversity and seeks talented students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.

Supplemental Handbook

In addition, all MSNS students are responsible for the policies and regulations listed in the University of Pennsylvania Pennbook <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/>.

Students should read this document in full upon admission to the program and refer to the documents as they move through their curriculum.

Academic Calendar

The School of Nursing follows the [University Academic Calendar](#).

Disclaimer

The policies and procedures described in this manual are continually revised and updated. The School of Nursing and the University of Pennsylvania must reserve the right to make changes affecting policies, fees, curriculum, or any other matters announced in this publication. If you have questions regarding the contents of this handbook, please contact your Program Director or the Office of Academic Affairs at advisor@nursing.upenn.edu.

Penn Nursing's Mission and Policies

School of Nursing Mission and Values

At Penn Nursing, our mission is to make a significant impact on health by advancing science, promoting equity, demonstrating practice excellence, and preparing leaders in the discipline of nursing and nutrition science.

Consistent with our mission and philosophy, Penn Nursing is committed to providing educational opportunities to students with disabilities. In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the School provides reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified students with disabilities. However, the decision regarding appropriate accommodations will be based on the specifics of each case. This office is responsible for assessing documentation and determining reasonable accommodations. Students who seek reasonable accommodations for disabilities must contact [Student Disabilities Services](#). The office hours are Monday through Friday, from 9:00am to 5:00pm. Phone: (215) 573-9235; TDD: (215) 746-6320; FAX: (215) 746- 6326; Email: vpul-lrcmail@pobox.upenn.edu
Questions concerning these standards can be directed to advisor@nursing.upenn.edu.

Important School of Nursing Policies

All students at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing are required to adhere to the following school-wide policies:

- [Statement of Personal Attributes and Capabilities](#)
- [Student Social Media Policy](#)
- [Student Substance Abuse Policy](#)

Degree Requirements

Graduate Nutrition Program Requirements

Individual program policies may supersede this policy due to national accreditation regulations. Check with your Program Director to determine any additional requirements.

Overview

Each program of graduate degree study is a distinct and sequential course plan leading to theoretical expertise within the science of nutrition. A minimum of 10 course units are required for the MSNS program. Full-time students will take one year, and part time students may take 3 years to complete their course of study.

Certification Requirements

The MSNS degree does not provide the requirements for accreditation in dietetics. However, students who have a BS in dietetics may benefit from the additional degree in terms of professional work opportunities.

Time Limitations

MSNS PROGRAM

A maximum of five (5) calendar years, beginning with the initial graduate course following matriculation, is allowed for completion of the work for the MSNS degree.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Integrate nutrition science with knowledge from ethics, the biophysical, psychosocial, analytical, and organizational sciences
- Design effective and culturally sensitive health care and policy plans that incorporate knowledge of nutritional health, healthcare and public health systems and specific populations
- Develop skills in communicating nutrition concepts and motivating clients for appropriate behavioral decisions and actions
- Accumulate skills in scholarly writing and presentations to communicate scientific knowledge
- Illustrate effective strategies for recognizing and improving equitable access to nutrition resources as a strategy to reduce inequities in nutrition-related health outcomes
- Evaluate and synthesize published research findings from the peer-reviewed nutrition science literature
- Demonstrate the ability to collaborate and consult with other nutrition science professionals in the design, coordination, and evaluation of human nutrition research
- Integrate evidence, clinical judgment, and inter-professional perspectives in planning, implementing, and evaluating achieved outcomes of populations
- Analyze outcomes research to make recommendations and develop strategies to reduce risks and improve patient care outcomes for a specific patients and health conditions
- Integrate principles and strategies to design and deliver culturally relevant, effective health promotion and disease prevention education for individuals, families, communities, and health professionals
- Demonstrate the ability to collaborate and consult with other nutrition science professionals in the design, coordination, and evaluation of human nutrition research
- Integrate evidence, clinical judgment, and inter-professional perspectives in planning, implementing, and evaluating achieved outcomes of populations
- Evaluate and synthesize published research findings from the peer-reviewed nutrition science literature

- Develop scholarly writing, peer review and presentation skills to communicate scientific knowledge

Courses & Registration

Course Registration Procedure

Students are responsible for their own registration. Students receive registration materials via e-mail one week prior to the start of Advance Registration. New or transfer students may register during the designated registration period that is held before the start of classes. Information about how to register can be found on the [Registration](#) page.

Registration Hold

Each Nursing student is placed on registration hold before the start of the upcoming registration term. Each student must request registration “signoff” from the primary academic advisor (Program Director or other assigned Program Advisor) in order for the registration hold to be lifted and to register for classes. Students are encouraged to meet with their Program Director or Advisor in person. The registration holds are lifted by the Program Director/Advisor. This is an opportunity for students and the Program Director/Advisors to ensure that the plan of study and planned course registration is correct.

Course Selection and Drop Period

Students can use [Path@Penn](#) to add, drop, or change a course or section.

- Non-clinical courses may be added during the first two weeks of each semester.
- Non-clinical courses may be dropped through the fifth week of each semester.

Full refund of tuition and fees is automatic only during the first two full weeks of the term - up to the end of the course selection period as determined on the university academic calander. For a full refund schedule, please see the tuition refund section below for more information.

Students wishing to drop a course after the end of the course selection and drop period will need to request to **withdraw** from the course.

Please note that should a student fail to attend classes in a course for which s/he is registered, s/he **will not** be automatically dropped from the course. Students who fail to drop a course they are not taking, but are still registered for, within the five-week course selection period may receive an F in that course. No tuition refunds will be issued.

Academic Advising

For most graduate students, the academic advisor is the Program Director or Associate Program Director. Advisors are the principal source of assistance to students in planning an academic program, seeking advice and dealing with problems as they arise. However, it is the responsibility of the student to maintain contact with the advisor. Faculty will make every effort to help students but cannot be expected to be responsible for problems not brought to their attention in a timely manner.

Tuition Refund

Full refund of tuition and fees is **automatic only during the first two full weeks** of the fall and spring terms - up to the end of the course selection period as determined on the university academic calendar. Fifty percent of tuition and fees are refunded for courses dropped during weeks three and four and must be requested through the Assistant Dean of Admissions and Academic Affairs. No refunds are given after week four. Please note that this policy pertains only to courses taken during the fall and spring semesters. Summer courses operate on a different refund schedule.

Course Load

Full-time status for graduate students is defined as enrollment in three to four course units in the fall or spring semester or three course units in the summer. Part-time status is defined as enrollment in less than three course units in the fall or spring semester or one course unit in a summer session.

Students registered for one or two course units in a term are classified as part-time, unless only the one or two course units are necessary to complete the degree requirements and the student has previously been enrolled as a full-time student, in which case the full-time classification applies. Full-time status for financial aid purposes is 3 course units.

The maximum course load is typically no more than 4 course units in the fall or spring semester and no more than two or three course units in a summer session. Students can request an overload to the maximum course load by emailing their Program Director.

Change of Grade Type

Pass / Fail

No MSNS courses may be taken on a pass/fail basis.

Audit

A student may request that the Office of Student Information change his or her status in a course to auditor, provided that the request is endorsed by the Program Director and the instructor giving the course and is submitted to the Office of Student Information no

later than the end of the second week of the term. Courses taken for audit will not count toward degree requirements and are still assessed regular tuition and fees.

Summer Sessions

The MSNS courses offered during the summer term are 12 weeks long. Registration for summer and fall courses occur simultaneously during the Advance Registration period in the spring semester.

Class Attendance & Absences

Policies regarding absence from completion of weekly course modules are determined by the instructor(s) responsible for the course. Any special circumstances must be discussed with the course director prior to the start of the semester. As for religious holidays, we have to follow the Policy of Secular and Religious Holidays.

Course Withdrawal

After the 5th week of classes, courses may not be dropped. Students may petition to withdraw from the course up until the 10th week of the semester by submitting a course withdraw form to the course instructor and the Assistant Dean of Academic and Student Affairs. If the withdrawal is approved, the registration for the course remains on the record and the notation of "W" is placed as a permanent entry in the grade section of the student's transcript. The "W" does not affect the student's grade point average. A student may only attempt a required Nursing course twice; therefore, only one withdraw per course will be permitted.

After the tenth week of the semester, withdrawals are not normally permitted. Students who have a serious and compelling extenuating circumstance may petition the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee to grant a late withdrawal for a course. Students petitioning for an exception must obtain written support from the instructor for the committee to consider the petition.

Leave of Absence

MSNS students must request a leave of absence if not enrolled in coursework for one or more consecutive semesters.

A leave of absence for a period of up to one academic year may be granted when circumstances necessitate the interruption of academic work. In unusual circumstances, and at the written request of the student, such leaves may be extended for no longer than one additional year. This period may include either consecutive or nonconsecutive terms.

The complete leave of absence policy, including the request form.

English Language Support Courses

For students who need additional language support, Penn offers classes to enhance students' oral and written communication skills. These courses will not count toward degree requirements.

- GAS 600 English Language Skills
- GAS 610 Research Paper Writing

Transfer Credit

A maximum of two course units (or their equivalents) may be approved for transfer credit for the MSNS program.

Eligible courses must meet the following criteria:

- Taken at the graduate level
- Taken at an accredited, four-year institution
- Final grade of B or higher (no pass/fail or audit)
- Taken prior to admission to the University of Pennsylvania MSNS program
- Must be taken within five years of matriculation.

All transfer credit decisions are at the discretion of the course faculty. See transfer credit procedures. For the timeline and instructions on submitting course work for review.

Grade Reports and Transcripts

At the end of each semester, students may access [Path@Penn](#) for a listing of final grades. Through [Path@Penn](#), students can request to receive their grade report by mail from the Office of the Registrar.

Transcripts are maintained by the Office of the Registrar, not by the School of Nursing. Students can request transcripts through the Office of the Registrar, or order them online through [Path@Penn](#).

Course Materials

Canvas Learning Management Platform

Canvas is the Learning Management System used at the University of Pennsylvania. Students use Canvas to access their course content, upload assignments, and interact online with their instructors and classmates. Once you register for a course, you will be added to the Canvas site. Please note that sites are published individually by instructors each semester, so you may not see all registered courses in your course listing right away.

Textbooks

Most assigned textbooks are available as eBooks or hardcover for purchase from commercial vendors.

Course / Faculty Evaluations

At the end of each course, students evaluate the course and its instructor. The results of these evaluations are maintained by the Office of Student Information. Faculty members may also request additional evaluation of courses conducted by the students.

Academic Regulations

Good Standing

A student in good standing is defined as a student who:

- Maintains the proper GPA
- Maintains the proper course load (without incompletes)
- Is not on academic probation
- Does not have two consecutive semesters of non-enrollment
- Is on an approved leave of absence
- Is not on financial hold nor carrying past due balances

A student must maintain a **cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0** to remain in good academic standing and to graduate from the School of Nursing and the University.

Academic Warning

A student who has a cumulative GPA or single semester term GPA between 2.5 and 3.0 will be given a warning notice.

Academic Probation

A student will be placed on probation if they:

- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 2.5 at the end of any semester
- Has a term GPA below 2.5 at the end of any semester
- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 for two consecutive semesters
- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 in MSNS required courses
- Has failed a required MSNS course

Dismissal

A student will be withdrawn from the School of Nursing for failing a required MSNS course twice.

A student who has been on academic probation for at least one semester and who has a cumulative GPA below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters may be withdrawn from the School of Nursing.

Grading Policies

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is tabulated at the end of each semester. A minimum of a C- is needed to pass a non-clinical graduate level course (a grade lower than this will be reported as an F on the student's transcript).

All course grading policies are at the discretion of individual course instructors.

GPA Scale

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|---------|--|
| A+ = 4.0 | B+ = 3.3 | C+ = 2.3 | | |
| A = 3.7 | B = 3.0 | C = 2.0 | F = 0.0 | |
| A- = 3.3 | B- = 2.7 | C- = 1.7 | | |

GPA Calculation

To calculate the GPA, the following formula should be used:

$$\text{GPA} = \text{SUM (C.U. x GRADE)} / \text{TOTAL CUs}$$

The GPA is calculated by multiplying the course unit for each course (usually 1 c.u.) by the numerical equivalent for the grade received in the course, adding the total number and dividing it by the total number of credits taken. Averages are tabulated for each semester and on a cumulative basis.

Other GPA Notations (NR/GR/W)

The notations of NR and GR indicate that the grade has not been received by the Registrar. All NRs (instructor did not submit grades for the course) and GRs (instructor did not enter a grade for the student in question) must be cleared from the student's

transcript before graduation. The notation W indicates an approved withdrawal from course.

Course Failure

If a required course is failed, it must be repeated at the next available offering and a satisfactory grade must be achieved. Any courses for which the failed course is a prerequisite may not be taken until a satisfactory grade in the prerequisite course has been achieved. However, the “F” remains on the transcript even though the student has repeated the course and obtained a passing grade or above. The “F” is still calculated into the cumulative GPA.

A student may only attempt a required MSNS course twice. A student will be withdrawn from the School of Nursing for failing a required Nursing course twice or withdrawing from the course on the first attempt and failing the course on the second attempt or vice versa.

Incomplete Policy

A student who fails to complete a course within the prescribed period and does not withdraw from the course or change his or her status to auditor will receive, at the instructor’s discretion, either a grade of I (incomplete) or F (failure).

A grade of incomplete in a non-clinical course is assigned by the instructor only under the following conditions:

- The student has academic good standing in the course with a passing grade average.
- The student has no more than two outstanding course requirements unmet in the course.
- The student and instructor have completed a learning plan to complete course work.
- The student and instructor have an agreed date of submission for all outstanding course requirements. This date is no later than the end of the academic term that follows the term in which the grade of incomplete is assigned.

These conditions must be conveyed to the Office of Student Information via email and approved by the Assistant Dean or her/his designee before the grade of incomplete is assigned.

Except in unusual and extreme situations, the “I” must be removed within the following academic term. Only with the approval of the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs or the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, the instructor may permit an extension of time up to one year for the completion of the course. Incomplete extensions must be accompanied by a written faculty approval on file with the Office of Student Information. Any grade of incomplete which remains after one calendar year from date of assignment becomes a permanent incomplete grade designated by the mark I* on the student’s record and is not credited toward any degree.

Academic Standards and Progression Committee

All matters of academic discipline are acted upon through the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee of the School of Nursing.

The Academic Standards and Progressions Committee is the highest ruling body in the School of Nursing. The Academic Standards and Progressions Committee reserves the right to make decisions in the best interest of the student and the School of Nursing.

Meetings

The Academic Standards and Progressions Committee meets three times a year at the close of the fall, spring, and summer semesters, and as needed, to rule on specific academic problems.

Purview

The cases of students with academic concerns are presented to the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee for action. Committee deliberations may result in issuing a warning, placing the student on probation, or withdrawing the student from the School of Nursing. Students will receive a letter informing them of the Committee’s decision and outlining the required course of action. A copy will be sent to the student’s faculty advisor.

Petitions

Other academic problems may be brought to the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee for action. A student must petition the Committee in writing, describing the situation, and may be asked to present their case at the Committee meeting. The petition should be submitted to the Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Affairs.

Academic Integrity Policies

Since the University is an academic community, its fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. Essential to the success of this educational mission is a commitment to the principles of academic integrity. Every member of the University community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of honesty at all times. Students, as members of the community, are also responsible for adhering to the principles and spirit of the following Code of Academic Integrity.

University Code of Academic Integrity

Academic Dishonesty Definitions

Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance are prohibited. If a student is unsure whether her/his action(s) constitutes a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, then it is that student's responsibility to consult with the instructor to clarify any ambiguities. Examples of such activities include but are not limited to the following definitions:

- **Cheating:** using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material or attempting to prevent another from using authorized assistance, material or study aids. Example: using a cheat sheet in a quiz or exam, altering a graded exam and resubmitting it for a better grade, etc.
- **Plagiarism:** using the ideas, data or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgment. Example: copying another person's paper, article, or computer work and submitting it for an assignment, cloning someone else's idea without attribution, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, etc.
- **Fabrication:** submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise. Example: making up data for an experiment, fudging data, citing nonexistent articles, contriving sources, etc.
- **Multiple Submission:** submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfill another academic requirement.

- **Misrepresentation of academic records:** misrepresenting or tampering with or attempting to tamper with any portion of a student's transcripts or academic record, either before or after coming to the University of Pennsylvania. Example: forging a change of grade slip, tampering with computer records, falsifying academic information on one's resume, etc.
- **Facilitating Academic Dishonesty:** knowingly helping or attempting to help another violates any provision of the Code. Example: working together on a take-home exam, etc.
- **Unfair advantage:** attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. Example: gaining or providing unauthorized access to examination materials, obstructing, or interfering with another student's efforts in an academic exercise, lying about a need for an extension for an exam or paper, continuing to write even when time is up during an exam, destroying or keeping library materials for one's own.

Office of Student Conduct

The Office of Student Conduct (OSC) is responsible for acting on behalf of the University in matters of student discipline. OSC deals with alleged instances of academic dishonesty and other student misconduct, in order to determine how best to resolve these allegations consistent with the goals and mission of the University as an educational and intellectual community. (Note: As of January 2015, all alleged violations of the University's Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence and Stalking Policy are handled by the Sexual Violence Investigative Officer).

For detailed information regarding the Disciplinary Process, resources for students and faculty, and frequently asked questions, please consult the [OSC website](#).

If you have any questions about the Code of Academic Integrity or the processes required by the Code, or if you would like a complete copy of the Code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Office of Student Conduct directly by calling 215-898-5651 or visiting the office located in 207 Duhring Wing, 236 S. 34th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

Examination Policies

Examinations in the School of Nursing courses follow the [Rules Governing Final Examinations](#) from the Office of the Provost. The [Final Examination schedule](#) for each semester is published by the Office of the University Registrar.

Students with such special circumstances as time conflicts between multiple exams, illness, or grave personal difficulties such as a death in the family should petition the faculty immediately to work with and find a resolution.

Readmission to a Graduate Program

Graduate Nutrition students are readmitted through the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee. The Academic Standards and Progressions Committee is the highest ruling body in the School of Nursing with regard to readmission decisions for master's students; as such, it has the final say.

Procedure

1. The student should indicate interest in readmission by emailing the [Office of Student Services](#) at least six months before the desired return date. The following materials are required for the readmission petition to be considered:
 - a. A letter requesting readmission addressed to the Academic Standards and Progression Committee
 - b. Two letters of recommendation, preferably from nurse managers or those who have supervised the student (to be sent directly from the recommender to advisor@nursing.upenn.edu)
 - c. A resume
 - d. Any transcripts from institutions attended since separating from Penn.
2. The Associate Director for Graduate Academic Affairs will forward the materials to the Graduate Program Director(s). The Graduate Program Director(s) will communicate with the applicant if any additional admissions requirements, such as an interview, are needed.
3. The Program Director(s) will review the applicant and communicate their recommendation to the Associate Director for Graduate Academic Affairs prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Academic Standards and Progression Committee. If the Program Director(s) recommend readmission, an updated plan of study should be provided.
4. The readmission materials and Program Director(s)' recommendation will be reviewed by the Academic Standards and Progression Committee and the student will be notified of the decision.

5. The student should indicate interest in readmission by emailing the [Office of Student Services](#) at least six months before the desired return date. The following materials are required for the readmission petition to be considered:
 - a. A letter requesting readmission addressed to the Academic Standards and Progression Committee
 - b. Two letters of recommendation, preferably from nurse managers or those who have supervised the student (to be sent directly from the recommender to advisor@nursing.upenn.edu)
 - c. A resume
 - d. Any transcripts from institutions attended since separating from Penn.
6. The Associate Director for Graduate Academic Affairs will forward the materials to the Graduate Program Director(s). The Graduate Program Director(s) will communicate with the applicant if any additional admissions requirements, such as an interview, are needed.
7. The Program Director(s) will review the applicant and communicate their recommendation to the Associate Director for Graduate Academic Affairs prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Academic Standards and Progression Committee. If the Program Director(s) recommend readmission, an updated plan of study should be provided.
8. The student should indicate interest in readmission by emailing the [Office of Student Services](#) at least six months before the desired return date. The following materials are required for the readmission petition to be considered:
 - a. A letter requesting readmission addressed to the Academic Standards and Progression Committee
 - b. Two letters of recommendation, preferably from nurse managers or those who have supervised the student (to be sent directly from the recommender to advisor@nursing.upenn.edu)
 - c. A resume
 - d. Any transcripts from institutions attended since separating from Penn.
9. The Associate Director for Graduate Academic Affairs will forward the materials to the Graduate Program Director(s). The Graduate Program Director(s) will communicate with the applicant if any additional admissions requirements, such as an interview, are needed.
10. The Program Director(s) will review the applicant and communicate their recommendation to the Associate Director for Graduate Academic Affairs prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Academic Standards and Progression Committee. If the Program Director(s) recommend readmission, an updated plan of study should be provided.

11. The readmission materials and Program Director(s)' recommendation will be reviewed by the Academic Standards and Progression Committee and the student will be notified of the decision.

Grievance Policy

Overview

This policy exists for the resolution of disagreements between students and instructors for academic matters. A student must first have submitted a written appeal regarding the academic matter in question to the appropriate instructor or instructors. Email appeals are permitted. After a decision is made by the instructor(s), the issue, if unresolved, may be appealed to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. The Associate Dean for Academic Programs will consult with the instructor(s) and attempt to resolve any process disputes, but the faculty retains the final decision about the grade for the assignment or the course. If the matter continues to be unresolved to the satisfaction of the student and the instructor(s), the issue will be referred to the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee (ASPC). The ASPC will review the situation to determine if grading processes have been applied fairly and will provide recommendations to the instructor(s) about process improvements.

Types of Grievances

Commonly, grievances fall into two categories:

- Re-evolution of the grade given an individual assignment or for a course
- Appeal of the decision to dismiss the student from the school, for significant failure to perform academically or failure to correspond with the Office of Student Services according to stipulations in Leave of Absence letters.

Grade Disagreement

The role of the ASPC in matters of grade disagreement is to investigate the processes used by faculty in determining the grade and advise the faculty member in handling any perceived problems with applying grading processes outlined in the syllabus or any other apparent violations of fairness. The faculty member ultimately determines the grade that is awarded.

The ASPC is the only body in the School of Nursing that can dismiss a student for severely poor academic performance, failure to return from a leave of absence/ failure to correspond with the school, or other serious problems.

Options following Dismissal from the School of Nursing

Review by the Academic Standards and Progression Committee

In the event that the ASPC dismisses a student from the School of Nursing, the student may request a meeting with the Committee. The ASPC has the option to reconsider the decision or to uphold it. The ASPC must defer to faculty and teaching staff on all academic decisions related to dismissal.

Appeal to the Academic Standards and Progression Committee

The only ASPC decision a student may petition is that of dismissal from the School of Nursing.

Process for appeal of dismissal from the School of Nursing

1. The student must submit a written petition to appeal the dismissal within 30 days of notification of the decision. The petition must include the grounds for appeal, which are limited to a) procedural error, b) bias on the part of the ASPC or any of its members, or c) dismissal that was arbitrary or capricious and without any reasonable basis. The petition should be sent to the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Academic Affairs.
2. Written petitions for appeal of dismissal are evaluated by an ad hoc Appeals Committee appointed by the Dean of the School of Nursing. The Appeals Committee shall be comprised of three members of the Standing Faculty, one of whom will be designated Chair.
3. The student may request, in the written petition, the opportunity to address the membership of the Appeals Committee.
4. The Appeals Committee will review relevant background materials, including relevant academic history and any supporting materials submitted by the student. The Appeals Committee may seek additional information or consultation from School or University officials as its members deem appropriate.
5. The Appeals Committee must defer to faculty and teaching staff on all academic decisions related to the dismissal.
6. The student must submit a written petition to appeal the dismissal within 30 days of notification of the decision. The petition must include the grounds for appeal, which are limited to a) procedural error, b) bias on the part of the ASPC or any of its members, or c) dismissal that was arbitrary or capricious and without any reasonable basis. The petition should be sent to the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Academic Affairs.

Process for appeal of dismissal from the School of Nursing

7. The student must submit a written petition to appeal the dismissal within 30 days of notification of the decision. The petition must include the grounds for appeal, which are limited to a) procedural error, b) bias on the part of the ASPC or any of its members, or c) dismissal that was arbitrary or capricious and without any reasonable basis. The petition should be sent to the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Academic Affairs.
8. Written petitions for appeal of dismissal are evaluated by an ad hoc Appeals Committee appointed by the Dean of the School of Nursing. The Appeals Committee shall be comprised of three members of the Standing Faculty, one of whom will be designated Chair.
9. The student may request, in the written petition, the opportunity to address the membership of the Appeals Committee.
10. The Appeals Committee will review relevant background materials, including relevant academic history and any supporting materials submitted by the student. The Appeals Committee may seek additional information or consultation from School or University officials as its members deem appropriate.
11. The Appeals Committee must defer to faculty and teaching staff on all academic decisions related to the dismissal.
12. The Appeals Committee deliberates and votes in private. In voting, the Appeals Committee may consider the following among the possible options: a) uphold the dismissal, or b) return the dismissal decision to the ASPC for further consideration.
13. The Appeals Committee reports the results of the vote and any supporting rationale to the Dean. The Appeals Committee is advisory to the Dean. The Dean holds the final decision.
14. In the case that the Dean decides to ask the ASPC to further consider a decision to dismiss in light of such an Appeal's Committee review, ASPC's decision to uphold dismissal after such further consideration cannot be appealed.

Role of Ombuds

The [Office of the Ombuds](#) at the University of Pennsylvania serves as a mechanism for students, faculty, staff, and administrators who have a specific problem or dispute that they may not have been able to resolve through other channels. The overarching mission of the Office of the Ombuds is to resolve issues of equity and justice at the University of Pennsylvania before the tensions of polarization escalate.

The office is concerned with safeguarding individual rights and promoting better channels of communication throughout the University. It is independent of all administrative offices. The Ombuds is not an advocate for any one individual or group. They are advocates for fairness, adherence to university regulations, due process, and personal responsibility. Office supplements, but does not replace, any existing grievance mechanisms or modes of redress. It can and does recommend changes in the existing rules and practices when necessary.

Students may contact the Office of the Ombuds for consultation at any time during the grievance process. The Ombuds may advise students about process issues and may choose to discuss the issue with relevant faculty or the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. The Ombuds does not function as a true appeal process in that they do not attempt to overturn a faculty decision about student performance.

Role of the Dean

Students may contact the Dean of the School of Nursing at any time in the grievance process. The Dean may communicate with relevant faculty or the Associate Dean for Academic Programs about process issues. She will not over-rule a faculty member's decision about grading.

Financial Information

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is charged based on the number of Course Units (CU) taken in a given semester. You will also be charged a General Fee and Technology Fee each semester, and in some semesters may be charged additional fees that are associated with certain courses.

Please see the Course and Registration section of this handbook for Tuition Refund policies.

Financial Assistance

Personalized financial assistance is available through the School of Nursing Financial Aid Office (financialaid@nursing.upenn.edu or 215-898-8191).

Funded Research Opportunities

Opportunities to participate in funded research programs may be available to full-time graduate students. This experience can be a valuable addition to a student's studies. For further information the student may consult the Office of Nursing Research at 215-898-3151 or research@nursing.upenn.edu.

Student Records

Confidentiality of Student Records

This notice provides a summary of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), often referred to as the "Buckley Amendment," and University policy regarding the confidentiality of student records. For more detail, the University policy, which incorporates legal requirements, is available online.

Restrictions on Disclosing Student Information

In general, University faculty and staff may not disclose personally identifiable information from a student or applicant's records except with the student's written consent. Some of the most common exceptions to this rule are:

- To school officials with a "legitimate educational interest" – in other words, where the information is required or would be helpful in the performance of his or her duties, or in the pursuit of an enterprise sanctioned by the University;
- To another school in which a student or applicant seeks to enroll;
- To parents if the parent properly documents that the student is a dependent for tax purposes;
- As required by other law.

University faculty and staff may disclose [directory](#) information, such as name, address, telephone number, and other designated demographic data, without the student's consent, unless the student has chosen to object to such disclosure by "opting-out." Students can exercise their right to opt-out by contacting the [University Registrar's office](#).

As a general rule, University faculty and staff must inform any recipient of student records that they may not re-disclose that information unless they obtain the student's written consent.

In certain cases, such as injury and in emergency situations, the University may contact parents regarding a student. Disclosure decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by designated University officials in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel.

Students' Right to Inspect and Seek Correction of Records

Students are entitled to inspect and review their records. They are not entitled to inspect personal notes of faculty or administrative staff that are solely held by the maker of the notes, confidential letters and statements subject to waiver, or parts of their record that contain information about another student. Students may be allowed to copy their records, upon payment of a nominal charge. Students also have the right to seek correction of their records.

Officials responsible for student records, such as the Registrar and school or department business offices, are required to maintain a record of requests for access and disclosures of student records, except in cases where the request was from or the disclosure was to: the student, school officials with legitimate educational interests, a party with consent from the student or a party seeking directory information.

For more detail, the University policy, which incorporates legal requirements, is available in the PennBook.

Graduation

Requirements

All degree requirements must be completed within a five-year period after admission to MSNS degree program. Candidates who are unable to meet this requirement must petition for an extension to the Academic Standard and Progressions Committee. Any additional requirements in effect at the time of re-evaluation must be completed.

All failing (“F”) and incomplete grades must be cleared or completed by graduation day or the student’s name will be removed from the graduation list. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required. All University balances must be paid in full.

Procedures

Applications for diplomas will be emailed to students during the academic year. Students must complete the online applications according to the instructions.

Ceremonies

Each year, the School of Nursing celebrates the accomplishments of the graduating class with a special School of Nursing ceremony following the [University Commencement](#) at Franklin Field.

Diplomas

Diplomas are granted by the University of Pennsylvania. Students will receive their diplomas in the mail.

Corrections to diplomas should be brought to the attention of the Office of the Secretary. A fee will be charged for all changes on diplomas.

Students with outstanding University balances, incompletes, “NR” or uncleared “F” grades at the time of graduation will not be able to obtain their diplomas nor will they be able to obtain any official transcripts or other University information until the balances are paid in full.