



GRADUATE NURSING STUDENT HANDBOOK

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WELCOME LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Dear Graduate Student:

Welcome! The faculty, staff and I look forward to working with you as you pursue your master's degree in nursing. I look forward to meeting you.

As I'm sure you know, this is an exciting and challenging time for the nursing profession. Never before have nurses had such opportunities and the scientific knowledge to impact and improve health care delivery and the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities. Nurses with advanced education must be at the forefront of these efforts, providing necessary leadership, knowledge, and expertise. They need, however, cutting edge skills.

The Graduate Program in Nursing at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) offers you the opportunity to gain the essential knowledge and skills necessary for leading and delivering evidence-based practice, whether as a nurse practitioner or a clinical nurse leader. Master's education at TCNJ also prepares graduates for doctoral study and continuing personal and professional growth.

I invite you to become actively engaged in Nursing at TCNJ through the channels described in this handbook. Our faculty and staff are committed to working with you to create a learning environment for you to meet your educational and professional goals.

If I can ever be of any assistance to you, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Carole Kenner, PhD, RN, FAAN, FNAP, ANEF

Carol Kuser Loser Dean/Professor

TCNJ GRADUATE NURSING POLICIES

Welcome to The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) and graduate study in the Department of Nursing (DON). We hope that you are excited to begin your educational journey and we look forward to working with you to help you achieve your professional goals.

This letter also serves to inform you of the DON's and college wide policies and to provide you with information about how to access those policies. Please sign one copy and return it to your Track Leader/Advisor. The signed copy will be kept in your academic file. Please keep the other copy as a reference.

TCNJ has several policies that can help you negotiate graduate school. The graduate bulletin (<https://graduate.tcnj.edu/resources/graduate-bulletin/>) contains information regarding: tuition, attendance policies and academic progression. The DON section of the bulletin contains critical information about progression standards within the nursing department. Of note: graduate students must maintain a 3.0 GPA at all times. If a student drops below a 3.0, they are given one semester to bring up the GPA. If the GPA is not 3.0 at the end of the semester, students are dismissed from TCNJ.

TCNJ's college wide policies can be found at: <http://policies.tcnj.edu/index.php>. This site includes information about the grievance policy. This site also contains the academic integrity policy as well as others. A brief summary of the academic integrity policy is noted here.

Academic Honesty: All students are expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty in their study at the College. The College of New Jersey defines academic dishonesty as:

“any attempt by the student to gain academic advantage through dishonest means; to submit, as his or her own, work which has not been done by him or her; or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, submitting as one's own a project, paper, test, or speech copied from, partially copied, or partially paraphrased from the work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright, or in manuscript form). Credit must be given for words quoted or paraphrased. These standards apply to any academic work, whether it is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written, or oral.”

All students are expected to read and abide by the policy. The TCNJ policy can be found at <http://policies.tcnj.edu/policies/digest.php?docId=9394>. Cheating and plagiarism are each grounds for academic jeopardy or dismissal. This policy applies to every assignment from case study to homework to online case discussion. This policy also applies to your compartment during clinical. Department of Nursing faculty are instructed to contact the academic integrity officer (currently Anne Farrell, PhD, Exercise Science) upon any instance of suspected academic dishonesty. The academic integrity officer will then evaluate the evidence and meet with the student (please see the college wide policy). The DON utilizes the most current issue of the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing guidelines. Each course syllabus will note which edition the faculty will use for that course. Students are responsible to following the standards for referencing found in the APA manual.

Ethical Comportment

In addition to abiding by the TCNJ Academic Integrity Policy, TCNJ nursing faculty and graduate students, as registered nurses, are accountable for practice according to the American Nursing Association's Code of Ethics for Nurses and will be reviewed during NURS 501: Perspectives in Advanced Nursing Practice. : <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/ethics/>

Other information to support your learning is noted below.

Students with Disabilities: Any student who has a documented disability and is in need of academic accommodations should notify the professor of this course and/or contact the Office of Differing Abilities Services at (609) 771-2571. Accommodations are individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

Required Computer Capabilities and Abilities (Resources may be accessed from TCNJ computer labs if you do not have a computer and internet access at home). Please ask for help early in the semester if you anticipate difficulty with any of the following tasks.

- Internet access
- Adobe Acrobat Reader
- A TCNJ email account. Please check it at least twice a week. Faculty will contact students through this email address. ***Email is the official method of communication at TCNJ. ****
- Ability to access the class CANVAS website using your TCNJ user name and password.
- Ability to download and print documents from CANVAS, including those that require an Adobe Acrobat Reader.
- Ability to upload papers and assignments onto CANVAS

Department of Nursing Handbook

The TCNJ Department of nursing had a student handbook that can guide you in all the steps of your educational journey. This Handbook contains information about advising, clinical, clinical assignments and department processes: <https://nursing.tcnj.edu/files/2015/08/Fall-2015-Nursing-Academic-Policies.pdf>

Welcome to TCNJ and the Department of Nursing. We look forward to working with you as you pursue your educational goals.

Sincerely,

Track Leader

**By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the contents of this letter, that I am aware that I am responsible for following the noted policies, handbooks and that I will be held accountable to TCNJ's standards for academic excellence.

STUDENT NAME

DATE

FACULTY NAME

DATE

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

MISSION

The graduate program in nursing at TCNJ is designed to meet the needs of nurses who are seeking education to advance their knowledge and skills in healthcare. The Department's mission and philosophy can be found at: <https://nursing.tcnj.edu/about/mission-and-philosophy/>. We offer graduate certificates and MSN degrees to assist students with gaining competency in the area of primary care nursing (family, neonatal and adult/gerontology nurse practitioner), school nursing (certificate and MSN) and across the care continuum for those interested in the Clinical Nurse Leader role. The curricular pathways and requirements for those certificates and degrees can be found in the TCNJ graduate handbook at: <https://graduate.tcnj.edu/resources/graduate-bulletin/>.

END OF PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Specifically, at the end of our MSN programs we have the following objectives, in that student will be able to:

1. Synthesize theoretical knowledge from nursing, organizational, social, and biological sciences and apply to advanced nursing practice in the areas of health promotion, illness prevention and management, and maintenance of function across the health-illness continuum with individuals and families.
2. Critique and analyze research knowledge and utilize scientific evidence as a basis for advanced nursing practice.
3. Analyze individual, societal, political, and health care system forces that affect the health of individuals and families in the community, and advanced nursing practice roles in providing quality, cost-effective, and ethical care.
4. Utilize holistic health assessment, critical thinking, and clinical decision making skills to develop and monitor comprehensive, client-based, culturally competent, and holistic plans of care.
5. Gain competency in transitioning to the advanced practice roles of health care provider, collaborator, consultant, advocate, teacher, and professional nursing leader.

The objectives can also be located here:

<https://nursing.tcnj.edu/programs/msn-programs/msn-end-of-program-objectivesexpected-outcomes/>

At the end of the MSN program, family and adult/gerontology NP students are eligible to sit for the ANCC or the AANP certification exam. CNL students are eligible to sit for the CNL certification exam. School nurse students are able to be certified as school nurses in New Jersey.

COMMUNICATION

The faculty appreciates our students and we are here to work with you on your educational journey. This requires smooth and often frequent communication in order to answer your

questions in a timely manner and share course and program updates with you as soon as possible. The following represent best practices in communication between students, faculty and administration.

Email is the official form of communication at TCNJ.

- Faculty use the students' official TCNJ email address to communicate. Students and faculty are expected to monitor their email at least once every 24 hours during the business week during any semester they are teaching or enrolled. During shorter school breaks that occur in the academic year, students and faculty may not respond. During longer breaks (summer, January term) both students and faculty should periodically monitor their email for updates. In the few weeks prior to the semester beginning both faculty and students should monitor their emails.
- Although healthcare is a 24/7 activity, both students and faculty need time during which they are not expected to respond to emails. Thus, students may not receive responses to emails during the evening or weekend hours. Faculty should provide students with guidance on contact and response time at the beginning of the semester. Similarly, faculty should not expect student responses during the off hours.
- Urgent matters or lack of response from a faculty member should be addressed through a phone call to the Department of Nursing office, which is staffed Monday through Friday from 8-4:30 pm. Students should call 609-771-2591. Faculty should provide students a means of contact for urgent matters related to evening courses.
- CANVAS NURS 99: Additional communication with graduate students takes place with a CANVAS course (NURS 99). All graduate nursing students are enrolled in this 'course' each semester. The course has no cost and allows us to have another way to communicate with students, and for graduate students to contact each other. Faculty will post general announcements on topics such as course registration deadlines, scholarship opportunities and job postings. Files that students may need are also housed within this course (e.g. electronic copy of the clinical evaluation form, time logs and this handbook). Students are encouraged to set notifications so they will know when items are added. There is also a listing of graduate students and a discussion group for students to communicate with each other.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Graduate nursing students have opportunities for student representation to the graduate nursing curriculum committee. Students are encouraged to volunteer as student representatives by contacting the Department Chair. TCNJ also has a college wide graduate council that seeks student representation. Students interested should discuss with their academic advisor who can direct them to the nursing representative on that council.

SIGMA

TCNJ is proud to have a chapter of the international honor society for nursing, Sigma. TCNJ's chapter of Sigma is Delta Nu. We encourage graduate students who are already Sigma members to join our chapter, or to indicate dual membership with Delta Nu and their home chapter. Delta Nu offers induction to graduate nursing students who have not previously been inducted in the Spring semester of each year.

ADVISING

Each student will be assigned an advisor by the Department Chair upon matriculating into a degree or certificate program in the Department of Nursing. Students are responsible for contacting their advisor each semester to discuss course enrollment for the next semester, possible clinical rotations and any other concerns the student may have. Students are welcome to meet with an advisor at any point but should have contact a minimum of once per term (including summer if enrolled). Students and advisors work together to ensure that students are enrolled in the correct certificate or degree program (as noted in PAWS) and that the academic requirements page is current.

Non-Matriculated students are not provided formal advisors but should connect with the track leader of the program they intend to enroll in for advice and information about how to apply for matriculation, possible courses to take in subsequent semesters and other mentoring. Non-matriculated students may take up to 2 courses in the Department prior to applying for matriculated status.

CLINICAL ROTATIONS

ASSIGNMENT OF CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Clinical assignments are made in consultation with the clinical coordinator, the Track Leaders and, if necessary, with the Chair of the Graduate Curriculum Committee. Track Leaders alert the Clinical Site Coordinator 6-9 months in advance of the likely clinical placement needs. Students will complete the request for clinical sites a minimum of 4 months prior to the beginning of the semester. Students are **not** guaranteed a clinical site, but if they request a site, every effort will be made to secure an appropriate site. Students may find their own site, but the vetting process must take place. A student who finds their own site may not be guaranteed the site will be approved. Students who request a site placement must accept that placement, regardless of the distance of the site. **Sites must be within 90 minutes driving time from campus**, unless the Graduate Curriculum Committee determines that no other reasonable options are available for clinical placement.

The Clinical Site Coordinator secures clinical sites for the appropriate semesters according to the program needs expressed by the Track Leaders

NEW SITES must be vetted and approved by the Track Leader. New Preceptors must have a minimum of 1 year of experience as a Nurse Practitioner or in a leadership role to precept. Considerations prior to accepting a new preceptor include:

1. Years of experience (minimum 1 year);
2. Certification in the appropriate specialty;
3. Community reputation of the preceptor;
4. Breadth and depth of experience available. Ideally students will be able to independently evaluate 6-12 patients per day;
5. Safety of the site.
6. safety of the site

Timeline for Clinical Placements:

1. *6-9 months before:* track leaders and clinical coordinator discuss clinical needs; advisors discuss possible clinical site needs with students and advise students if they want to find their own site to clear it with the Clinical Site Coordinator before any contact;
2. *4 months before:* students formally complete the request for clinical paperwork;
3. *3 months before:* clinical coordinator presents plan for the upcoming semester to the appropriate Track Leaders. Once approved students are notified.
4. *2 months before:* students who committed to finding their own site but have failed to secure a site notify the clinical coordinator.

Clinical Placement Requests

Students may request a specific clinical placement at any time, but they are not guaranteed. A minimum of 4 months in advance, students will contact the Clinical Site Coordinator to notify of a clinical placement request.

STUDENTS MAY NOT CONTACT A POTENTIAL CLINICAL SITE TO ASK A PRECEPTOR UNLESS THE CLINICAL SITE COORDINATOR HAS GRANTED PERMISSION IN WRITING.

Students who approach clinical preceptors without permission may be denied the site and denied a placement. Students who indicate and commit to finding their own placement are thus responsible to do so. If a student fails in finding a placement, they should contact the clinical coordinator a minimum of 2 months in advance of the semester to see if an alternative can be arranged. If a student does not meet this deadline, no site is guaranteed and the student may be asked to withdraw from the course.

If a student finds a placement they must contact the clinical coordinator and provide the contact information. The clinical coordinator will obtain credentialing information about the preceptor, forward to the track leader and once the site is approved, then secure a letter of agreement. If a student has found a placement that requires a clinical contract with an agency, this may take up to a year and is not guaranteed.

If a student requests TCNJ to place the student, as noted above, they agree to accept the placement within 90-minute driving time of the TCNJ campus. If the student refuses the assignment for any reason, they may not be provided a site and may be asked to withdraw from the course unless they can secure a site on their own following the above procedure. The clinical coordinator and track leader will make every effort to work with the student in terms of preference, but distance is not an excuse to refuse a site. Similarly, students who request TCNJ to place them agree to be available Monday through Friday for the assignment. Work obligations are not a reason to recuse an assignment. If a student has work obligations that are not flexible, they should secure their own sites.

CLINICAL CONCERNS

Occasionally, clinical situations may not be ideal for optimal learning. Clinical concerns about a placement site may originate from a variety of sources including (but not limited to) advisor, clinical site visitor faculty, course faculty, preceptor, student or other TCNJ or clinical site employee. When clinical concerns occur:

1. The party raising the issue should communicate with the Course Faculty and the appropriate Track Leader or Academic Advisor.
2. It may be necessary for the Course Faculty, Track Leader and Academic Advisor to meet with the student. This meeting is documented in the student's academic folder.
3. If the issue cannot be resolved, the Department Chair should be consulted.

4. Clinical issues may represent an academic integrity issue should be reported to the academic integrity officer and follow the TCNJ [policy](#) on Academic Integrity.

NOTE: Options for resolving clinical issues include (but are not limited to):

1. Placing a student on clinical 'hold' until the issue can be resolved or there is creation and implementation of a clinical remediation plan (written work, simulation or face to face meetings).
2. Securing a new clinical site. If the faculty deems that the clinical situation is unable to be remedied for optimal student learning, then the track leader should inform the Department Chair that a new site will be secured. The course faculty will contact the current clinical placement and inform the preceptor of the decision to pull the student. The course faculty will contact the clinical coordinator for a new site.

CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS

Prior to enrollment in the first clinical course in your program, faculty will provide information about impending clinical requirements. There are requirements regarding health and credentials, behavior, and dress and appearance.

1. **NJ RN License** – Required prior to clinical and each time license is renewed.
2. **Student Malpractice Insurance** – Required prior to clinical and annually.
3. **CPR Certification (BCLS or ACLS)** – Required prior to clinical and each time certification is renewed.
4. **TB testing** – Documentation of negative TB skin test (ppd) or a negative Quantiferon Gold test within 1 year prior to enrollment in first clinical course and on an annual basis thereafter. Students with a history of a + test must present a report of a negative chest x-ray done within the past year.
5. **Copy of current health insurance card** – Required prior to clinical and annually.
6. **Physical Examination** signed by nurse practitioner, physician's assistant or physician – Required prior to clinical and annually. This must be on letterhead or a prescription. It must state that the student is without evidence of communicable diseases and is physically capable of being an NP student in a clinical rotation.
7. **Documentation of immunity to the following:**
 - Tetanus:** Primary 3-dose series + booster (TD or Tdap) within last 10 years. Documentation of 1 Tdap is required.
 - Varicella:** Positive titer.
 - Hepatitis B:** Positive anti-HBS titer.
 - Measles, Mumps, Rubella:** Positive titers. Persons born prior to 1957 are not required to present evidence of immunity.
 - Influenza:** Annually prior to November 30.
8. **5-Panel, Non-DOT urine drug test** – Required prior to clinical and as requested by faculty or required by clinical site.

9. Criminal background check based on fingerprinting – Required once at the beginning of NURS 633. This may be required again depending on the clinical site.

10. Personal statement/release form – Required prior to starting clinical. The form can be obtained from the Nursing Office (206 Trenton Hall). The clinical site coordinator is responsible for ensuring that student's clinical compliance documentation is up to date at least one month prior to the beginning of the semester and notifying the student if there is an impending expiration. The clinical site coordinator is responsible for notifying course faculty if documents are not uploaded. Students who are not in compliance will be asked to refrain from going to clinical until the item is uploaded. If a student has let an item expire for more than 7 days, the student must provide an adequate plan for correcting the deficiency. If the student does not provide a plan, they may be asked to withdraw from the course after 14 days from expiration.

GUIDELINES CONCERNING BEHAVIOR IN CLINICAL SETTINGS

Clinical Site Attire

Students are considered representatives of The College of New Jersey Department of Nursing whenever involved in off-campus study. They are required to wear hair neatly off the collar, minimal jewelry, minimal perfume, and short fingernails (without dark nail polish). A white lab coat worn over street clothes is required unless otherwise stated by clinical agency or preceptor. Trousers should not be denim jeans or jean-type. Closed, low-heeled shoes are required. T-shirts are not appropriate. An ID badge with the student's name and which identifies them as a Student Nurse Practitioner or Graduate Nursing Student is required.

Definitions of Safe, Satisfactory or Acceptable Performance

The student will demonstrate patterns of professional behavior which follow the legal and ethical codes of nursing; promote the actual or potential wellbeing of clients, health care worker, and self; demonstrate accountability in preparation, documentation, and continuity of care; and show respect for the human rights of individuals. Students, who are not meeting the academic requirements of the theoretical component of the course at any time during the semester, may not be considered safe and may, at the discretion of the instructor, automatically be excluded from clinical experience.

Guidelines Concerning Behavior in Clinical Settings

A student whose behavior is unsafe or whose pattern of behavior is unsatisfactory may be subject, at the discretion of the instructor, to being removed from direct contact with clients.

Definitions of Safe, Satisfactory or Acceptable Performance

The student will demonstrate patterns of professional behavior which follow the legal and ethical codes of nursing; promote the actual or potential well-being of clients, health care worker, and self; demonstrate accountability in preparation, documentation, and continuity of care; and show respect for the human rights of individuals. Students who are not meeting the academic requirements of the theoretical component of the course at any time during the semester, may not be considered safe and may, at the discretion of the instructor, automatically be excluded from clinical experience.

Indicators Used as Guidelines for Evaluating Practice

Regulatory: The student practices within the boundaries of The College of New Jersey, Department of Nursing, the guidelines and objectives of the Department of Nursing, and follows the rules and regulations of the health care agency.

Examples of unsafe, unsatisfactory or unacceptable performance include but are not limited to the following:

- a. failure to notify the agency and/or clinical instructor of clinical absence as outlined in the course descriptions.
- b. presenting for clinical practicum under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- c. failure to make up clinical absences if deemed necessary by the clinical instructor.
- d. habitual tardiness or absenteeism to clinical assignments.

2. **Ethical:** The student practices according to the American Nurses' Association Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and the Nurse Practice Act governing practice in the state where the clinical learning experience occurs.

Examples of unsafe, unsatisfactory or unacceptable performance include but are not limited to the following:

- a. refuses assignment based on client's race, life style, culture, religious preferences, diagnosis, or condition of client.
- b. inappropriate behavior in any assigned activity related to clinical practice such as:
 - i. not reporting known errors in practice
 - ii. falsifying documents, signatures, or assignments
- c. ignoring unethical behavior(s) of other health care persons which affects clients' welfare.

3. **Promotion of Well-being:** The promotion of well-being of clients, other health care workers and self: The student's practice strives to meet the needs of the human system considering the biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural perspectives.

Examples of unsafe, unsatisfactory, or unacceptable performance include but are not limited to the following:

- a. failure to recognize and seek treatment for mental, physical, or emotional behavior(s) which may affect the well-being of others.
- b. failure to follow through on suggested referrals or interventions to correct deficit areas which may result in harm to others.
- c. omission of appropriate care, such as, but not limited to, medication errors.
- d. abuse of clients, such as, but not limited to: physical, mental or emotional abuse failing to recognize, or correct or contributing to hazardous conditions or circumstances.
- e. interpersonal relationships with agency staff, co-workers, peers, faculty resulting in miscommunications, disruptions of clients care and/or functioning.

4. **Accountability:** The student's practice demonstrates the expected level of responsibility in the preparation, implementation, documentation and promotion of continuity in the care of clients.

Examples of improper accountability include but are not limited to the following:

- a. failure to provide concise, inclusive, written and verbal communication.
- b. failure to accurately record comprehensive client behaviors.
- c. failure to report to instructor questionable nursing practice(s) which affect client welfare.
- d. attempting activities without adequate orientation or theoretical preparation or appropriate assistance.
- e. dishonesty.

5. **Human Rights:** The student's conduct shows respect for the individual client. Examples of unsafe, or unacceptable performance include but are not limited to the following:
- failure to maintain confidentiality of interactions.
 - failure to maintain confidentiality of records.
 - dishonesty in relationships.
 - utilization of stereotypical judgments which are detrimental to patient care.
 - failure to recognize and promote every patient's rights.

A student whose behavior is unsafe or whose pattern of behavior is unsatisfactory may be subject, at the discretion of the instructor, to being removed from direct contact with clients.

Clinical Attire and Appearance

Standards for clinical appearance are based on the need for students to be professional, clearly identified as a student and to have grooming and attire that limit safety risks for injury to the student or the client. With that in mind, students must adhere to the following:

- Students will wear a lab coat with the TCNJ seal and a name tag. These items normally come from Flynn and O'Hara. For a lab coat (\$31.00) go to www.flynnohara.com/school/nj124. For a name pin (approx. \$10 including shipping) please go to tcnj.badges.com. Your name badge should state your name. For example, Dorothy Jones, RN, NP student.
- Students should appear neat and well-groomed with minimal jewelry. In general, students should dress in business casual attire. Trousers or slacks may be worn but denim jeans or jean type slacks are not permitted. Closed toe, low-heeled comfortable shoes are required. Sneakers are not acceptable unless the clinical agency holds that as current standard of dress. Casual T-shirts are not appropriate. Hair should be above the collar or pulled back. Men should keep facial hair to less than 1 inch. No tattoos should be visible. For client comfort and safety, refrain from wearing perfume/cologne or other strongly scented products. Good hand hygiene should be followed to limit spread of infection. Handwashing is expected before and after contact with each client, and when handling patient care equipment and diagnostic specimens. Fingernails must be kept short (not extending beyond the ends of your fingers), smooth and clean. Clear or light-colored fingernail polish may be worn. No artificial fingernails or tips may be worn.

DOCUMENTATION OF CLINICAL HOURS/CASES

All students are required to keep records about their hours spent in clinical activities, the activities engaged in, and a brief summary of patient assessment and management. Currently, the Department utilizes an online management system for these records, Typhon. Students are required to pay for this system during NURS 633 prior to attending clinical.

During NURS 633 there is an orientation to the system prior to beginning clinical that is coordinated by the course faculty and track leaders. This responsibility is rotated among faculty who sit on the graduate curriculum committee. The selected faculty will schedule the orientation with the Typhon educator. All students are required to attend this orientation and to purchase the system.

Each clinical course syllabus details the requirements for deadlines for documentation of time logs and case reports. In general, all NP students will document their clinical compliance, hours,

self-evaluations, evaluation of preceptor and faculty and cases with the Typhon management system. Students who do not meet these guidelines may be asked to refrain from attending clinical until documentation is current. Time logs and case logs must be complete prior to receiving a grade in a given clinical course. Students whose documentation is not complete may not progress to the next clinical course. If the documents are incomplete at the end of the program, the student may be delayed in graduation. The course faculty is responsible for evaluating the case documentation, time logs and evaluations and verifying that they are complete *prior* to giving a grade for the course. The faculty must time stamp the appropriate documents and let the nursing department administrative assistant know that the files are ready to be downloaded and printed to the paper clinical folder.

CLINICAL HOURS CARRY-OVER from one semester to another (voted on 1-23-18)

All clinical hours must be completed within the semester of the class offered. Course faculty are responsible for verifying that the student has completed the required number of hours for their specialty for the course. This should be verified in Typhon, or through a signed paper copy. If hours cannot be verified, faculty should assign and “In Process” grade for the course. Students who do not provide verification of complete hours prior to the beginning of the subsequent clinical course will be asked to drop the next course prior to the end of add/drop.

GRADING POLICIES

The following is the grade distribution followed by the Department of Nursing for Graduate Students :

Letter Grade	Percent
A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	78-79
C	75-77
C-	72-74
F	71 and below

College-wide policies on academic standing are found in the Graduate Bulletin of the College of New Jersey.

Academic Policy Statement on Minimum Grades and Academic Progression in All Graduate Nursing Programs

Graduate students must achieve a grade of B- or better in the following courses in order to continue in the course sequence:

- NURS 503
- NURS 504
- NURS 633
- NURS 643
- NURS 636
- NURS 637
- NURS 638
- NURS 690
- NURS 660
- NURS 695

A graduate student who earns a C or C+ in any of the above courses may repeat the course once, the next time it is offered. A student who earns a C- or F in any of the above courses will be dismissed from the program.

Graduate nursing students may only repeat one course in the program, one time. If a student repeats a course and subsequently earns a grade less than B- in one of the above courses, that student will be dismissed from the program.

Clinical courses are those that include both theoretical learning in the classroom as well as practice in a clinical setting. Students who are not meeting the academic requirements of the theoretical component of any clinical course may not be considered safe and may, at the discretion of the instructor, be removed/excluded from the clinical practicum for that course. The college policy for all graduate programs specifies that students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0. Students who fall below this cumulative GPA are placed on academic probation and given one semester to bring the GPA up to greater than or equal to 3.0. If the student does not achieve a GPA of greater than or equal to 3.0, the student is dismissed from the college. In the Department of Nursing, if a student received a low grade in a course that is offered only once a year and that grade is solely responsible for lowering the GPA, the student may be allowed to stay in the program until that course is repeated. However, progression may not be allowed until the course is repeated and the GPA is ≥ 3.0 .

END OF PROGRAM

GRADUATION

TCNJ offers graduation dates in May, August, December and January of each year. Students must apply for graduation whether they are in a degree granting or certificate program. Students are referred to the Records and Registration website for the application, instructions and late fees.

There is only one commencement ceremony each year, in May. Graduate students earning an MSN are encouraged to attend both the department and general college ceremony. Certificate students may attend and should speak with their advisor about attendance. Academic regalia is required to attend.

AWARDS FOR STUDENTS

There are three awards for graduate nursing students who complete the program. These awards are given at graduation. They are decided at March graduate curriculum committee meeting. The faculty nominate students and a vote takes place after nomination. Students do not typically receive more than one award.

DELTA NU AWARD: This award is from the Sigma Theta Tau Chapter at TCNJ. Awarded to a student with high and sustained academic performance. This is usually awarded to the student with the highest GPA among the cohort of graduates. Delta Nu has generously provided a small monetary prize with this award. Most recently the award was for \$250 check.

GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD: Awarded to a student who has completed a minimum of 23 semester hours of the graduate program and who has demonstrated caring toward peers and empowerment of clients by meeting their holistic needs.

MARILYN SCHLENTZ AWARD: Awarded to the graduate student who demonstrates an interest in holistic healing modalities, based on the capstone project.

CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE

After graduation, a faculty representative of TCNJ will submit verification of education to the ANCC regarding the program that you have completed. This takes place no later than one month after your graduation date.

Additionally, for NP graduates, a faculty representative notifies the New Jersey Board of Nursing that the students have completed the required 6 hours of content related to controlled and dangerous substances. As we are an New Jersey school, we do not contact other boards of nursing. If a student needs verification of educational content, they should follow the process below.

Students who need additional verification of education for licensure forms from states other than New Jersey, recommendations for clinical privileges or other similar documents., should contact the Program Assistant for assistance. As a general rule, these documents may take two (2) weeks to complete as they may need verification from Records and Registration in addition to completion from our own faculty. During semester breaks, this time may be longer.

LIFE AS AN ALUMNUS

The faculty looks forward to a continuing relationship with our students, who graduate to become our colleagues. The following information should assist you in your lifelong needs and goals related to being an alumnus.

Ongoing, regular feed to faculty is not only important during your time studying with us, but also after you have graduated. We strive to continually improve our programs and to meet the needs of our students, our community partners and of course, to the patients we care for. In order to gather reflections from our students after they have been practicing for some time, we conduct one and five-year alumni surveys. Your participation is essential so that we can use the feedback to drive program change and innovation. Ongoing collaboration in this way is expected professional behavior. We humbly request that students provide us with long term contact information (e.g. LinkedIn or other personal emails). Students who do not complete these essential surveys put our ability to provide quality programs, and our certifications in jeopardy.

Finally, thank you for choosing TCNJ for your graduate study. We look forward to working with you as colleagues. We are especially grateful for alumni who precept our students, return to work with us on publications, pursue graduate study or who wish to return to us to take on the joyful challenge of instructing and mentoring the next generation of nursing leaders!