**NURSING PROGRAMS HANDBOOK**



**2025 - 2026**

**Academic Year**

**GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**STUDENT NURSE HANDBOOK**

**GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Health Sciences Department**

**Nursing Program**

**2100 16th Avenue South**

**Great Falls, MT 59405**

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# Welcome to the Great Falls College MSU Nursing Programs

Welcome to the Nursing Programs at Great Falls College MSU. Whether you are beginning your journey in healthcare or continuing your education, you are stepping into a profession that is both deeply rewarding and profoundly impactful.

“To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived — that is to have succeeded.”
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

This handbook is designed to provide you with essential information and policies related to all Nursing Programs at Great Falls College MSU. It will serve as a valuable resource throughout your time in the program.

Great Falls College MSU is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

We proudly offer two nursing pathways:

* The **Associate of Science Registered Nurse (ASN RN) Program**, launched in Fall 2016, based on the statewide ASN RN curriculum.
* The **Certificate of Applied Science Practical Nurse (CAS PN)** Program, launched in Spring 2017, is also based on the statewide CAS PN curriculum. This program includes both traditional face-to-face instruction and a distance learning component, with optional full-time or part-time tracks introduced in Fall 2020.

We are excited to support you as you begin this meaningful journey into the world of nursing. Welcome to the community of future healthcare professionals!

# Mission and Philosophy

## Mission

The mission of the Great Falls College (GFC) MSU Nursing Programs is to produce well-rounded, holistic nurses who are attuned to the diverse health care needs of clients, families, and communities. The college will graduate nurses who provide culturally sensitive, compassionate, ethical, and competent care in the local, state, and national communities. The GFC MSU nurse graduates with sound judgement and promotes excellence in patient-centered care. Nurses will value teamwork, evidence-based practice, continuous quality improvement, patient safety, and a pattern of lifelong learning.

## Philosophy of Learning and Nursing Practice

Nursing is a practice-centered discipline that operates within a dynamic and continuously evolving healthcare environment. It is part of a broader continuum of health and wellness, requiring nurses to adapt to changing needs and contexts. At Great Falls College MSU, we believe that learning is a lifelong, multifaceted journey—one that challenges students to engage in critical thinking, creativity, compassion, and skill, all within a holistic framework.

Nursing education is a catalyst for professional growth. It must be rooted in conceptual understanding, the synthesis of knowledge, and evidence-based practice. Our program is designed to cultivate nurses who seamlessly integrate the art and science of nursing. As healthcare advances and societal needs shift, nursing education must remain responsive—locally, nationally, and globally. We are committed to fostering a professional, ethical, and civil learning environment for both students and faculty.

Learning is a collaborative process, shaped by individual goals, motivation, and the support of dedicated faculty. Faculty members serve as knowledgeable mentors, guiding and encouraging students, while students take ownership of their educational journey. Diversity is essential to nursing education and to the development of ethical, compassionate, and caring professionals. We embrace and support a diverse student and faculty population, promoting sensitivity to individual, cultural, and ethnic differences and lifestyles.

This philosophy is further enriched by Jean Watson’s Theory of Human Caring, which serves as a foundational framework for our program. Watson’s theory emphasizes the central role of caring relationships in promoting healing and wholeness. It affirms that nursing is a human science grounded in kindness, empathy, and respect—values that are essential to the practice of compassionate, patient-centered care.

# Conceptual Framework

The Great Falls College MSU Nursing Program is built on four key concepts: person, health, nursing, and community. These concepts are supported by Jean Watson’s Theory of Human Caring, which emphasizes the importance of compassion, empathy, and meaningful relationships in promoting healing and wellness.

Person: Each person is a unique individual with physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual needs. People deserve dignity throughout life and death. Nurses build caring relationships to support individuals in achieving balance and well-being. Watson’s theory reminds us that caring is central to how nurses connect with and support others.

Health: Health is a changing state that includes prevention, treatment, and comfort care. It is shaped by personal beliefs, experiences, and environments. Nurses respect each person’s view of health and support them along their health journey, recognizing that healing involves the whole person—mind, body, and spirit.

Nursing: Nursing is both a science and an art. It uses evidence-based knowledge and compassionate care to improve lives. Nurses form therapeutic relationships to help individuals, families, and communities reach their best possible health. Guided by Watson’s caring theory, nurses focus on kindness, presence, and respect in every interaction.

Community: Community includes the environment where people live, work, and connect. It is shaped by social, economic, and cultural factors. Nurses consider these influences when planning care and work to promote health at local, national, and global levels. Caring for communities means understanding their unique needs and values.

# General Statement of Nursing Program Handbook

Please note that the Nursing Program Handbook is a dynamic document and may be updated as the program evolves. Additions or changes may be made during your enrollment if necessary. When updates occur, students will be provided with official addendum documentation.

Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to all content outlined in both the individual course syllabi and this program handbook. It is each student’s responsibility to become familiar with the handbook and to keep it readily accessible for reference when questions about policies or procedures arise.

Students are strongly advised not to rely on fellow students for clarification of policies or procedures, as this can often lead to the spread of inaccurate information. Instead, any questions or concerns should be directed to program faculty for accurate guidance.

If you encounter concerns, questions, or issues related to the program:
1. First, speak directly with the individual course faculty.
2. If the issue remains unresolved, schedule a meeting with the Program Director.
3. If further resolution is needed, an appointment may be made with the Health Sciences Division Director.

## ASN RN End of Program Student Learning Outcomes (EPSLO)

• Coordinate, delegate, and prioritize the delivery of care aimed at meeting the needs of patients, communities of patients, and their families.
• Formulate a nursing care plan, based on the nursing process, to provide clinically competent, evidence-based, safe, and quality patient care.
• Demonstrate effective, therapeutic communication skills for delivering patient care, providing patient education, advocacy, and being an effective member of the healthcare team.
• Practice collaboratively within legal and ethical frameworks and professional scope of practice when managing all aspects of holistic patient care.
• Perform nursing skills and techniques safely and correctly.

## CAS PN End of Program Student Learning Outcomes

• Formulate a nursing care plan, based on the nursing process, to provide clinically competent, evidence-based, safe, and quality patient care.
• Demonstrate effective, therapeutic communication skills for delivering patient care, providing patient education, advocacy, and being an effective member of the healthcare team.
• Practice collaboratively within legal and ethical frameworks and professional scope of practice when managing all aspects of holistic patient care.
• Perform nursing skills and techniques safely and correctly.

**Nursing Program Outcomes Measures**

• Program graduates will pass the NCLEX RN/PN at or above the national average.
• Eighty percent (80%) of students entering any of the Nursing Programs will successfully complete their respective program within 150% of scheduled program time.
• Graduate satisfaction surveys of Nursing Program students will be > 80% satisfied.
• Employer Satisfaction surveys of Nursing Program graduates will be > 80% satisfied.
• Employment rate or continuing education rates of graduates will be > 80% within 6 months of graduation.

**Nursing Program Code of Ethics**

As a nursing student at Great Falls College MSU, you are expected to uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior in all academic, clinical, and interpersonal settings. The following principles guide your conduct:

1. Respect and Dignity
• Treat patients, peers, faculty, and staff with respect.
• Honor the rights, values, and dignity of every individual.

2. Equity and Non-Discrimination
• Provide fair and unbiased care to all patients, regardless of background or identity.

3. Patient Advocacy
• Prioritize the health, safety, and rights of patients above personal interests.
• Promote well-being and act in the best interest of those in your care.

4. Confidentiality
• Protect patient privacy and maintain confidentiality in accordance with HIPAA and legal standards.

5. Social media and Photography
• Do not reference patients, clinical sites, or affiliated agencies on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube).
• Do not take or share photos in clinical settings, as this may violate privacy laws.

6. Technology Use
• Cell phones are not permitted at any clinical location during clinical hours.

7. Scope of Practice
• Perform only those procedures and tasks for which you have been trained and authorized.

8. Ethical Conduct
• Refuse to engage in illegal, unethical, or incompetent actions.
• Report any observed misconduct to the appropriate authority.

9. Conflict of Interest
• Avoid situations that may compromise professional judgment or create conflicts of interest.

10. Integrity
• Demonstrate honesty, accountability, and professionalism in all academic and clinical environments.

11. Policy Compliance
• Follow all policies and procedures of Great Falls College MSU and affiliated clinical sites.

Students who are in a Nursing Program and breach the Code of Ethics may be dismissed from the program and denied access to any other health career program at Great Falls College MSU. (See dismissal criteria)

# Great Falls College MSU Health Sciences General Health Policy

This policy outlines requirements and procedures for students enrolled in the Nursing Program at Great Falls College MSU. It applies to both admission and progression in the program, as well as participation in clinical rotations. Topics include vaccinations, exposure to bloodborne pathogens, needle stick injuries, standard precautions, reporting protocols, and student responsibilities.

## Health Insurance and Medical Responsibility

Students are required to maintain active health insurance throughout the duration of their clinical rotations. Proof of coverage must be submitted prior to clinical placement. Students are responsible for all costs associated with medical care, including treatment for illness or injury, vaccinations, screenings, and required tests.

## Illness or Injury

In the event of illness, injury, or other health concerns during clinical rotations:

* Students must promptly inform both the faculty member and clinical facility staff.
* Injuries must be recorded using the clinical agency’s official forms.
* Students may be referred to an emergency room, urgent care, or their personal physician, as appropriate.
* Faculty will assess whether the student is fit to safely resume clinical duties.
* The Nursing Program is not responsible for any illness or injury incurred during clinical time.
* Students are responsible for all expenses related to treatment.

## CPR Certification

Students must maintain current certification in American Heart Association Healthcare Provider CPR or BLS Provider CPR. A valid certification card must be presented for progression through the Nursing Program. Students are responsible for locating appropriate courses and covering all associated fees.

## Vaccinations

Prior to entering the clinical setting, students must provide documentation of the following:

* Diphtheria and Tetanus immunizations
* Hepatitis B vaccine series
* Proof of Varicella immunity or exposure
* Negative tuberculosis screening - yearly
* Current seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations (as required by clinical sites)

## Criminal Background Checks

Students must complete and pass a criminal background check before starting clinical coursework. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility to attend clinical courses and may lead to dismissal from the program. All costs associated with background checks are the student’s responsibility.

Applicants with legal or disciplinary findings related to abuse, neglect, exploitation, or mistreatment will not be admitted. Admission to and graduation from the Nursing Program does not guarantee eligibility to sit for the nursing licensure exam.

## Drug and Alcohol Policy

Use of drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited on campus, in classrooms, laboratories, and clinical settings. Students must submit a negative drug screen from a DOT-approved lab within 30 days prior to the program start date. Students are responsible for all costs related to drug screening and background checks.

Any evidence or suspicion of impairment may result in immediate removal from the educational setting and possible dismissal from the program and the college.

## Drug/Alcohol Screening Policy

* Students suspected of being under the influence will be removed from the educational setting.
* They must undergo immediate substance screening at a DOT-approved lab.
* They must consent to release screening results to the Program Director.
* Refusal to comply may result in dismissal from the program.
* A positive screening may lead to dismissal and referral for counseling.
* Questions about test accuracy should be directed to the testing agency.
* All screening costs are the student’s responsibility.

## Liability Insurance

All nursing students are required to maintain professional liability insurance while enrolled in the Nursing Program. This coverage is provided through the college and included in semester fees. Students do not need to obtain separate liability insurance.

## Student Pregnancy

Pregnant students must notify the Program Director, primary faculty, and each clinical instructor as early as possible to ensure appropriate precautions can be taken regarding clinical assignments.

By the 13th week of pregnancy, students must submit a release form from a licensed obstetrical provider confirming medical clearance to continue clinical participation and meet program requirements. Any changes affecting clinical performance must be documented by the provider and submitted to the Program Director immediately.

Students are responsible for following CDC guidelines regarding exposure to infectious diseases and avoiding other pregnancy-related hazards. Great Falls College MSU and its affiliated clinical agencies are not liable for any harm to the student or fetus resulting from clinical participation.

After childbirth, students must submit written clearance from a licensed provider before returning to clinical activities. Faculty will make reasonable efforts to accommodate missed clinical experiences; however, extended absences may impact the ability to meet course objectives. Provider restrictions may result in withdrawal from the course or program. Students who withdraw due to pregnancy may apply for readmission in accordance with program policy.

## HIPAA Compliance and Confidentiality

Nursing students are entrusted with access to Protected Health Information (PHI) during clinical education. In accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), students must maintain strict confidentiality and comply with all privacy regulations.

Student Responsibilities:

- Adhere to HIPAA privacy rules in all clinical, academic, and professional settings.
- Access patient records only during approved clinical hours or with explicit instructor permission.

Examples of HIPAA Violations include:

- Unauthorized access, use, copying, or sharing of patient records.
- Discussing patient, staff, or faculty information outside approved settings.
- Posting or referencing clinical information on social media.
- Contacting patients outside of clinical assignments without authorization.
- Removing documents containing patient identifiers from the clinical setting.
- Improper disposal of printed materials containing PHI.

Consequences of Breach:

- Immediate dismissal from the Nursing Program.
- Ineligibility for readmission to the program.

## Academic Integrity and Professional Conduct

Honesty is a foundational value of the nursing profession. Students enrolled in the Great Falls College MSU Nursing Program are expected to uphold this core value, as it is essential to maintaining the integrity and trustworthiness of the profession (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2021; American Nurses Association [ANA], 2015).

# Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Policy

This policy establishes clear expectations for the ethical and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, DALL·E) by nursing students. It aligns with Great Falls College - Montana State University’s academic integrity standards and supports the development of professional, clinical, and critical thinking skills.

## 1. Permitted Uses of AI

AI tools may be used for educational support only, including:

* Study Assistance: Summarizing readings, generating flashcards, or explaining complex topics.
* Writing Support: Grammar correction, citation formatting, and brainstorming.
* Research Preparation: Topic exploration, outlining, and organizing literature.
* Simulation Practice: Practicing communication or decision-making in hypothetical clinical scenarios.

Note: Students must critically evaluate AI-generated content and remain responsible for its accuracy and appropriateness.

## 2. Prohibited Uses of AI

The following uses of AI are strictly prohibited:

* Submitting AI-generated content (e.g., essays, care plans, reflections) as original work.
* Using AI during exams, quizzes, or clinical assessments.
* Employing AI in clinical documentation or patient care decisions.
* Using AI to bypass learning objectives or professional skill development.

## 3. Disclosure and Citation

If AI tools are used in any academic work, students must:

* Clearly disclose the tool used and how it was used (e.g., “ChatGPT was used to generate an outline for this paper.”).
* Cite the tool appropriately using APA or the required citation style.

## 4. Ethical and Professional Expectations

* Integrity: Students must uphold honesty and transparency in all academic and clinical work.
* Competency: Over-reliance on AI may hinder the development of essential nursing skills.
* Bias Awareness: AI tools may reflect societal or data-driven biases; students must evaluate content critically.

## 5. Consequences of Misuse

Violations of this policy will be treated as breaches of the GFCMSU Academic Integrity Code and may result in:

* Grade penalties
* Academic probation
* Dismissal from the nursing program

## 6. Faculty Discretion

Instructors may set additional AI-related expectations in their syllabi. Students are responsible for understanding and following course-specific guidelines.

## 7. When in Doubt

Students should consult with their instructor or academic advisor if they are unsure about appropriate AI use.

# Advisors

The Nursing Program at Great Falls College MSU is academically rigorous and demands a high level of commitment, organization, and time management. To support student success, all students are strongly encouraged to meet with nursing faculty or the Program Director each semester for academic advising.

Nursing faculty are available to provide general academic guidance and professional insight related to the nursing field. Contact information and availability are included in all course syllabi. Establishing a relationship with an advisor early in the program is especially important.

Early advising can help students:
• Address academic concerns before they escalate

• Avoid delays in progression or graduation

In addition to faculty advising, students are encouraged to utilize the services of the Advising and Career Center.

Advisors in this center can assist with:
• Navigating college resources

• Addressing personal or academic challenges

Students are encouraged to take full advantage of all advising and support services available at Great Falls College MSU to help ensure their success in the Nursing Program.

# Use of Classrooms and Simulated Hospital

When not in use for class, these areas may be available for practice and study. Permission from an instructor is required for lab use outside of designated class/lab time.

Each student is responsible for any material or instruments used and for cleaning and putting away those items. Each student is responsible for their desk area; additional clean-up duties will be assigned throughout the program.

No equipment or instruments may be removed from the Simulated Hospital.

Handle equipment carefully. Be sure you know how to use the equipment, including in the clinical setting. If in doubt, check with the instructor. If you break something, notify the Program Director so it can be repaired.

# Governance: Student/Faculty Forum

The Student/Faculty Forum provides a committee for faculty and students to engage in dialogue regarding concerns, suggestions, and questions related to the Nursing Programs, curriculum, and other relevant issues. The Nursing Program Director will help facilitate student leadership to schedule meetings as needed throughout the semester.
The committee is composed of Nursing faculty, the Program Director, and a minimum of two elected students from each nursing cohort.

### Faculty Responsibilities:

• Increasing student awareness regarding program direction and faculty concerns.

• Providing information and guidance regarding student concerns and participating in follow-up activities as indicated.

• Fostering student/faculty interaction during joint meetings.

• Notifying student representatives of changes to Nursing Program, policy, or handbook.

### Student Representative Responsibilities:

• Increasing class awareness regarding committee activities.

• Soliciting information from peers for committee agendas.

• Assisting in problem solving to address agenda items.

• Implementing committee/faculty suggestions and reporting outcomes to peers.

• Contributing to program policy and curriculum development.

# Pinning Committee

The Pinning Committee is a faculty-led group responsible for organizing the nursing pinning ceremony and related fundraising activities.
**Committee Composition:**
• At least one faculty member and two student representatives from each nursing cohort.
**Responsibilities**:
• Plan and coordinate the pinning ceremony.
• Organize and manage fundraising efforts.
• Share updates and decisions with cohorts through student representatives.

## Admission to Great Falls College MSU

Students must be admitted to Great Falls College MSU and be in good academic standing prior to submitting the ASN Registered Nurse program application. Applications will not be reviewed unless the applicant has been admitted to the College and official transcripts have been reviewed by the Registrar.

Acceptance to Great Falls College MSU requires a completed admissions application file. Applications can be obtained by visiting the campus, calling the College at (406) 268-3700 or 1-800-446-2698, or applying online at https://gfcmsu.edu/home/admissions/.

## Eligibility for Admission into the Nursing Program

All eligibility forms and documents are included in Nursing Program Information and Application Packet.

To be eligible to apply for admission into Nursing program, applicants must:

* Show that they have been admitted to Great Falls College MSU.
* Have a complete admissions file and be in good academic standing.
* Have completed all prerequisite coursework with a grade of 'C' or higher (not 'C-'), with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 in prerequisite courses.

Prerequisite coursework can be taken at other institutions, but it is the applicant’s responsibility to confirm that those courses are equivalent to the program’s prerequisites and are transferable to this institution prior to submitting their application. Full admission instructions and policies can be found in the current program application online. These are updated annually, so applicants must follow the most current version.

For a current listing of approved equivalent courses, visit the Transfer Guide under Student Information at <https://prodmyinfo.montana.edu/pls/gfagent/hwzkxfer.p_selstate> All transfer work must be from an appropriately accredited institution.

The transferring student must initiate the request for evaluation of credit during the admission process by providing an official transcript from the transferring institution(s) and the necessary materials, including copies of the appropriate catalog descriptions or course syllabi, to the Registrar. Official transcripts must be sent directly by the issuing institution to the following address:
Registrar’s Office, Great Falls College MSU, 2100 16th Ave S, Great Falls, MT 59405

Current students may apply during the spring semester prior to the fall program intake. Students may apply before completing their prerequisites and may be considered for conditional acceptance if space is available. Final determination will be made after satisfactory completion of the prerequisite courses.

Applicants who are in the process of completing minimum requirements may still be considered for acceptance. However, acceptance is contingent upon successful completion of those requirements. Applicants who have fully met all requirements will be given priority over those still in progress. For example, students enrolled in summer courses at the time of application submission are considered in progress.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all requirements are met by the established deadline. Deadlines, guidelines, and policies apply equally to all applicants; therefore, no exceptions will be made.

# Academic Progression

Mastery of the didactic theory of each course is essential for the mastery of concepts. Theory will be applied the same semester it is taught and is built upon in subsequent courses. The theory in each semester is a necessary foundation for the student in providing effective safe nursing care for patients in all clinical sites. Therefore, the following policies have been adopted regarding sequential progression through the Nursing Program at Great Falls College MSU.

* Students who earn less than a C (75%) in any one or more NRSG prefix course will not be eligible to continue progression through the Nursing Program. This includes a C minus. These students will receive a failing grade (F) as the overall course grade.
* Students who earn less than a cumulative 75% on course exams (measured at the end of the semester) will not be eligible to continue progressing through the Nursing Program. \*\*
* No rounding of grades is allowed in the Nursing Program. For example, a 74.9% is *not* a passing grade. This applies to both overall course grade and Test average calculations.
* Students who achieve less than a cumulative 75% test average will receive a failing grade (F) as the overall course grade, as they have not met all requirements to pass the course resulting in ineligibility to continue progression through or graduation from the Nursing Program.
* Progression is prohibited with an “Incomplete” grade.
* Students who withdraw/fail/have an incomplete in any NRSG prefix class will not be allowed to progress in or graduate from the Nursing Program.
* Progression (date) is defined as the last day of the current semester.

\*\* Test/exam averages will be calculated by dividing total points earned by total points available. This may include chapter tests, exams, reading quizzes, Kaplan exams and any other objective test type item at the primary instructor’s discretion. For an assignment to be eligible for inclusion in the test average, it must fall into one of the above categories ***and*** be proctored by approved personnel. At-home, group assignments, case studies, attending lectures, etc. cannot be included in the test/exam average.

# Repeating Nursing Courses

To successfully progress in the Nursing Program, students must pass all NRSG (Nursing) courses in the designated sequence. Failure to pass any NRSG course will result in inability to enroll in subsequent nursing coursework.

Students who are unable to progress in the program may be granted a one-time opportunity to repeat a failed NRSG course, provided the course is taken in the correct sequence.

Admission requirements for all nursing programs are outlined in the respective application packets. Each packet includes a detailed scoring rubric used to evaluate and rank applicants. Please note that each cohort has limited capacity. Admission decisions are made to fill each class to its maximum enrollment. The Registered Nurse (RN) program admits up to 30 students per cohort. The Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) program may be offered in full-time, part-time, distance, or face-to-face formats, but the total number of students admitted across all LPN cohorts will not exceed 30. For additional information, visit the Academic Programs page on the Great Falls College website and select either the LPN or RN program. The admissions process is clearly outlined, and previous years application packets are available for reference. Please be aware that application materials and criteria are subject to change.

Eligibility to repeat a course is determined by the Nursing Program Director and is based on:

* Academic performance
* Professional conduct
* Patient safety
* Availability of the course
* Space in the class and clinical placements

Readmission is not guaranteed and is subject to the Nursing Program’s official readmission policy.

Nursing coursework completed at other institutions will not be considered for substitution or transfer in the GFC-MSU Nursing Program. Any non-nursing transfer credits must be evaluated and approved prior to entry through the competitive admissions process.

**Readmission to the Nursing Program**

Students seeking readmission after withdrawal or failure from any of the nursing courses must meet the re-enrollment policies for Great Falls College MSU, participate in the full competitive entry process and follow the readmission steps listed below. Students who withdraw or fail a course must follow the same procedures. Readmission steps are listed below:

* Written notification of intent to re-enroll in Nursing Program, sent to Nursing Program Director no less than 3 weeks prior to the application deadline for the nursing program. A copy should be included in the application packet
* Attendance at a mandatory meeting with Program Director and/or Nursing Faculty to present a detailed, self-reflective, education plan for success and to meet all Nursing Program requirements.

*All readmission is subject to available space in the Nursing Program. There is no guarantee of readmission.*

**Additional Conditions of Readmission**

* If withdrawal was due to major health problems a physician’s clearance must be submitted to return to class and clinical. All other readmission steps continue to apply. This student may not be required to take part in the competitive entry process. The director of the nursing program along with the registrar will review each case and their decision will be final.
* Students who are dismissed from the program due to violations of professional or academic integrity, program policies, or the Code of Ethics will be ineligible for reenrollment for a minimum of **three** academic years. After this period, they may reapply through the competitive entry process. No prior coursework will be accepted, and the student must complete the entire program from the beginning.
* Readmissions beyond one (1) academic year must repeat all nursing courses regardless of grade obtained in previous attempt at any program.
* A student with two (2) subsequent failures or withdrawals from a Nursing Program will not be eligible for readmission for **three** years even if they have completed a different program between attempts.
* Students who withdraw from the Nursing Program due to active military service or deployment are **not required to reapply through the competitive entry process** for reentry. However, documentation verifying the service or deployment must be submitted to the Program Director. **Note:** *This policy applies only to the student’s own military service or deployment. The deployment of a spouse does****not****qualify under this exemption.*
* Upon return, students may be required to undergo an assessment of clinical skill retention at the discretion of the course faculty and the Nursing Program Director to ensure safe and competent practice.

# Competitive Application Process

Students seeking readmission must re-enter the competitive application process. Prerequisite courses are subject to expiration limits typically 5 or 10 years depending on the course. Please refer to the current application packet for specific timeframes. If any prerequisite courses were within the acceptable time limit at the time of the student's initial enrollment and have since expired during the 18-month period following that enrollment, they will still be considered valid for readmission. When calculating GPA for readmission, core courses that were failed and led to disenrollment will be excluded. Additionally, incomplete grades will be treated as failures for the purpose of admission scoring.

All other criteria for readmission will be identical to those applied to new applicants, ensuring a fair and consistent evaluation process.

# Transfer Policy

This policy outlines the requirements and conditions for students seeking transfer into the Great Falls College MSU Nursing Program or reentry following withdrawal or failure from another nursing program.

**Transfer from In-State Nursing Programs**

Students transferring from other in-state nursing programs may be considered for admission under the following conditions:

* The student is in good standing with the program they are leaving.
* A letter of recommendation is provided from the Program Director of the previous institution.
* Space is available in the class and clinical placement the student would enter.

All transfer activities must occur within 12 months of the student’s last attendance at the previous nursing programs core nursing courses.

**Admission After Withdrawal or Failure from Another Nursing Program**

Prospective students who have withdrawn from or failed a nursing program outside of Great Falls College MSU must submit the following documentation:

1. A written, detailed explanation of the circumstances surrounding the withdrawal or failure.
2. A letter of recommendation from at least one current faculty member from the previous nursing program.
3. A signed release of information authorizing the Program Director to obtain relevant records.

The student must reapply through the competitive entry process and repeat all nursing courses.

**Repeating Courses with Lab or Clinical Components**

If a student fails a course that includes a lab or clinical component, both the course and its associated component must be repeated, even if the student passed one part of the course.

# Grading Policy

The Nursing Program standards and requirements in relation to the grading scale and attendance are more rigorous and stricter than the general requirements for Great Falls College MSU. This increased level of expectation is necessary to prepare students for the NCLEX and to ensure graduates are prepared for professional employment in the field of nursing.

**Lecture/Didactic Courses**

Grades for lecture and didactic courses are assigned according to the following scale:
 A = 92% – 100%
 B = 84% – 91%
 C = 75% – 83%
 Not Passing = 74.9% and below
 F = 74.9% and below
*Note*: Grades are not rounded in the Nursing Program. For example, a score of 74.9% is not considered passing.
Students must earn a minimum of 75% average on tests **AND** a 75% overall course average to continue in the program.

**Lab and Clinical Courses**

All lab and clinical courses are evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis. To receive a passing grade, students must successfully demonstrate 100% of the required course outcomes and clinical skills.

Please refer to individual course syllabi for specific grading criteria and policies. Course syllabi may supersede the general grading policies outlined in this handbook.

## Graduation:

Students must follow all the graduation policies and processes of Great Falls College – MSU including apply for graduation using the proper forms found at: [Graduation - Great Falls College](https://www.gfcmsu.edu/home/campus-departments/registrar/graduation/)

Students must use the transcript request form to send their transcript to Montana BON. The form is found at: [Transcripts - Great Falls College](https://www.gfcmsu.edu/home/campus-departments/registrar/transcripts/)

## State Licensure

In order to practice as a nurse you must pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). The National Council of State Boards of Nursing online registration for the NCLEX exam is found at [NCLEX & Other Exams | NCSBN](https://www.ncsbn.org/exams.page) . Successful completion of the Nursing Program does not guarantee a graduate is allowed to take the NCLEX or obtain a Montana Nursing license if they have a felony or other criminal conditions. Contact the Montana Board of Nursing with questions. Applications for state licensure are available by contacting the Montana State Board of Nursing at [www.nurse.mt.gov](http://www.nurse.mt.gov) or at the following address:

Montana State Board of Nursing

 301 South Park

 P.O. Box 200513

 Helena, MT 59620-0513

 Telephone: (406) 841-2340

## Grievance Policy

Students may pursue the academic complaint process if they disagree with an academic decision, as outlined in Great Falls College MSU Policy 300.60.
Resolution steps:
1. Meet with the Course/Clinical Instructor.
2. If unresolved, meet with the Nursing Program Director.
3. If still unresolved, meet with the Health Science Division Director.
4. Submit to the Academic Appeals Committee.
5. Final appeal to Dr. Stephanie Erdmann, Dean/CEO.

Refer to the Student Handbook and college catalog for full procedures. Academic Advisors are available to assist.

# General Expectations and Attendance Policy

## General Expectations

The Nursing Program at Great Falls College MSU expects all students to demonstrate professionalism, respect, and integrity. As future healthcare professionals, students must uphold these standards in all academic and clinical settings.

### Professional Conduct

Disrespectful or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. This includes:
 - Talking during class in a way that disrupts learning.
 - Sharing private conversations not originally intended for the student.
 - Complaining about the program, faculty, or peers in public settings (e.g., clinical sites, campus areas ).
- Personal discussions should be held in private areas where others—especially staff, peers, or patients—cannot overhear.
- Violations will be addressed individually and may result in an Academic/Professional Deficiency or dismissal from the program.

### Communication Standards

- All official communication must be conducted through the student’s GFC MSU email (typically ending in @gfcmsu.edu). Students are responsible for checking this email regularly.
- Faculty, staff, and patients must be addressed formally using Dr., Mr., Mrs., or Miss followed by their last name, unless otherwise directed.
- Professional language is required at all times. Profanity, slang, expletives, or disrespectful remarks are unacceptable.

### Unprofessional Conduct

Examples include, but are not limited to:
- Chronic tardiness or absenteeism.
- Failure to notify instructors of absences.
- Hostile behavior such as emotional outbursts, argumentative or abusive conduct, or poor problem-solving.
- Complaints about faculty or the program in inappropriate settings.

## Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is essential for academic success and professional development. Missed classes or clinical experiences reduce learning opportunities and may impact course performance.

### Class Attendance

- Students must attend all scheduled classes. If unable to attend, notify the instructor before class begins.
- Attendance requirements may vary by course and delivery method (face-to-face, hybrid, online). Refer to individual syllabi for specifics.
- Missing 15% or more of class sessions in a semester may result in removal from the course and program.
- The only excused absences for illness require documentation from a licensed provider (MD, NP, or PA).
- Appointments should be scheduled outside of class time. Absences for work, sleep, or preparation for work are not excused.
- The ASN RN program is in-person only. Attendance is mandatory except for approved absences.

## Clinical Attendance

- Clinical attendance is mandatory. Absences are only permitted for emergencies or severe illness, with prior approval and documentation.
- Students may not miss more than one clinical day per semester.
- All clinical orientations are required. Failure to attend will result in exclusion from clinical with no make-up option.
- If absent from clinical, students must:
 1. Contact the clinical instructor using the method listed in D2L.
 2. Email the primary course instructor and Program Director.
 3. Call the assigned unit (if applicable) at least 30 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- Failure to follow these steps may result in an Academic/Professional Deficiency.
- All missed clinical hours must be made up. Students are responsible for scheduling and completing make-up hours. Instructors may use virtual clinical software when appropriate.

### Additional Notes

- Attendance is tracked for financial aid purposes. Faculty must report the last date of attendance for students who receive a failing grade.
- Repeated tardiness will result in an Academic/Professional Deficiency.
- The Nursing Program’s attendance and grading policies are more rigorous than general college standards to ensure readiness for the licensure and professional practice.

### Weather Considerations

Winter storms are common in Central Montana. Students are expected to:
- Plan ahead for longer travel times.
- Arrange alternative transportation if living in areas with poor road maintenance.

# Course/Classroom and Testing Policies

## Course/Classroom Policies

Students are expected to attend classes regularly, be punctual, keep appointments with faculty, come prepared, and submit assignments on time.

Tardiness during guest lectures will result in an Academic/Professional Deficiency, regardless of how late the student arrives.

Students scoring below 75% (C) on coursework must contact the instructor for guidance.

Incomplete coursework must be completed according to the Nursing Program policy or course syllabus before the semester ends. Failure to submit make-up work will result in a zero and may lead to a failing grade and inability to progress in the program.

The impact of absences on grades is determined by the instructor. Refer to individual syllabi for details.

## Testing Policy

Students absent during a scheduled test must arrange a make-up test with the instructor as outlined in the course syllabus. All exams must be completed to receive a final grade. Missing an exam results in an 'F' and prevents progression.

### Dosage Calculation Quiz

First-semester students will take a dosage calculation quiz during pharmacology lab. This quiz contributes to the exam average.

Scores below 80% require a mandatory remediation meeting with course faculty. Students must email faculty as outlined in the syllabus to schedule this meeting. Remediation may involve other nursing faculty.

Dosage calculation is critical for patient safety and may appear on all exams throughout the program. Poor performance may lead to a sub-75% exam average and program failure.

### Kaplan Testing

Kaplan Integrated testing must be completed on campus at Great Falls College MSU. No exceptions, rescheduling, or make-ups are allowed.

Kaplan testing is part of the final grade and is required for course completion and program progression. Missing any portion results in a failing/incomplete grade and removal from the program.

All Kaplan testing listed in the syllabus is mandatory. Incomplete testing leads to course failure and program dismissal.

# Clinical Experience Policies

* Students represent the college and nursing profession; professionalism is expected at all times.
* Clinical instructors may dismiss students for policy violations.
* Clinical schedules are posted in Canvas; students must monitor for updates.
* Clinical paperwork includes medication sheets, assessments, concept maps, reflection papers, and SBAR notes; templates are in Canvas. Refer to individual syllabus for specifics in each course
* Unprepared students may be dismissed and must make up time at faculty discretion.
* Assignments are made the morning of clinical; students must be ready for various scenarios.
* Paperwork is due by 5pm Thursday following clinical via Canvas Assignment Dropbox; late submissions are at faculty discretion.
* Students must pass at least 75% of paperwork **and** meet learning outcomes to pass clinical.
* Leaving clinical without permission may result in dismissal due to safety and ethical concerns.
* Students must arrive 15 minutes early; three tardies equal one absence and require a makeup day.
* Missing report due to tardiness results in an absence, deficiency, and makeup requirement.
* Dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism) results in dismissal per college policy.
* Cellphone usage is prohibited in the clinical setting; violations result in deficiency.
* Conversations must remain therapeutic and professional in clinical settings.
* Gum chewing is not allowed in clinical.
* Post-conference is part of the clinical day; professional appearance is required.
* Skills checklists must be brought to every lab and clinical; failure results in a deficiency.
* Procedures may only be performed after skill validation in simulation lab.
* Students must follow all facility policies.
* Healthcare facilities are smoke-free; students may be sent home if smelling of smoke.
* Denial of access to Benefis Health Systems or Great Falls Clinic results in dismissal due to inability to meet objectives. Denial of access to a clinical site may result in dismissal after investigation.
* Clinical failure results from unsafe, negligent, or incompetent performance; students may be removed immediately if patient safety is compromised.

## Clinical/Lab Experience Dress Code

Students are expected to maintain a professional appearance at all times during clinical and lab experiences. The following guidelines apply:

* **Uniform Standards**: Designated uniforms must be in the specified color for the student’s program level, professionally acceptable, and free of damage. Uniforms must be clean, neatly ironed, and properly fitted. Pants must be hemmed, worn at the waist, and not excessively tight or loose.
* **Footwear and Undergarments**: Closed-toe shoes must be worn with clean socks or nylons. Clean, supportive undergarments are required and must not be visible under the uniform.
* **Layering**: If additional warmth is needed, students may wear a long-sleeve shirt under their uniform top in black, white, or the same color as the scrub top. No visible logos or wording are permitted. The only acceptable layer over a scrub top is a scrub jacket in the same color as the acceptable scrub top with the appropriate program patch and name badge visible.
* **Hair and Grooming**: Hair must be clean and styled away from the face. Long hair must be tied up and off the shoulders. Facial hair must be neatly groomed or shaved.
* **Nails and Cosmetics**: Artificial nails and extenders are prohibited by CDC guidelines and Nursing Program policy. Natural nails must be short, clean, and free of dark polish. Makeup may be worn, but scented products such as perfume, lotion, or aftershave are not allowed in clinical settings.
* **Jewelry and Tattoos**: Permitted jewelry includes a wedding ring, one pair of small post-style earrings, and a watch. All other visible body jewelry must be removed. Visible tattoos must comply with the policies of the clinical facility. Tattoos with vulgar, political, obscene or inappropriate subject matter will be covered in the lab and clinical settings.
* **Hygiene**: Students must maintain personal hygiene, including regular bathing and use of deodorant. Offensive body odors, including the smell of smoke, or scented products such as perfume, lotion, or aftershave are not permissible in clinical settings.
* **Instructor Discretion**: Clinical instructors have final authority on Dress code appropriateness. Students may be asked to change attire or be sent home if dress code standards are not met.

## ****Identification Requirements****

* Clinical IDs/name tags must be worn at all times and maintained throughout the program.
* Great Falls College MSU name tags are required at non-Benefis clinical sites and are available from the Nursing Program Director.
* Benefis-issued IDs must be worn at Benefis Health System sites. These IDs are property of Benefis and must be returned to the Nursing Program Director upon withdrawal, removal, or graduation.
* Lost Benefis IDs must be reported to the Nursing Program Director within one week.
* Failure to return IDs will result in an incomplete grade for the Leadership or Management course and prevent graduation.

## Remediating an Unsafe Practice Incident

The Nursing Program at Great Falls College MSU is committed to educating students in a safe, ethical, and conscientious manner, in alignment with the standards of the Montana State Board of Nursing and the College. Clinical environments must foster both patient safety and student learning, and students are expected to contribute positively to these settings.

To successfully complete the Nursing Program, students must demonstrate safe and reliable behavior in both classroom and clinical settings. Emotional or psychological challenges—such as those related to substance use, financial stress, interpersonal issues, or other personal factors—can interfere with a student’s ability to perform safely. When such issues result in unsafe or unprofessional behavior, the Nursing Program will intervene to protect patient safety and support student success.

Unsafe or unreliable behavior in any setting that may impact clinical performance is considered unacceptable and will prompt a response.

### This process includes:

Identification: Unsafe behavior may be identified by faculty or students. Students are encouraged to proactively discuss any personal challenges with faculty before issues escalate.

Immediate Action: If a faculty member observes unsafe behavior in a clinical or classroom setting, they may:

* Dismiss the student from the clinical site if the student can safely leave.
* Ask the student to leave the classroom or clinical area and meet with the faculty member afterward.
* Refer the student to the Program Director and/or primary faculty for further evaluation.

If there is reasonable suspicion of substance use, Great Falls College MSU reserves the right to require drug testing at the student’s expense as a condition for remaining in the Nursing Program.

Students exhibiting unsafe clinical behavior may be issued a Nursing Learning Laboratory Educational Remediation Form. Depending on the severity, some incidents may result in immediate removal from the program.

To complete remediation:

* Skill Practice: The student must report to the Simulated Hospital to practice the skill(s) identified as unsafe. Competency must be demonstrated to nursing lab faculty.
* Timeline: Remediation must be completed within one week of receiving the form. Failure to do so will result in an Academic/Professional Deficiency.
* Documentation: The signed remediation form must be submitted to the Program Director, with copies provided to the clinical and primary instructors within the same one-week timeframe.

## Academic/Professional Deficiency

Academic/Professional Deficiencies are serious violations of Nursing Program expectations. Each occurrence results in a written warning placed in the student's file and a copy provided to the student. Multiple deficiencies may lead to dismissal from the program.

* Failure to arrive on time for scheduled clinical or lab experience.
* Leaving clinical early or not completing the full scheduled experience.
* Failure to notify the clinical site, clinical instructor, and primary instructor at least 30 minutes before clinical start time.
* Non-compliance with published program requirements.
* Late submission of clinical paperwork.
* Use of cell phones at clinical sites.
* Violation of clinical or lab dress code.
* Unexcused absence from clinical experience.
* Tardiness to classroom; lecture or simulation.
* Unprofessional behavior, including disrespect toward instructors, peers, or clinical staff.

# Grounds for Dismissal from the Nursing Program

Dismissal from the Nursing Program may occur for a variety of academic, clinical, or professional reasons. While the following list outlines common grounds for dismissal, it is not exhaustive. Final decisions are made at the discretion of the Program Director, based on the student’s ability to provide safe patient care, demonstrate professionalism, and maintain academic standards. Due process will be followed where applicable.

Academic and Clinical Performance:

• Failing grade in any nursing course, lab, or clinical component

• Failure in a corequisite course (RN program)

• Incomplete final course grade that prevents progression

• Repeated failure to meet clinical objectives or demonstrate satisfactory progress

• Inability to perform safe and accurate dosage or IV calculations

• Performing nursing skills outside of approved clinical or lab settings

• Failure to follow lab or clinical policies and procedures

Professional Conduct and Behavior:

• Unprofessional or unethical behavior (e.g., poor attitude, inappropriate language, refusal to participate in group work)

• Insubordination toward faculty or clinical staff

• Use of profanity, obscene language, or disparaging remarks in public settings

• Use of cell phones in class, lab, or clinical without permission

• Breach of confidentiality or any HIPAA violation, including unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of patient information

• Taking photos or removing documents with patient identifiers from clinical settings

• Contacting patients outside of authorized clinical activities

Attendance and Communication:

• Failure to follow absence or tardiness notification procedures

• “No call, no show” for a scheduled clinical day

• Excessive absenteeism

Academic Integrity:

• Cheating, plagiarism, or presenting another’s work as one’s own

• Reuse of previously submitted work without permission

• Falsification of records, including charting or documentation

Legal and Safety Concerns:

• Conviction, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs or controlled substances

• Evidence or suspicion of drug or alcohol use in academic or clinical settings

• Violation of controlled substance administration procedures

• Failure to pass a required criminal background check

• Denial of access or expulsion from a clinical site

# Ethical Behavior Infraction Response Levels

Purpose

This appendix outlines the progressive disciplinary responses to ethical and professional behavior infractions within Nursing Programs at Great Falls College MSU. It is intended to guide faculty and students in maintaining a respectful, safe, and professional learning environment.

## Level 1: Informal Intervention

Use When:

* First-time or minor infractions
* Behavior is disruptive but not harmful or malicious
* Student may be unaware of expectations

Examples:

* + Failure to maintain proper uniform standards, including wearing attire that is incorrect, soiled, or not neatly pressed.
	+ Using a cell phone during class or lab
	+ Arriving late without prior notice
	+ Forgetting required materials for lab or clinical
	+ Eating or drinking in restricted areas
	+ Failure to maintain a clean work area
* Response:
	+ Verbal discussion with instructor
	+ Clarification of expectations
	+ Informal documentation (e.g., summary email)
	+ Opportunity for correction or remediation

## Level 2: Formal Warning

Use When:

· Repeated Level 1 infractions

· Behavior disrupts learning or clinical environment

· Student has been previously counseled

Examples:

· Continued tardiness or early departures

· Insubordination or argumentative behavior

· Failure to follow safety or infection control protocols

· Incomplete or inaccurate documentation

· Unprofessional interactions with peers or staff

· Failure to attend scheduled remediation

Response:

· Written warning placed in student file

· Copy provided to student

· Student conduct report filed with GFCMSU

· Required meeting with program leadership

· Possible behavioral contract or remediation plan

## Level 3: Final Warning or Probation

Use When:

· Escalation of behavior despite prior warnings

· Behavior poses risk to patient safety or program integrity

· Student demonstrates disregard for professional standards

Examples:

· Falsification of records or assignments

· Unsafe clinical practices (e.g., using nonsterile instruments)

· Breach of confidentiality (e.g., discussing patient info outside approved areas)

· Harassment or threatening behavior

· Unauthorized access to restricted systems or data

Response:

· Final written warning or probation status

· Review by Program Director and/or Division leadership

· Formal performance improvement plan

· Notification of potential dismissal if behavior continues

## Level 4: Dismissal from Program

Use When:

· Serious ethical or safety violations

· Repeated infractions across multiple categories

· Student fails to meet conditions of probation or improvement plan

Examples:

· Threats to patient or staff safety

· Gross insubordination

· Substance use during program activities

· Theft or willful damage to property

· Possession of weapons or explosives

· Serious HIPAA violations

Response:

· Immediate dismissal from program- see immediate dismissal for more information

· Documentation of dismissal and rationale

· Student notified of dismissal committee process (if applicable)

· Referral to college advisor for further action

### Case-by-Case Evaluation

Not all infractions can be anticipated. Faculty and program leadership reserve the right to evaluate incidents individually and apply disciplinary responses based on severity, context, and impact. Due process will be followed in all applicable situations.

## Immediate Dismissal

Dismissal may occur without progression through the level process for serious incidents and the Great Falls College policy 300.1 would be followed. The following are examples of possible behaviors leading to immediate dismissal:

· Threats to patient safety

· Gross insubordination

· Disclosure of confidential information

· Falsifying records

· Cheating or theft

· Willful damage to property

· Intoxication or drug use during program hours

· Possession of weapons on campus or clinical sites

*Exceptions may be granted at the discretion of Faculty or the Nursing Program Director.*

# Distance-Specific Policies

Unless otherwise specified, all policies in this handbook apply to distance students. The following section outlines additional policies specific to students enrolled in the Distance CAS LPN Nursing Program both Full time and Part time

## On-Campus Sessions

All scheduled on-campus sessions are **mandatory** and will **not be repeated**. Failure to attend any required session will result in **removal from the Practical Nurse Program**.

Distance students must comply with **all program policies**, including attendance and dress code requirements for designated in-person sessions.

## Distance Success Coach

• Distance PN students must maintain scheduled contact with the Distance Success Coach via phone or video. Scheduling is coordinated between the student and the coach.
• Failure to maintain scheduled contact may result in an Academic/Professional Deficiency.
• Multiple deficiencies for missed contact may lead to dismissal from the program.

## Lecture

• Students must view class recordings on Panopto (accessed through Canvas) by the next scheduled class, unless otherwise stated in the course syllabus.
• Failure to view recordings will be considered an absence.
• Students are responsible for all presented class material, regardless of format.

## Lab

• At the discretion of the lab faculty, students may be required to demonstrate skills via video submission, Webex/Teams appointment, RN observation with sign-off, or live demonstration on campus.
• All distance students must attend designated face-to-face lab days as outlined in the acceptance letter.
• Skills practice and checkoffs will occur during these in-person sessions.
• Any lab recordings or lessons intended for distance students must be viewed within 7 days of posting.

## Clinical Site Requirements

* Distance students are responsible for securing appropriate clinical sites and preceptors for clinical experiences.
* Semester 1 clinical hours initially occur during on-campus sessions. Precepted Clinical Hours to augment on campus clinical hours can begin as outlined in the course syllabi.
	+ A signed affiliation agreement between the facility and the college is required before clinicals begin.
	+ Preceptors must be approved by faculty, and a clinical schedule must be submitted to faculty and the Program Director.

## Clinical Paperwork and Submission

* Distance students must submit the same clinical paperwork as face-to-face students.
* Paperwork must be submitted via the appropriate Canvas Assignment Dropbox as outlined in the course syllabus.

## Clinical Hour Log Completion

* A log of completed hours must be submitted to the respective Canvas clinical course shell.
* All clinical hours must be completed at least one week before the end of the semester.
* Clinical hours shall be performed per the guidelines in the course syllabus

## Clinical Scheduling and Tracking

* Students must report planned scheduled clinical hours to the course faculty and any deviation from that schedule must be reported to faculty.
* Expectations for calendar updates will be outlined in individual course syllabus.

# Testing Policy

The following testing policies apply to students in the Great Falls College MSU Nursing Program distance learners. These guidelines are designed to ensure academic integrity and consistency across all testing environments.

## Exam Setup and Scheduling

Distance students must notify course faculty via email at least 72 hours in advance (excluding weekends) of their planned exam time. Exams must be scheduled within the 24-hour window prior to the in-class exam. Failure to notify faculty will result in a missed exam and a zero for the exam. Exams must be taken at the pre-scheduled time. Make-up exams are allowed only for emergencies and at faculty discretion.

## Exam Environment Requirements

Remote exams open 24 hours before the in-class exam and close at the same time for all students. *Respondus LockDown* *Browser* with video and microphone required. Students must perform a room scan with their web cam and use a handheld mirror to show the computer screen at the start of the exam. Students must be alone in a well-lit room with the door closed. Any visitor entry or communication can be considered cheating. No cell phones smart watches or secondary devices are allowed. The testing area must be clear of materials except the computer and any instructor-approved items. Dual monitors/screens are prohibited. Use of other applications or internet is not allowed.

## Permitted Materials

Students may use one blank sheet of scratch paper, a pencil or pen and a basic 4-function calculator. At the start of the exam, students must show these to the camera. At the end, they must hold up each side of the paper for 20 seconds, clearly visible and in focus. Scratch paper must be shredded/destroyed after use. Students must not write test questions on scratch paper or share it with others. Violations will result in academic write-up.

## Conduct and Integrity

Exams are computerized and they are not open book exams. Use of unauthorized resources may result in a zero and an academic write-up. Clear evidence of cheating (e.g., video/audio proof or direct observation) will result in immediate dismissal from the program. Discussing exam content with classmates (face to face or distance) before the exam closes for all students is prohibited and will result in an academic write-up. Students must remain in full view of the camera for the entire test. Faculty may conduct unannounced visits during exams to ensure compliance. Any test flagged for suspicion of irregularities will prompt a review of the video by a faculty member. Grades can be withheld until completion of review of videos. Any deviation from these policies will be handled by the primary instructor in consultation with Nursing faculty and/or the Program Director.