

**Middle Tennessee State University
School of Nursing
Graduate Program Admission, Progression & Retention Policy**

The Middle Tennessee State University School of Nursing has one graduate degree (MSN) program with two concentrations: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP). The School of Nursing also offers a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Post-Masters Certificate (PMHNP-PMC) option.

The School of Nursing Admission, Progression, & Retention Policy and standards apply to all MSN degree-seeking students and Post-Master's Certificate students.

Program Admission/Readmission

To be considered for admission to the MTSU MSN program, students must meet the following requirements:

1. Reside in the state of Tennessee
2. Have and maintain an unencumbered RN license in Tennessee
3. Have a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN) with an overall GPA of at least 2.9 on a 4.0 scale
4. If transferring, have a MSN overall GPA of at least 2.9 on a 4.0 scale and be in good standing at previous nursing program
5. Apply and be accepted to *MTSU College of Graduate Studies*, and
6. Choose a program concentration of interest.

An admission status will be assigned by the School of Nursing Admissions Committee. to those students who have a complete admission packet and have an overall GPA of at least 2.9 on a 4.0 scale

Students who do not have a GPA of at least a 2.9 on a 4.0 scale will not be considered for admission.

Students applying to the Post Master's Certificate option must meet all MSN program admission requirements in addition to having earned a Master of Science (MSN) degree in nursing from an accredited college or university.

The School of Nursing utilizes the following admission status:

1. Full admission
2. Conditional admission
3. Non-degree seeking

Full Admission

Students who have a 3.0 or greater GPA in undergraduate or graduate work at the time of application and meet all requirements for admission will be accepted into the program

under a full admission status. Students will receive notification of admission via MTmail following the admission application deadline.

Conditional Admission

Students who have a 2.9 to 2.99 GPA on a 4.0 scale in undergraduate or graduate work at the time of application and meet all requirements for admission will be accepted into the program under a conditional or 'probational' status. Students whose undergraduate (BSN) program does not use GPA, but who meet all other criteria for admission, will be accepted into the program under a conditional or 'probational' status. Students will receive notification of admission, including the conditions of admission, via MTmail following the admission application deadline.

The following conditions must be met for admission status to be converted to a "full admission".

The student admitted with a conditional status must:

1. Receive a grade of 'B' or above in all courses for the first 12 credit hours of coursework.
2. Meet any other conditional admission requirements set by the Admissions Committee.

Since the conditional admission status serves as a probationary period for new admissions, a student who does not meet the requirements for conditional admission at any point during the first 12 credit hours of coursework will not be placed on probation.

Once the conditions of admission have been met, a student will be awarded full admission into the MSN program.

Conditionally admitted students not meeting requirements for admission at any point during the probationary period will be dismissed from the program.

Non-Degree-Seeking Admission

Non-degree seeking student admission is available to qualified applicants who wish to enhance their post-baccalaureate education but do not plan to seek a graduate degree. A limited number of graduate nursing courses are available to non-degree seeking students.

Applicants requesting this status must be admitted to the MTSU College of Graduate Studies, meet the following eligibility criteria, and submit appropriate documents to the MSN academic advisor. The School of Nursing Admissions Committee will consider each request.

Eligibility criteria for non-degree-seeking student enrollment in the School of Nursing:

1. Reside in the State of Tennessee
2. Have and maintain an unencumbered RN license in Tennessee

3. Have a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN) with an overall GPA of at least 2.9 on a 4.0 scale
4. Specify in writing the purpose of the request which may include but is not limited to: completing pre-requisites when already admitted to another graduate program; coursework for professional development; or coursework for transfer to another program.

Program Readmission

It is expected students enroll in courses each semester. If a student must interrupt their program of study or exit the program an Interruption of Program (IOP) Form must be submitted to the MSN academic advisor during the semester the request is made.

Readmission to the graduate program is not guaranteed and is granted on a space-available basis. Readmitted students fall under the current admission guidelines at the time of their readmission.

To be readmitted to the MSN program the student must:

1. Complete the readmission application for the College of Graduate Studies
2. Update all required health records within the School of Nursing document storage system.

Students wishing to change concentrations in the program must go through the readmission process and be admitted into the specified concentration. Readmission applications will be considered with the next admission cycle.

Students who are readmitted will follow the most recent academic policies in the School of Nursing.

Program Progression

All students are monitored each semester for progression and retention. Graduate students in the School of Nursing must:

1. Earn a "B" or better in all nursing courses, and
2. Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better at the end of each term
3. Maintain current documentation within the School of Nursing document storage system.
4. Take courses in the order outlined on the student's program of study

Specialty Course Exams

An average of 85% must be achieved on exams (combined) in all specialty courses to progress in the program. Courses that require this average include:

- NURS 6011-Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Across the Lifespan
- NURS 6110-Advanced Health Assessment and Lab
- NURS 6112-Advanced Pharmacology

- NURS 6210-Family Healthcare Diagnosis and Management and Clinical I
- NURS 6211-Family Healthcare Diagnosis and Management and Clinical II
- NURS 6310-Psychopharmacology
- NURS 6311-Psychiatric Mental Health Diagnosis and Management and Clinical I
- NURS 6312-Psychiatric Mental Health Diagnosis and Management and Clinical II

Prerequisites

Prerequisites for nursing courses are to be met in order to progress. Refer to the MSN program of study, relevant course descriptions and the MSN academic advisor for guidance in course sequencing.

Repeating a Course

If a student does not successfully complete a nursing course with a “B” or better, the student may repeat the course **one (1) time only** without consequences. The course repeat must be taken in the next academic term. No other courses can be taken during the term. If a student is unsuccessful in the course a second time, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Only two (2) different courses in the program of study may be repeated.

Course Withdrawal

Students may withdraw from a single course one (1) time only.

Students with two (2) withdrawals from a single course will not be readmitted to the MSN program.

Only two (2) instances of course withdrawals are permitted without consequences in the MSN program. Withdrawing from one or more courses at the same time is considered one (1) instance of withdrawal.

Students with more than two (2) withdrawals from the MSN program will not be readmitted to the program.

Time to Degree

Students must complete their program of study within six (6) years. Policies and procedures regarding time to degree can be found in the Student Handbook of the Middle Tennessee State University College of Graduate Studies.

Program Retention

Reinstatement/Extension

Students must register for courses each term. Failure to register for any semester/term constitutes a lapse in the program of study requiring readmission to the program. Refer to the readmission requirements in the Graduate Program Admission, Progression, and Retention Policy.

Students who do not plan to register for a particular term/semester must complete and submit an Interruption of Program (IOP) form to the MSN academic advisor before completing the current term.

Students may also wish to submit a Stop Out form to the College of Graduate Studies and will need to fill out a readmission application form (without being required to submit any additional materials) before enrolling for the next term/semester. This will ensure that the College of Graduate Studies has all current student information and will trigger the process required for re-enrollment.

Program Probation

The School of Nursing recognizes two types of program probation (1) Academic and (2) Clinical. During the period of probation, the student is permitted to continue academic studies.

Academic Probation:

A student may be placed on **academic probation** for:

1. Failing to achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in graduate courses at the end of each term.

Clinical Probation:

A student may be placed on **clinical probation** for:

1. Failing to adhere to the School of Nursing Honor Code or the ANA Code for Nurses; and/or
2. Demonstrating unsafe clinical practices as determined by the course instructor and/or specialty coordinator.

Students who are placed on academic or clinical probation must discuss strategies for improvement with the MSN Academic Advisor and/or the Associate Director, Graduate Nursing Program, to improve the likelihood of future success.

Any student who meets a criterion for program probation a second time will be eligible for dismissal from the School of Nursing.

Program Dismissal

Program dismissal means that a student is ineligible to reapply to the School of Nursing at Middle Tennessee State University or be considered for admission to a different program concentration. Upon confirmation of dismissal, the student will be withdrawn from all nursing courses and a notation of dismissal entered in the student's file.

The School of Nursing recognizes three types of program dismissal (1) Academic (2) Clinical, and (3) Ethical/Professional.

Academic Dismissal:

A student may be subject to **academic dismissal** for:

1. Failing to achieve a grade of "B" or above when repeating a required course
2. Failing to achieve a grade of "B" or above in all remaining courses, once a "C", "D" or "F" grade has been replaced in the same or previous semester
3. Meeting the College of Graduate Studies criteria for probation a second time.
4. Failing to meet the terms of the conditional admission
5. Failing to complete all requirements for the MSN degree within six (6) years of beginning graduate nursing courses

Clinical Dismissal:

A student may be subject to **clinical dismissal** for:

1. Demonstrating a pattern of unsafe clinical practice in one or more courses
2. Meeting the criteria for probation following readmission to the graduate program.

Ethical/Professional Dismissal:

A student may be subject to **ethical/professional dismissal** for:

1. Use of mind-altering drugs or alcohol when engaged in any nursing activity in or outside of class
2. Evidence of disciplinary offenses (e.g. Academic Misconduct) as outlined in the SON Graduate Student Handbook and MTSU Rights and Responsibilities of students
3. Violating the School of Nursing Honor Code
4. Breach of ethics or gross professional negligence

Ethical/Professional Dismissal Process

The following process will be used for **unethical or unprofessional conduct** leading to possible program dismissal.

1. Course faculty contacts the SON Director when faced with a situation or case that could possibly result in dismissal from the program

2. Director forms an ad hoc panel composed of three (3) nursing faculty with no conflict of interest
3. Panel will review documentation regarding case and hold separate hearings with the student and faculty member
4. Panel will forward recommendation for dismissal/non-dismissal to Director with an explanation of the reasons for the decision
5. Director will notify student of the decision in writing

Notification of dismissal from the graduate program will be sent to students via their MTmail account and in writing via standard mail.

Appeal of Grade or Progression/Dismissal Decision

To appeal a grade, the University grade appeals process is followed, and can be viewed here:

<https://www.mtsu.edu/policies/academic-affairs-students/313.php>

If a student wishes to appeal a progression or dismissal decision, the student must notify the Director of the School of Nursing in writing within five (5) business days of the notification of the dismissal.

If the School of Nursing Director upholds the original decision of dismissal, the student may appeal the decision to the College of Graduate Studies.

Approvals and Updates

School of Nursing Graduate Affairs Committee: September 2015

School of Nursing Faculty: October 2015

University Graduate Council: November 2015

Tennessee Board of Regents: July 2016

Clerical Update: January 2017

Clerical Update: March 2017

Faculty Update: April 2017

Faculty/Clerical Update: June 2017

Clerical Update: March 2018

Update: June 25, 2020

Update: July 22, 2021

Administrative Update: August 12, 2021

Reviewed: August 16, 2022

Faculty Update: March 17, 2023