This handbook is intended to provide students pertinent information relating to the School of Nursing. None of the information contained herein shall be interpreted to create a contract. The information included is up-to-date as of the time of publication. The University reserves the right to make changes in policy, regulations and fees, as circumstances dictate, subsequent to publication.

1/1992
Rev 1/2016
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I. MISSION

The mission of Middle Tennessee State University School of Nursing is to provide excellence in nursing education by preparing individuals to meet the dynamic and complex healthcare needs of society. Through robust academic programs, the School of Nursing demonstrates its’ commitment to the art and science of nursing.

II. PHILOSOPHY

A. The Middle Tennessee State University School of Nursing has established an operating framework with five core competencies at the foundation. These are communication, critical thinking, personal and professional relationships, leadership and the nursing process. From this base, additional concepts emerge to provide interaction with persons, the environment, health, professional nursing and nursing education.

1. Communication includes all interaction, verbal and nonverbal, that occurs with an individual or the environment. Because communication is a complex process, education and experience contribute to expanding an individual’s ability in this competence. Good communication involves receiving as well as sending messages. It is essential in order for any of the other competencies to be useful.

2. Critical thinking encompasses all forms of analysis, creativity and reasoning. It is essential for good decision-making. Although it involves some basic intuitive ability, critical thinking skills can be taught. Since critical thinking can be taught, opportunities for practice and improvement are available in a variety of settings. This skill is a cornerstone without which the other core competencies would remain at a dangerously superficial level.

3. Personal and professional relationships are important factors in the operating framework because they are the context in which the other competencies interact. Through the process of socialization, students learn the professional role in formal and informal ways. Experiences can increase abilities to interact with a large variety of individuals, thus enhancing relationship skills. Competency in interpersonal relationships is crucial for successful goal attainment.
4. **Leadership** is a dynamic process that includes technical skills in combination with the art of nursing. Effective leaders demonstrate all other core competencies as they guide others in the professional role. Adaptation to future trends in the healthcare system is possible through skills in management that allow for control of both material and human resources. The baccalaureate graduate is prepared to assume positions that require this important core competency.

5. The **nursing process** is the vehicle that connects and applies all other competencies. It is the profession’s method of problem solving and allows for consistent, creative and skillful care. Through the nursing process, a team of concerned professionals meets individuals’ needs for health and well-being.

All five of the core competencies must be present in order for an individual to demonstrate competency in the art and science of nursing. Anyone missing a portion of this core could not be a successful nursing professional. Together, the five core competencies prepare individuals with the resources to operate in the healthcare arena knowing that they possess appropriate skill to handle challenging situations. The combination of communication, critical thinking, personal and professional relationships, leadership, and the nursing process provide a broad base that stimulates ongoing knowledge and skill acquisition.

B. The additional concepts encircle the core competencies and add further definition and depth to the practice of nursing. **Person, environment, health, professional nursing, and nursing education** contribute dimensions to the core competencies that clarify expectations of the practicing nurse. All terms represent factors that the nurse encounters while delivering care.

1. Every **person** is a unique and multifaceted individual. Persons live, work and play as individuals, families, groups and communities. They are bio-psycho-social and spiritual beings who represent the entire spectrum of cultural diversity. Nurses can administer care for persons singly or in any configuration. Communication occurs with any of these combinations, highlighting interpersonal relationships. Critical thinking is required in order to plan care using the nursing process.

2. The person interacts with the **environment** in an ongoing, continually changing cycle. In order to fully understand persons, their environment must be examined. Again, use of the core competencies facilitates nurses’ ability to incorporate all environmental influence.

3. **Health** is a continuum of wellness to illness. It is not merely the presence or absence of disease, but includes all forms of life influencing factors. Persons, in connection with their environment, strive for a place on the continuum of health that is realistic and comfortable for them. Nurses act to assist each individual in this effort. Use of all five core competencies is crucial in gaining the skill to allow optimal service to all individuals, families and communities.

4. **Professional nursing** is an art and a science. Courses are taken in a wide variety of disciplines to supplement the knowledge gained from nursing courses. Not only do students acquire a
broad knowledge base, but also they learn to interact with a diverse group of team members.

5. **Nursing education** takes place in environments of higher learning. It includes a variety of experiences to assist students in gaining beginning competence in providing holistic care. Nursing education includes courses from many disciplines. Courses in humanities, arts, sciences and mathematics are eventually combined with nursing content to produce a well-rounded individual capable of using communication and critical thinking in developing the nursing process and accomplishing productive personal and professional relationships.

### III. **MAJOR CONCEPTS/CORE COMPETENCIES**

The core competencies were derived from concept identification and clarification exercises with the faculty in April 2001. It yielded five core competencies with subcategories identifying behaviors or characteristics for each subcategory. These are the competencies the graduate should demonstrate to fulfill the program outcomes.

#### A. **COMMUNICATION**

1. **Oral Skills**
   - Teaching
   - Professional Interaction
   - Therapeutic Communication
   - Assertiveness
   - Public Speaking
   - Negotiation

2. **Written Skills**
   - Manuscript
   - Technical Reports
   - Composition
   - Professional Correspondence
   - Documentation
   - Plans of Care

3. **Information Technology Skills**
   - Word Processing
   - Web Searching
   - Terminology
   - Electronic Communication
   - Navigation of the Web
   - Database Management

#### B. **CRITICAL THINKING**

1. **Scientific Inquiry**
   - Research Dissemination
   - Research Utilization
   - Quality Improvement
   - Critical Elements Identification
Reflective Thinking

2. Creativity
   - Autonomy
   - Self-expression
   - Risk
   - Taking Flexibility

C. LEADERSHIP

1. Personal
   - Role Modeling
   - Professional Accountability/responsibility
   - Lifelong Learning

2. Coordinator of Care
   - Team Member
   - Clients/Patients
   - Delegation

3. Materials Management
   - Accountability
   - Appropriation
   - Information Manager

4. Human Resources
   - Groups/Aggregates
   - Workforce Manager

5. Time Management
   - Organization

D. NURSING PROCESS

1. Assessment
2. Analysis
3. Planning
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation

E. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. Morality
   - Socialization
   - Spirituality
   - Altruism
   - Social Justice
   - Values
   - Quality of Life

2. Ethics
3. **Legality**
   Nurse Practice Act
   Patient Rights
   Civil and/or Criminal Law
   Standards of Practice

4. **Cultural Care Competency**
   Sensitivity
   Diversity

5. **Caring**
   Empathy
   Empowerment
   Collegiality
   Compassion
   Respect

F. **DEFINITIONS**

1. **Communication Skills**: Exchange of ideas via a variety of formats.
   - **Oral Skills**: Verbal and nonverbal communication
   - **Writing Skills**: Ability to communicate information in written format
   - **Technology Skills**: Utilization of technology to promote validation and exchange of information.

2. **Critical Thinking Skills**: Utilizing skills of reasoning, analysis, research, or decision making relevant to the discipline of nursing.
   - **Scientific Inquiry**: Attainment, synthesis, and utilization of data
   - **Creativity**: The procurement, reordering or identification of data to facilitate change

3. **Leadership**: Use of knowledge and skills to design, coordinate and manage care of individuals within a system.
   - **Role Modeling**: Students will model professionalism
   - **Professional Accountability/Responsibility**: Ultimately answers for health care outcomes
   - **Lifelong Learning**: Recognizes the need to expand knowledge base throughout one’s career
   - **Clients/Patients**: Responsible for direct and indirect care of clients with multiple healthcare deficits
   - **Team Member**: Practices with other healthcare professionals, including lesser skilled personnel, i.e. unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP)
4. **Nursing Process**: An orderly, logical, problem-solving approach to administer nursing care so that client’s needs are met

- **Assessment**: A deliberate and systematic collection of data
- **Analysis**: Examine and interpret data to make nursing judgments
- **Planning**: Develop a strategy that prescribes interventions to attain expected outcomes
- **Implementation**: Putting a nursing plan into action
- **Evaluation**: Continuous process essential to ensuring the quality and appropriateness of nursing interventions

5. **Personal and Professional Relationships**: Standards of behavior in the practice of nursing

- **Morality**: Establishment and maintenance of standards of thinking and behaving
- **Ethics**: The study of suitable actions based on values and mores of society
- **Legality**: Standards of behavior defined by law
- **Cultural Care Competency**: Awareness of and response to differences among people
- **Caring**: Behavior that shows understanding and respect for another’s perceptions, feelings, needs, and desires.

**IV. PROGRAM OUTCOMES**
Graduates of the baccalaureate program receive preparation designed to enable them to:

1. Develop professional knowledge and skills necessary to design, coordinate, and lead within the healthcare system.

2. Utilize the nursing process as a foundation for nursing practice.

3. Communicate in a variety of media to facilitate the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and information.

4. Employ critical thinking abilities for personal and professional development and nursing practice refinement.
5. Exhibit personal and professional development responsive to changes in nursing, health care, and society.

V. **NURSING STUDENT HONOR CODE**

**KNOWLEDGE, INTEGRITY, COMPASSION and SKILL**

The School of Nursing (SON) at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) values a strong sense of integrity and ethics among students and faculty alike and strives to facilitate the development of such behaviors through the use of the Nursing Student Honor Code. Students in the SON are held, not only to the standards outlined in the MTSU student handbook, but to the guidelines provided below.

*Statement of Nursing Student Honor Code*

Student conduct in the MTSU SON is expected to demonstrate ethical behaviors that reflect a strong sense of integrity in personal, academic, and professional conduct. The student is guided by the values of truth, justice, and respect for human dignity, as well as professional standards, in the practice of ethical and safe behaviors toward self, fellow students, faculty, staff, and patients when operating in any student capacity on or off University property.

The MTSU SON administration and faculty support the development of behaviors demonstrating integrity and ethics in all student arenas. The Honor Code is explained upon admission to the SON. As students progress through the curriculum, it is the obligation of all students to adhere to the higher ethical, personal, academic, and professional behaviors as outlined in the Honor Code. Each student is required to abide by all components of the Honor Code, including consequences for any violations. All students are ethically responsible for reporting any known or suspected violation of this Honor Code.

*Nursing Student Honor Pledge*

As a student of the Middle Tennessee State University School of Nursing, I do hereby truthfully pledge not to engage in any acts of academic or professional misconduct during my nursing education. I have read and been given the opportunity to ask questions about the Nursing Student Honor Code System presented in the School of Nursing Student Handbook. I understand the content contained therein, including the disciplinary processes as referenced in the MTSU Student Handbook, Resources and Rules. As an expectation of my admission to and progression through the nursing program, I will abide by the Nursing Student Honor Code at all times. I understand that any acts of academic or professional misconduct violate the honor code and may result in sanctions as severe as dismissal from the nursing program.
VI. STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Academic and Professional Conduct

Students enrolled in the nursing program at MTSU will be held accountable for the provisions as stated by the Student Code of Conduct. As with the Nursing Student Honor Code, the Student Code of Conduct is based upon and demands the values of truth, integrity, and ethical behavior within academic and professional settings. Professional settings include those places in which a nursing student is functioning as a representative of the SON and MTSU, on or off campus. Failure to adhere to the provisions of academic and professional conduct of the Student Code of Conduct shall be deemed as misconduct, resulting in academic and/or disciplinary consequences up to and including dismissal from the nursing program. Academic and professional misconduct would include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. **Plagiarism.** The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one’s own without proper acknowledgment.

2. **Cheating.** Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise inclusive of online work. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours. Cheating includes but is not limited to receiving or providing answers on a written exam, storing any data within a calculator prior to or during an exam for use in providing responses to an exam, giving signals of any kind during an exam, sending and/or receiving text messages via cell phone with regard to answers to an exam, the procurement and/or distribution of an exam before or after it is given, including the use of cell phone camera options or copying computer generated assessments in order to reproduce an exam, and group collaboration on any independent assignment. Posting of forms, written papers, and exams to any free or paid-access social networking website(s) is strictly prohibited.

3. **Fabrication.** Fabrication or invention, either verbal or written, of any information or citation in an academic exercise. This includes, but is not limited to, falsification of any information provided to a faculty or staff member, clinical site staff and preceptors (class-related or clinical); for example, the nursing care plan (NCP) database.

4. **Facilitation.** Helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the Code of Conduct.

5. Posting of confidential client or facility information from clinical assignments or experiences to any online forum or webpage is strictly prohibited, as well as a breach of the federal HIPAA regulations.

6. Any behavior that threatens the safety of self, fellow students, faculty, staff, or patients when operating in a student capacity, representing the MTSU SON.
7. Other forms of unprofessional behavior or conduct includes but is not limited to:
   a. Tobacco use (smoking, E-cigarettes or smokeless tobacco) at clinical sites and/or in nursing student uniform
   b. Purchasing of alcohol or cigarettes in a nursing student uniform
   c. Tardiness (clinical, classroom, lab or simulation experiences)
   d. Interruptions or inappropriate talking during class
   e. Intimidation of students and/or faculty or staff (angry, hostile or violent behavior)
   f. Use of cellphones or other electronic devices not approved by faculty in class
   g. Academic misconduct
   h. Fabrication of data in class, clinical or other written assignments
   i. Sleeping in class or clinical
   j. Sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual comments
   k. Use of vulgar, obscene or disrespectful language towards patients, other students, faculty or staff (social media sites, on campus or at clinical sites)
   l. Any other behavior deemed by faculty as unacceptable

Any and all infractions of the Student Code of Conduct will be handled according to University policy as stated in the University Student Handbook of Resources and Rules. A copy of the University Student Handbook is available online via the official MTSU website.

Grievance Policy Statement

Any student being disciplined for academic misconduct may refer to the MTSU Student Handbook, Resources and Rules, for the grievance policy and procedures. A grade appeal process is available for utilization by students, as indicated in VII. Policies and Procedures, section I of this handbook.

VII. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. **Student Rights and Responsibilities.** All policies, rights and responsibilities pertaining to all students at MTSU apply to the students in the nursing curriculum.

B. **Advising Guidelines.**

   a. Students should look on their Pipeline account under Assigned Advisor to ascertain the name and contact information (phone # and/or email address) for the student’s assigned nursing academic advisor and faculty advisor.

   b. In order to meet with an advisor, students should make appointments well in advance, as nursing faculty are frequently off campus (i.e., for clinical experiences with upper-division nursing students).
c. Students should allow 3-5 working days for the advisor to respond.

d. Make contact early in the semester to schedule an appointment – do not wait until the last minute (priority registration time) to try and make an appointment to see your advisor. Go to the MTSU SON website to schedule an appointment with your academic advisor.

e. The academic advisor’s office is located in Suite 201 in the SON.

f. Pre-Nursing students should meet with their advisor each semester to be sure they are aware of admission requirements, required courses, and deadlines for making application. Deadline dates for admission consideration to upper-division nursing courses are February 1 for a Fall semester and October 1 for a Spring semester. Necessary paperwork must be on file in the Nursing office by said dates. To make an appointment with your assigned Pre-Nursing advisor go to the MTSU SON website and follow the instructions. The number for the CBHS advising office is 615-898-4803.

g. Students should also meet with their advisor each semester to review their progression throughout the nursing program.

h. A student may initiate a change in faculty advisor. Any such request must be submitted in writing to the Director of the School of Nursing.

i. The upper-division form is a degree plan outlining courses required for graduation for major and minor areas of study. This form should be completed prior to the end of the first semester of the junior year.

**STUDENTS MUST SEE THEIR ACADEMIC ADVISOR IN THE SECOND SEMESTER OF UPPER-DIVISION NURSING TO DETERMINE ANY DEFICIENCIES BEFORE SUBMITTING THE UPPER-DIVISION AND INTENT TO GRADUATE FORMS.**

Upon advisor approval, the form should be submitted to the Graduation Coordinator. Upper-division forms will be given out by the advisor in one of the 2nd semester classes and turned back in that same class. If the student is seeking an optional minor, discuss the procedure with the advisor during the class.

C. **Progression/Retention in the Nursing Major**

1. **Progression Requirements within the Program**

In order for students to progress through the nursing curriculum, they must:

1. Maintain current documentation in the SON on the student’s Medatrax account.

2. Achieve success in nursing courses in the order outlined in the BSN Upper-Division
Nursing Curriculum with a minimum grade of “C” (2.00) in all theory courses as well as a “pass” in each co-requisite lab/clinical course. Courses with a grade less than “C” must be repeated at MTSU. See VII.E.1. for failure to progress information.

Students who have failed nursing courses in one semester at MTSU may not transfer nursing credits for those nursing courses from another institution. (If a student fails a nursing course at MTSU, he/she must repeat that course at MTSU.) Students failing a course are expected to meet with the course instructor and faculty advisor by mid-term.

3. Readmission.

If a student must interrupt her/his program of study or exit the program, an Interruption of Program Form must be submitted to the SON Admission Committee Chairperson requesting to interrupt/exit the program. This can be found on the MTSU SON website.

The student will be readmitted on a space-available basis. The student will be reviewed for readmission to upper-division nursing courses after evidence that admission requirements to the degree program have been met. Students seeking readmission to the upper-division nursing program will be readmitted by the following prioritization:

1. Student who has been accepted into the nursing program but took a semester off for health reasons.

2. Student who has been accepted into the nursing program but failed one class, and/or, who has interrupted the educational process for another reason. (Only one repeat of a nursing [NURS] course is permitted.)

3. Qualified students transferring from other upper-division nursing programs.


The School of Nursing uses a common grading scale as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= 94-100 \\
B &= 87-93 \\
C &= 80-86 \\
D &= 73-79 \\
F &= \text{Below 73}
\end{align*}
\]

No extra credit will be awarded within any nursing course. Final grades will be rounded according to conventional mathematical rules. Students must attain a minimum grade of “C” (2.00) in all nursing courses (MTSU Undergraduate Catalog).

Students are required to purchase their own Scantron sheets (200 response) for testing purposes. Please ask the faculty for each course how many sheets are required from Phillips Bookstore. Scantron sheets will not be available for purchase in the nursing office.

A standardized exam is a requirement during the program of study. Please refer to the course syllabi for further information.
5. **Incompleted Courses**

An “I” indicates that the student has not completed all course requirements because of illness or other uncontrollable circumstances, especially those that may occur toward the close of the term. Mere failure to make up work or turn in required work on time does not provide the basis for the grade of “I” unless the extenuating circumstances noted above are present for reasons acceptable to the instructor. The “incomplete” must be removed during the succeeding semester, excluding summer. Otherwise, a grade of “F” is entered. The “I” grade carries no value until converted to a final grade.

6. **Withdrawal from a Course**

A “W” is assigned in courses that are dropped during a specified period of time within a term.
   a. For didactic/theory courses, students should consult the appropriate class schedule book for specific withdrawal dates each term.
   b. All clinical courses are linked to corresponding didactic/theory courses. If a student wishes to withdraw from a clinical course, notification to and signature from the clinical course instructor is required prior to a “W” grade assignment.
   c. **Students withdrawing from a clinical course are highly encouraged to also withdraw from associated didactic/theory course.**

7. **Paper Submission.**

Students are required to submit scholarly papers using American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. Basic information on APA format will be introduced in NURS 3000, Professionalism in Nursing. Anti-plagarism software may also be utilized within specific courses. See course syllabi for further details.

8. **Program Development.**

Each nursing semester builds upon the nursing courses in the semesters preceding it. Since it is necessary that all content and skills be retained, students will be held accountable for previously assigned materials through testing or other evaluation methods.

9. **Clinical Policies.**

Successful completion of clinical objectives must be achieved to receive a passing grade for the course. Students will be active participants in the evaluation process.

   a. All students are required to meet clinical responsibilities according to the course syllabus. Any cause for clinical absence must be cleared with the instructor involved and reported to the clinical agency in advance of the time the student is to report to clinical. Unexcused absences or absences which affect the student’s ability to meet clinical objectives are considered unsatisfactory clinical performance. Tardiness or coming unprepared to clinical will be reflected in the clinical grade and may be considered a clinical absence and result in an unsatisfactory grade.

   b. Students are expected to be prepared for clinicals based upon clinical objectives. Faculty reserve the right to determine each student’s eligibility to participate in
clinical rotations based upon satisfactory preparation, meeting SON and clinical agency’s policies, and performance at a safe level of practice. If any of these are not satisfactory, faculty reserve the right to dismiss the student from clinical for that day. Such a dismissal may result in academic or disciplinary actions being taken against the student.

c. Current BCLS certification is required prior to all clinical rotations. The certification course must be the American Heart Association BLS for Health care Providers given by Level F instructor. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain the credential. In the SON office, students can ask for a partial list of agencies that teach BCLS certification.

d. Because quality clinical placements are increasingly difficult to secure, non-traditional hours will be incorporated into the student’s clinical rotations. The combination of traditional (8 hours day shifts) and non-traditional (6-12 hours day, evening and weekend shifts) allows the student to participate in a broader range of experiences in the nursing industry, as well as prepares a smoother transition to employment. The clinical rotation schedule will be given to students at the earliest possible date to facilitate planning by the student. Clinical schedules/hours are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and/or the clinical agency.

e. Clinical sites may vary each semester as the faculty deem necessary. Students must have their own transportation to the clinical sites. Students may be expected to prepare for their assigned clinical patient(s) prior to clinical.

f. Based on requirements imposed by clinical sites used by the SON, students must complete a multi-state criminal background check no earlier than one (1) year prior and no later than 90 days prior to the initial clinical experience. They may also be required by facilities to maintain a current background check within the 12 months preceding any clinical rotation. Students are responsible for contacting the vendor who will maintain the records for seven (7) years. Students are responsible for the costs associated with the criminal background checks.

Based on the outcome of the criminal background check, the clinical affiliate makes the determination concerning student participation at their facility. Students may not be placed at a clinical site if they do not meet the clinical site’s requirements concerning criminal background checks. The SON does not guarantee student placement at clinical facilities. A student’s successful completion of the SON program is dependent on his/her ability to be placed at a clinical site and to successfully complete those requirements.

g. Based on requirements imposed by clinical sites used by the SON, students must complete a 10-panel drug screen no earlier than one (1) year prior. Students are responsible for contacting the vendor who will maintain the records for seven (7) years. Students are responsible for the costs associated with the drug screen. Based on the outcome of the drug screen, the clinical affiliate makes the determination concerning student participation at their facility. Students may not be placed at a clinical site if they do not meet the clinical site’s requirements concerning drug screens. The SON does not guarantee student placement at clinical facilities. A
student’s successful completion of the SON program is dependent on his/her ability to be placed at a clinical site and to successfully complete those requirements. You will keep up with your clinical requirements on the Medatrax clinical tracking software.

D. **Math Competency.** Math and dosage calculations are integrated throughout the program. This ensures continued proficiency. Students will be required to perform at 100% accuracy when calculating, preparing and administering medications in the clinical area. Failure to do so constitutes a lack of safe practice. For this reason, dosage computation proficiency is required of all students prior to the start of each clinical to ensure safe care delivery in the healthcare setting. Students must receive 100% to determine proficiency. Competency must be determined prior to start of clinical rotation. **A student will only have two attempts to demonstrate 100%.** Students will not be permitted to attend clinical if 100% is not attained within two attempts resulting in failure of the clinical course.

E. **Dismissal from the Nursing Major.**

Students may be dismissed from the nursing major for a variety of reasons, which include, but are not limited to:

1. Failure to progress due to unsuccessful attainment of requirements: Students are dismissed from the program if they receive a total of two “D” or “F” grades in any combination of two or more nursing courses (required theory or clinical), regardless of the semester in which they occur.

2. School of Nursing Student Honor Code Violation: Refer to SON Student Honor Code.

3. Committal of a breach of ethics or gross professional negligence.

4. Use of mind-altering drugs or alcohol when engaged in any nursing activity in or outside of class.

5. Violation of the MTSU Student Code of Conduct following appropriate institutional disciplinary process.

F. **Nursing Dismissal Process**

1. Course faculty contacts Director when faced with a situation or case that could possibly result in potential dismissal.

2. Director forms ad hoc panel composed of 3 nursing faculty with no conflict of interest.

3. Panel will review documentation regarding case and hold a separate hearing for both student and faculty.

4. Panel will forward recommendation for dismissal/non-dismissal to Director with an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

5. Director will notify the student.

6. Any appeal will be filed with the Director of the School of Nursing.
G. **Standards of Nursing Competence.** Standards are defined by the Tennessee Board of Nursing.

**1000-1-.14 Standards of Nursing Competence.** The Board requires all nurses to document evidence of competence in their current practice role. The Board believes that the individual nurse is responsible for maintaining and demonstrating competence in the practice role whether the recipient of the nursing intervention is the individual, family, community, nursing staff, nursing student body, or other.

H. **Professional Conduct.**

1. Professional conduct within the nursing program involves safeguarding the client and the public from incompetent, unethical, or illegal practices. Confidentiality and protection of client privacy is a priority consideration in professional conduct. Students will not under any circumstances discuss any patient, hospital, or staff information outside the confines of the classroom, clinical, or post-conference area and/or without the direction and guidance of clinical faculty or clinical supervisor. If at any time a student has a concern regarding an occurrence in the clinical setting, the student is to discuss the concern with the clinical faculty and/or appropriate member of nursing team at the clinical agency. Failure to comply with confidentiality policy may result in dismissal from the program. Clinical agencies may require students to sign an agency confidentiality agreement prior to clinical experience in that facility.

Any student determined to pose a threat to self, client or others due to: 1.) physical and/or mental deficits, or, 2.) inappropriate or unprofessional conduct will be asked to leave the clinical setting. This constitutes failure to meet the performance standards of nursing practice and may result in appropriate action up to dismissal from the program. The involved student and faculty member will progress through the Four (4) Step Process for Unprofessional Conduct Penalties listed on page 22.

Clinical professional behavior is an academic issue. Faculty reserve the right to determine each student’s eligibility to participate in clinical rotations based upon satisfactory preparation, and meeting SON and clinical agency’s policies, and performance at a safe level of practice. If any of these is not satisfactory, faculty may give the student an unsatisfactory grade and ask a student to leave the clinical agency for the day.

2. **1000-1-.13 Unprofessional Conduct and Negligence, Habits or Other Cause.** Unprofessional conduct has been defined by the Tennessee Board of Nursing. A copy of the Administrative Rules is on file in the School of Nursing Office. Because drug and/or alcohol abuse is considered to be unprofessional conduct, the Tennessee Board of Regents Drug and Alcohol Policy and Testing Procedure is presented on the pages following the Unprofessional Conduct list. Additionally, violations of the MTSU School of Nursing Student Honor Code are considered unprofessional.

3. **63-7-107 Nursing Tennessee Code of Unannotated Title 63, Chapter 7 (TN Code)** Any action or behavior which violates the above will be grounds for dismissal from the nursing program.
63-7-107. Use of registered nurse title. Any person who holds a license to practice professional nursing under this chapter shall, during the effective period of such license, be entitled to use the title Registered Nurse of the abbreviation R.N. **No other person shall assume such title or use such abbreviation or any other words, letters, or signs to indicate the person using the same is a professional or registered nurse.**

4. **Drug and Alcohol Abuse.** If a student appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or is functioning in any impaired manner, the faculty or hospital personnel responsible for that student have the responsibility for dismissing the student from clinical experience that day. The Drug and Alcohol Testing Procedure and the Four (4) Step Process for Documenting and Imposing the Penalties for Unprofessional Conduct Policy will be followed. If the student subsequently returns to the class/clinical setting, all absences must be made up.

a. **Alcohol:** The use of alcohol by any students while performing assigned responsibilities is prohibited. “Being under the influence” means that the student is affected by alcohol in any detectable manner which interferes with safe performance or of duties. Symptoms of influence are not confined to those consistent with misbehavior, nor to obvious impairments of physical and mental ability, e.g. slurred speech or difficulty in maintaining balance. A determination of “influence” can be established by a professional opinion, a scientifically valid test, and in some cases such as alcohol, by a lay person’s opinion.

b. **Legal Drugs:** Being under the influence of a legal drug, prescribed or self-administered, by any student while performing assigned responsibilities is prohibited to the extent that such use or influence may affect safety of self, patients, co-workers or the public. If it is determined that the student does not pose a threat to safety of others and that performance is not affected, the student will be allowed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

c. **Illegal Drugs:** The use, sale, purchase, transfer or possession by any student of an illegal drug, which is defined as any drug (1) which is not legally obtainable or (2) which is legally obtainable but has not been legally obtained, is prohibited. This also includes marijuana. The presence in any detectable amount of any illegal drugs while performing assigned responsibilities is prohibited.

d. Students may be subject to take blood tests, urinalysis and/or other drug/alcohol screening tests when clinical supervisory personnel (faculty or hospital employee), fellow students or a student’s self-professed use determine that the circumstances justify testing.

A student’s consent to submit to such tests is required as a condition of acceptance into a program of study. A student’s refusal to submit to such tests may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program of study. Repeat random testing may occur at the discretion of the SON director. Any refusal to submit to such testing may result in disciplinary action or dismissal from the program. The cost of this testing will be assumed by the student.
Violation of these policies can result in disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal from the program of study, even for a first offense. A specific plan for rehabilitation will be developed on an individual basis, and where appropriate, counseling and assistance services for students who are identified as needing help will be recommended. Should a student be dismissed from a program of study for violation of these policies, a plan for rehabilitation will be devised which may include mandatory counseling, periodic drug/alcohol screening and periodic reporting before a student would be considered for re-admission into the program. The student must assume the responsibility for compliance with this plan before a student’s request for re-admission into the program of study can be considered.

The Tennessee Board of Regents Drug and Alcohol Testing Procedure Recommendations will be followed. A copy of the procedure is on file in the SON Office. Students may review the procedure upon request.

5. Unprofessional Conduct Policy.
   a. Course faculty contacts Director when faced with a situation or case possibly resulting in potential dismissal.
   b. Director forms ad hoc panel composed of 3 nursing faculty with no conflict of interest.
   c. Panel will review documentation regarding case and hold a separate hearing for both student and faculty.
   d. Panel will forward recommendation for dismissal/non-dismissal to Director with an explanation of the reasons for the recommendation.
   e. Director will notify the student of the decision.
   f. Any appeal will be filed with the Director of the School of Nursing.

I. Graduation Policy.
   In order to graduate from MTSU with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, the following criteria must be met:

   1. completion of 120 semester hours of credit including all of the prerequisite courses (or approved substitutes), the nursing courses and the general core requirements.
   2. completion of 42 semester hours of upper division credit.
   3. have a college grade point average of a 2.00 or better.
   4. have completed 12 of the last 18 hours in residence at MTSU.
   5. complete and file an Intention to Graduate form according to the Records Office schedule.

J. Grade Appeals.
   Any undergraduate student grievance concerning grades, should be pursued according to the process outlined in the MTSU Student Appeal of Grades Procedure.
K. **Attendance Policy.**

**Student Absence from Class:** Students are expected to attend the classes for which they are assigned or for which they are registered. The Faculty recognizes that there are occasional unavoidable circumstances that cause a student to miss a class. However, the fact that a student may be absent from a class does not, in any way, relieve that student of the responsibility for the work covered or assigned during the absence. See course syllabi for specific information.

L. **Testing Policy**

**MTSU School of Nursing Exam Policy**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Exam Policy is to establish standards in the MTSU School of Nursing that will result in fairness, integrity and professionalism. It is essential for students to be treated fairly in every course. It is the goal of the MTSU School of Nursing Faculty to provide each student with equal opportunities to achieve success. While students are expected to take scheduled exams at required times, there may be unforeseen circumstances that may result in a missed exam. The guidelines set forth in this policy will be followed by all Faculty of the MTSU School of Nursing.

I. **Exam Statement**

Students are expected to take required scheduled exams according to each course outline provided by the assigned Professor. Students must follow the guidelines set forth in the Exam Policy regarding missed exams.

II. **Students**

1.) There will be no make-up exams scheduled in any nursing course.
2.) In the event the student misses an exam, the student’s final exam (comprehensive) score will count twice.
3.) In the event the student is late for a scheduled course exam, the student will not acquire additional time to sit in the class to finish the exam.
4.) Each nursing course will provide the following Exam Policy Statement in the syllabus. Course Syllabus statement: There are no make-up exams permitted in any nursing course. Students who miss a scheduled exam for ANY reason will receive a grade for the missed exam that is equal to the grade achieved on the comprehensive final exam. Only one missed exam qualifies for this opportunity. Should a student miss a second (or more) scheduled exam(s) during the semester, he/she will receive a grade of 0 for that(those) exam(s).

III. **Procedures During Exams**

1.) All personal belongings, including electronic devices will be placed in the front of the classroom during exams.
2.) No cell phones, ear buds, or watches with computer screens are to be used during scheduled exams. These items (*Cell phones, ear buds, iwatch*) are not permitted on the person during exams.
3.) No hats or hoodies may be worn during scheduled exams.
4.) No food or drinks are allowed during scheduled exams.
5.) Students should take bathroom breaks prior to the exam. Students may not leave the room during exams.
6.) Students are not permitted to ask questions about the exam content during the exam.
7.) The Professor reserves the right to establish a seating chart during scheduled exams.

IV. National Standardized Testing
The MTSU School of Nursing utilizes National Standardized Testing in order to benchmark student performance throughout the program. These testing requirements consist of an Admission Assessment Exam for application to the MTSU SON and an Exit exam during the senior semester.

M. Student Nurse’s Association (SNA)

The Student Nurses’ Association is an organization of student nurses at all levels within the MTSU Nursing curriculum. The local chapter is affiliated with the National Student Nurses’ Association and offers students a chance to network with other nursing students locally, nationally and internationally. The organization participates in Departmental, University and Community events. Contact the SON at 898-2437 for a current list of chapter officers, dues, and upcoming events.

N. Use of Social Media by School of Nursing Students, Faculty, and Staff

Social media are defined as, but not limited, to web-based or mobile technologies used for interactive communication. Examples of social media include but are not limited to collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter), content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life). Regardless of how these forms of media are used, employees and students are responsible for the content they post or promote. Content contributed on these platforms is immediately searchable and shareable, regardless of whether that is the intention of the contributor. Once posted online, the content leaves the contributing individual’s control forever and may be traced back to the individual in perpetuity.

SON students, faculty, and staff are prohibited from disclosing through social media the following:

- Protected Health Information, as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) – For example, individuals may not disclose patient names or otherwise refer to patients in any way that identifies them individually, including by their initials or by their location (e.g., hospital name or unit).
- Confidential, non-public or proprietary information about
  - Families, clinical facility staff or clinical institutions;
  - The School, its employees and students;
- Copyrighted or intellectual property belonging to the clinical facility

Accordingly, the use of social media for clinical discussions that include any identifiable information related to patients or SON-affiliated clinical facilities is prohibited. Students in violation of this policy may be considered as having violated the MTSU School of Nursing Honor Code. However, like faculty and staff who violate this policy, students may face disciplinary action up to and including termination.

*Drafted by Student Services Committee, adapted from UNC Chapel Hill School of Nursing, November 17, 2015
*Accepted for approval, December 2015
VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Communication Venues.

The SON Faculty and the Director are available to students through many methods. Faculty have posted office hours on their doors. The Director of the program has adopted several communication venues for students, as follows:

1. Student Advisory Board to the Director – a luncheon is held every semester, and student leaders (class representatives, SNA officers and committee chairs, and students holding leadership positions are present) represent the issues and concerns of the student body.
2. Students having issues with a course or a course professor are asked to see the professor first. If there is an impasse, the course professor is asked to schedule a meeting with the Director after determining all parties’ availability.

3. If a student has a personal issue, or cannot go to his/her professor for any reason, he/she is asked to schedule an appointment through the nursing executive aide at 904-8488 or the student can come to the director’s office during open hours. These are posted on the glass beside the door to CKNB 221.

These communication venues help promote collaboration and cooperation between students, school administration, and nursing faculty.

B. **Student Representation on Faculty Committees.**

Students elect representatives from each class in the upper division. These representatives serve on SON Committees: the Student Success Committee, the Program Effectiveness Committee, the Alumni Committee and the Curriculum Committee. They are voting members when policy decisions are formulated. Other students are encouraged to forward their concerns through their representatives to the appropriate committee. The representatives are encouraged to meet routinely each semester to share information and keep fellow students informed.

The RN to BSN and graduate students attend courses in an online format. Students in these programs are encouraged to participate on committees. If they desire to work on any specific committee they may solicit this through personal contact with the Director, the online advisor or any graduate faculty member. This must be done no later than the second week of the Fall or Spring semesters.

C. **Health Information**

After a student has been accepted to the first semester of upper-division nursing and has been notified by the SON Admissions Committee, he/she must provide an admission health history and physical examination record.

1. Must be on file in the SON **prior to the first semester of upper-division nursing courses**, must be performed by a qualified practitioner, and must be completed on the official form from the SON.

2. An immunization record including a rubella titer (or proof of two doses for measles, mumps, and rubella), chicken pox titer (or proof of two doses), hepatitis B titer, Tdap and other immunizations required by clinical agencies about which the SON will notify the student upon admission to the nursing program.

**Hepatitis B**

Requires documentation of positive Anti-HBS surface antibodies (10 or greater), which
requires a blood sample, for Hepatitis B or documentation of informed refusal (available in CKNB 201).

In the case of a negative surface antibody/titer, documentation is required of the second booster series of the Hepatitis B vaccine. Follow up with serum surface antibody level as noted above.

If booster series results in a negative serum surface antibody (non-responder), documentation of such is required with a signed waiver and he/she will be allowed to continue clinical. Further vaccine is not recommended.

**Mumps/Measles/Rubella**

Proof of immunity in the form of a positive titer (blood sample) is required **OR** evidence of 2 MMR vaccines given at least 4 weeks apart on or after the first birthday regardless of birth date.

Do not vaccinate women who are pregnant or who plan to become pregnant within the next 4 weeks; if a student is pregnant and susceptible to measles, vaccinate as early in postpartum period. **If a pregnant woman does not show proof of immunity or vaccine history, they are not allowed to continue clinical experiences.**

**Varicella**

Proof of 2 doses of vaccine **OR** a positive titer (blood sample) is required for participation in clinical.

3. Requires that students be physically, emotionally, and cognitively able to meet the criteria required for clinical skills as outlined in the Core Performance Standards Required for Nursing.

4. Students must be able to perform clinical skills without physical or psychological threat to themselves or others. Students who have chronic health conditions which are controlled and which do not put themselves or others in danger are eligible to be considered for admission. Students may be asked to present evidence of physical and/or mental health at any time, prior to, or during their enrollment in the nursing program. After any change in health status, students must submit a written statement from a qualified health care provider to request permission to return to clinical. The statement must be on official letterhead, bear the signature of the health care provider, and at a minimum, contain a statement indicating that the student’s condition is not detrimental to the safety or health of self or others. If the student has restrictions or conditions associated with the return to work/study, those conditions must also be included in the statement. If there are no restrictions or special conditions, the statement must explicitly state this. The statement must be submitted to the clinical coordinator and APPROVED by the clinical coordinator prior to any attempt to return to clinical. The student will be notified by course email once the statement is approved. This notification will be the indicator that clears the student to return to clinical. It is the responsibility of the student to share these requirements with their treating healthcare provider. It is the responsibility of the SON to inform all clinical faculty/supervisors that the student is eligible to return.

5. Immediately prior to the student’s second semester TB skin test, with readings within 48 hours of the tests, must be completed along with the admission health examination record. After the two-step process, skin testing is done annually. If there is a positive TB test, the
student will have a baseline chest x-ray (CXR). If the CXR is positive, the student must be treated and must show proof of three negative sputum cultures before returning to clinical. If the CXR is negative, the student may participate in clinical experiences. One year after the first CXR, and yearly thereafter, the student will provide valid self-reporting of symptoms from his/her health care provider. The student will not need any additional chest x-rays.

6. Flu vaccinations are required of student’s entering the second and subsequent semesters.

D. **Maintenance of Health Record.**

1. TB skin test must be repeated annually or as required by clinical agency.

2. Students participating in clinical placement in hospitals requiring seasonal flu vaccination will provide documentation of the vaccination in their student file on Medatrax, prior to attending orientation to the facility or when by the deadline of the instructor. Student must sign a waiver prior to attending orientation if they prefer NOT to receive the vaccination as required. The student will be required to wear a mask during their clinical rotation while in the agency.

3. Compliance of Section C. 1-7 (Health Information) must continue throughout the program. If health information is not up-to-date, the student will not be allowed to attend clinical resulting in an assessment of unsatisfactory for each clinical day absent. Updates are the responsibility of the student.

4. Nursing students who have a communicable disease (for example, tuberculosis, Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B, HIV+ status), or any other condition that might limit or restrict their ability to perform the essential duties of a clinical environment, may not be compelled to disclose their status. However, students who want to ensure a successful rotation are encouraged to contact the school director. Any information offered will be held in the strictest confidence and disclosed only on a ‘need to know basis.’ In some instances, best practices may recommend that an individualized assessment suggesting specific safeguards for students and patients be conducted.

When nursing students progress to their first clinical course, they will receive formal education and instructions for following universal precautions.

E. **Health and Malpractice Insurance.**

1. **Health Insurance.** All students are required to carry health insurance throughout the nursing program.

2. **Malpractice Insurance.** Annual fees for malpractice insurance must be paid by cash, check or money order at the Nursing Office by the dates specified in the Admission Packet.

3. RN students must show proof of professional malpractice insurance that includes student malpractice coverage.
F. **Student Uniform and Dress Code.**

Students are required to adhere to the approved MTSU nursing dress code. All students will wear an approved name badge and holder. Uniforms should be worn only during clinical experiences and during transportation to and from clinical sites. Students must wear a lab coat with casual business attire and closed-toed shoes for clinical visits where a uniform is not required. Both uniforms and lab coats should have the MTSU embroidered logo. The name badge should be worn with both at all times. Complete uniforms including shoes are required for second semester. No crocs or ankle-strapped shoes or scrubs will be allowed in the clinical setting. Only uniforms purchased through the MTSU bookstore will be accepted.

**Specific Guidelines for Undergraduate Students:**

Students must purchase nursing uniforms (top, laboratory jacket and name badge holder from the MTSU bookstore). Uniforms must be clean, pressed and in good repair at all times.

White or navy sweaters may be worn with uniforms to and from clinical experiences, but may not be worn in the patient rooms. If sleeves are needed for warmth, the lab coat may be worn.

Regular designated all black leather nursing shoes must be worn. The shoes should be designated by the student for clinical use only. Athletic style shoes are acceptable if without color/stripes.

Socks should be non-bulky, stripeless and design-free.

Acceptable jewelry with uniforms includes wedding band, only one pair of PLAIN stud earrings, and a watch. No other jewelry is to be worn in the clinical area.

Male students may have a beard and/or moustache as long as it is short and neatly trimmed. Male beards must be established.

Hair must be neat, clean and professional in appearance. All hair should be pulled back from the face and off the shoulder when in uniform. No large barrettes or bows may be worn. Fingernails should be short (just barely covering the tips of fingers), clean and not polished. Artificial nails are not worn in any clinical agency. No perfumes or cologne should be worn.

Tattoos and body piercing are discouraged. All tattoos and body piercing are to be covered or removed when in the hospital and community-based sites.

Each student is **required** to have a name badge, bandage scissors, hemostat, black pen, wristwatch with second hand, stethoscope, pen-light, and ruler for use during the clinical experiences.

In addition, it is the responsibility of the student to follow clinical agency policies relating to dress code.
G. Additional Anticipated Expenses

Nursing students will have additional expenses incurred each semester. *The price listed is an approximate cost to the student based on previous semesters.*

First semester: Student Nurses Association (SNA) membership dues (Optional)

- Stethoscope ($17.00 and up) must have a diaphragm and bell

(Optional) Second semester:

- Tape measure $1
- Ruler $1
- Bandage scissors $3-
- 5 Hemostats $3-5
- Uniform attire as required
  - (Uniforms, shoes and name badge holder) $200
- Skills kit $35
- Student Nurses Association (SNA) membership dues

(Optional) Third semester: Skills kit $45

(Optional) Fourth semester: Skills kit $7.50

Student Nurses Association (SNA) membership dues (Optional)

Fifth semester:

- Licensure Fee (TN Board and NCLEX) $300
- Pictures (Optional) $35
- Nursing Pin (Optional) $40.00-$315.00
- State Board Picture $5.00
- Cap and Gown (included with tuition)
- Invitations (Optional) varies with choice
- Sigma Theta Tau membership $100 by invitation (Acceptable GPA does not automatically signify invitation; professionalism is included)
- Student Nurses Association (SNA) membership dues (Optional)

H. Notice of Non-Discrimination

The SON adheres to the MTSU policy on non-discrimination and disablities.

The MTSU Institutional Equity and Compliance office (formerly Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action) is located in the Cope Administration Building (CAB), Room 220, phone 898-2185.

Students with English as a second language who need assistance, may contact either Disabled Student Services at http://www.mtsu.edu/dssemail/ or Intercultural and Diversity Affairs Center at http://www.mtsu.edu/idac/
I. **Non-Student Attendance.**

Children, family and friends are NOT allowed to accompany the student to classes, clinicals or labs.

J. **Smoking Policy.**

As of January 2012, all areas of the MTSU campus are tobacco-free. Refer to MTSU Policy I:01:03 Tobacco-Free Campus Policy for more details.

K. **Financial Need/Grants/Scholarships.**

Students with incomes falling below poverty level may be eligible for grant monies as available. Only students who have registered financial status and needs with the MTSU Financial Aid Office will be considered. Students must have a current Free Application Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) file (updated every January) for the Student Success Committee to make decisions and allocate funds. Students must be registered for courses prior to obtaining scholarships.

There are several scholarships available to nursing students. Information about the criteria for these awards and application forms can be found outside the Advising Office (Room 201) in the literature container and on the SON website. Students can apply for foundation scholarships between February 1 and April 1. These applications must be received by the School of Nursing by April 1 in order for the student to be considered for a scholarship. The Committee will meet and review all submitted applications for foundation scholarships; monies will be awarded at the beginning of Fall semester. Incomplete scholarship packets will not be considered.

To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 cumulative GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a semester GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from a class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned; students who first received the lottery scholarship in Fall 2009 or later will additionally be limited to 120 TELS attempted hours.

L. **Americans with Disabilities Act.**

**ADA Compliance at MTSU**

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:
Middle Tennessee State University is committed to campus access in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation
Act of 1973. Any student interested in reasonable accommodations can consult the Disability & Access Center (DAC) website on the MTSU website and/or contact the DAC for assistance at 615-898-2783 or dacemail@mtsu.edu.

M. **University Writing Center**

The UWC (see them at the MTSU website—Writing Center page) offers free writing assistance for any writing assignment in any class. Please request someone with APA experience. The staff of English graduate assistants will work with students to develop the skills needed to become a confident, competent writer by providing students with one-to-one consultations and helpful handouts.

The center offers many online services including a grammar hotline for quick questions; an email drop box, as well as a chat room for writing assistance; and a web site filled with helpful handouts, exercises, and resource links for individual work.

N. **School of Nursing Pinning Ceremony.**

The ceremony is to honor Traditional BSN graduates from the Fall/Spring Nursing classes and is an event sponsored and financed by the SON. The following guidelines apply:

1. Student attire for the ceremony will be academic regalia without mortar board/tam.

2. The ceremony will be held on the MTSU campus the Friday prior to graduation.

3. Family and friends are welcome to attend, on a space available basis.

4. The ceremony will include a welcome, opening remarks, presentation of students, and closing remarks.

5. Graduation candidates may purchase the SON pin, which is awarded upon successful completion of all requirements for the BSN. (See Pin Purchase Agreement). If no pin is purchased, a blue ribbon will be pinned to your gown.

6. Attendance at this event is not mandatory for students or faculty.

O. **Graduation Awards.**

The School of Nursing recognizes outstanding graduating seniors each semester. The following four awards are selected by the Faculty according to the criteria identified.

1. **Outstanding Academic Achievement Award**
   - Graduating senior
   - Highest GPA
2. **Outstanding Leadership Achievement Award**
   - Graduating senior
   - 3.0 minimum GPA
   - Leadership skills/potential (professional, e.g., SNA and/or community)

3. **Spirit of Nursing Award**
   - Graduating senior
   - Community/professional involvement
   - Academic achievements

4. **Marie Potts Personal Achievement Award**
   The Marie Potts Personal Achievement Award was initiated in the Fall of 1996 in honor of Marie Potts, Assistant Professor of Nursing. Students consistently recognized Mrs. Potts as a guiding counselor throughout their student careers. Many students faced challenges as they pursued their dream of becoming a nurse. Mrs. Potts encouraged students to persevere and face their obstacles to the best of their abilities. This award is given to the graduating senior who has, in the opinion of his/her peers, overcome the greatest personal challenges or obstacles in order to complete his/her nursing education. The recipient of this award is nominated by classmates and selected by the Student Success Committee from the recommendations received.

P. **Handbook Protocol.**

All students function under the current SON Student Handbook. The handbook is reviewed and updated biannually by the Student Success Committee and updated as required. Students are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the material in the SON handbook. Clarification or questions should be raised at the time the handbook is received. Individual faculty members will answer other questions as they arise.

This Handbook presents the terms of enrollment in the SON in effect at the time of publication, but there is no guarantee that provisions will not be changed or revoked. The Handbook is not intended to state contractual terms and does not constitute a contract between the student and the institution or the SON. The SON reserves the right to make changes as required to become effective whenever determined by the institution or the SON. These changes will govern current and formerly enrolled students. Enrollment of all students is subject to these conditions.

IX. **SIGNATURE PAGES**

The two documents to be signed include the Authorization for Release of Student Information and Acknowledgment Background Check and Drug Screen and Maintaining Patient Privacy/Confidentiality/HIPAA. The Acknowledgement of Receipt of MTSU Nursing Student Handbook, the Nursing Student Honor Code Agreement, the School of Nursing Pin Purchase Agreement, Photographic Consent Release will be acknowledged on the signature page and a copy given to each student. Each student must submit the signed pages at the end of Upper Division Orientation.
AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG SCREEN

I, ____________________________, hereby authorize Middle Tennessee State University, (“University”) including all employees, agents, and other persons professionally affiliated with University having information related to the results of my background check and credential check(s), and drug screen as these terms are generically used by background check agencies, hospitals, clinics and similar medical treatment facilities, to disclose the same to clinical affiliation sites if so required by the terms of the clinical affiliation agreement, and to University administrators and faculty providing clinical instruction at such facilities as may be appropriate, waiving all legal rights to confidentiality and privacy.

I further authorize University to provide pertinent medical records (medical history, physical examination, immunization records) and health insurance information to hospitals, clinics and similar medical treatment facilities for clinical placement purposes if so required by the terms of the clinical affiliation agreement.

I expressly authorize disclosure of this information, and expressly release University, its officers, employees, and agents from any and all liability in connection with any statement made, documents produced, or information disclosed concerning the same.

I understand that a hospital, clinic or similar medical treatment facility may exclude me from clinical placement on the basis of a background check or positive drug screen. I further understand that if I am excluded from clinical placement, I will not be able to meet course requirements and/or the requirements for graduation. I release University, its officers, employees and agents from any and all liability in connection with any exclusion from clinical placement that results from information contained in a background check or drug screen.

Any hospital, clinic, or similar medical treatment facility to which I am assigned may be required by The Joint Commission’s policy to conduct an annual compliance audit of five percent (5%) or a minimum of thirty (30) background investigation files. I agree that, upon request from a hospital, clinic or similar medical treatment facility to which I am assigned, I will provide the results of my background check to be used for this audit purpose.

__________________________________________  ________________________________
Student Signature    Date

__________________________________________
Print Name
As nursing students you will be expected to maintain patient confidentiality and follow HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) guidelines while at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). Discussion and disclosure of patient information occurs in the formal teaching environment throughout the program only as outlined by your clinical professor(s).

Privacy and security concerns for patients and their families include any form of documentation such as electronic medical records (EMR), verbal and written reports in the agency setting, laboratory or medical testing reports such as X-Rays, MRIs, etc…. No electronic media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. are to be used for disseminating patient information be it intentional or unintentional in any form (graphic or text). No patient information with personal identifiers is to be removed from any health care setting at any time. Students must engage in appropriate academic and professional conduct as outlined in the MTSU School of Nursing Student Handbook which can be found online. Patient information is to be protected at all times.

Student work such as case studies and care plans will not use the patient’s actual name. This information will be coded per the clinical professor(s) directive.

Breach of confidential information is considered an act of academic and professional misconduct, is a violation of the MTSU School of Nursing Student Honor Pledge. Such a breach may result in academic and/or disciplinary consequences up to and including dismissal from the nursing program.

I have read and understand the information presented. I have also received a copy of this information for reference throughout the program.

Student Signature: ____________________________________________________________

Date: ________________

Faculty/Staff Witness: ________________________________________________________

Date: ________________
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT
BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG SCREEN

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Student Signature: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

Faculty/Staff Witness: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF MTSU NURSING STUDENT HANDBOOK

I have reviewed a copy of the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) School of Nursing (SON) Student Handbook (current edition). It has been reviewed with me, and I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions I might have about its content. I understand that I am responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the material contained in the MTSU SON handbook. The current MTSU SON Student Handbook:  http://mtsu.edu/nursing/student_info.php#handbook

NURSING STUDENT HONOR CODE AGREEMENT

I acknowledge receipt of the Nursing Student Honor Code document in the MTSU School of Nursing Student Handbook. I have read, been given the opportunity to ask questions, and understand the content of the document, including the possible sanctions as outlined in the pledge. I agree to abide by every component of the Honor Code at all times during my nursing education in the MTSU SON program. In so doing, I will actively uphold academic integrity and professional ethics. I agree to abide by Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines as established by Federal Regulations regarding patient information and confidentiality.

Statement for Written Work

I will complete all assignments in my nursing courses* without any assistance from another person, technical device, or written material other than those expressly permitted by the faculty.

SCHOOL OF NURSING PIN PURCHASE AGREEMENT

When a student becomes a candidate for graduation from the School of Nursing, he/she may purchase a School of Nursing pin. The pin will be awarded to the student upon successful completion of all requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Any student not successful in completing requirements for graduation, the pin will either (a) be returned to the company and the student’s money returned or (b) be held in the Nursing office until degree requirements are met successfully.

I understand and agree to comply with the above conditions

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PHOTOGRAPHIC CONSENT AND RELEASE

I hereby willingly grant, and irrevocably consent to and authorize Middle Tennessee State University, its officers, employees and agents (collectively, “the University”) the right and permission to:

1. Record my likeness/image and voice on a video, audio, photographic, digital, electronic or any other medium now known or hereafter developed;
2. Use my name in connection with these recordings;
3. Use, reproduce, publish, republish, broadcast, re-broadcast, adapt, edit, modify, make derivative works, distribute, display or otherwise use or reuse, exhibit or distribute in any medium, these recordings and likenesses/images for any purpose the University deems appropriate, including promotional or advertising efforts.

I understand that I will receive no compensation for any use of such recordings. I understand that all such recordings, in whatever medium, shall remain the property of the University. I hereby assign any copyright or other proprietary interest which I might assert to the University. The University may exercise any of these rights itself or through any successors, transferees, licensees, distributors or other parties, commercial or non-profit. I hereby release the University from liability for any violation of any personal or proprietary right I may have in connection with such use.

I have read and fully understand the terms of this document.
SIGNATURE PAGE

Initial:

[ ] Authorization for Release of Student Information and Acknowledgement Background Check and Drug Screen

[ ] Maintaining Patient Privacy/Confidentiality/HIPAA

[ ] MTSU Nursing Student Handbook

[ ] Nursing Student Honor Code Agreement

[ ] School of Nursing Pin Purchase Agreement

[ ] Photographic Consent and Release

I hereby acknowledge receipt and understanding of all the above, as evidenced by my initials and signature below.

Student’s Signature

____________________________________________

Date

Student’s Name (print)

____________________________________________

Faculty Signature

____________________________________________

Date