



MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
NURSING
STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Table of Contents

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program	4
Accreditation	4
Vision, Mission Statement, and Guiding Principles	4
Program Description	5
Program Outcomes	5
American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Essentials (2021)	6
American Organization of Nurse Leaders (AONL).....	6
Program of Study	7
Transfer Policy	7
Admission Requirements	7
Valid RN Licensure	7
Technology Requirements.....	8
Communication	8
Academic Advising	8
Progression and Retention	9
Late Policy	9
Practicum Experience Requirement	10
Graduation Requirements.....	10
Grievance, Complaint, Grade Appeal	10
Assessment/ Program Evaluation Process	10
Student Committee Engagement	11
Conduct.....	11
Definition of Civil Behavior	11
Expected Behaviors.....	11
Academic Dishonesty	11
Confidentiality Statement	12
Consensual Relationships	13

Transportation	14
Student Handbook Declaration Form	15
Student Photo/ Video Consent	16

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program

Welcome to the Lewis-Clark State College (LC State) MSN program. This handbook is designed as a resource for students in the Master of Science in Nursing and graduate nursing certificate programs at LC State. This handbook is utilized together with the LC State Student Handbook as well as the Graduate Studies Student Handbook. Students are expected to read and abide by the information in the handbooks. Changes will be made to the electronic version of this handbook as they occur. If necessary, students are notified via email or in the learning management system regarding updates in program or procedure prior to publication of the new handbook. Consult the electronic version for the most up-to-date information.

Accreditation

Lewis-Clark State College is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

The baccalaureate program at Lewis-Clark State College is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and approved by the Idaho Board of Nursing.

Lewis-Clark State College is pursuing initial accreditation for the Master of Science in Nursing program by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and is scheduled for an on-site accreditation site visit September 22-24, 2025. Applying for accreditation does not guarantee that accreditation will be granted.

Vision, Mission Statement, and Guiding Principles

Vision

To be recognized as a pioneering nursing graduate program responsive to the needs and expectations of our students and other stakeholders.

Mission

To provide a supportive student-centered learning environment that prepares nursing graduates with the

- knowledge and skills to meet the nursing needs of the clients they serve
- ability to become engaged citizens, advocates, and lifelong learners
- competencies to be effective nurse leaders

Guiding Principles

- We focus on Patient Safety and Quality of Care
- We embrace the art of nursing as reflected through Professional Values and Ethical Principles
- We value Partnerships, Teamwork, and Inter-professional Collaboration

- We emphasize the science of nursing through Quality Improvement and Evidence-Based Practice

Program Description

The MSN program, Nursing Leadership in Healthcare, challenges the BSN-prepared Registered Nurse to develop evidence-based knowledge and skills to become a transformative nurse leader, effective across a diverse range of healthcare and academic environments. The graduate will develop expertise to practice at an advanced level in the areas of financial and human capital management, quality improvement, and safety management. Graduates will be equipped with strategies for managing policy and other issues encountered in healthcare and educator leadership roles. The American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) core competencies are woven throughout the program.

The program is offered online, except for an on-campus immersion experience at the beginning of the program.

There are two options for entering the program:

- 1) U.S. licensed Registered Nurse with a BSN degree
- 2) U.S. licensed Registered Nurse with an associate degree in nursing who will complete bridge coursework and proceed to the MSN program

Program Outcomes

1. Demonstrate administrative and/or practice leadership in a population health context.
2. Synthesize and disseminate evidence-based administrative and/ or practice leadership knowledge to improve health outcomes
3. Be prepared to serve in leadership roles in clinical nursing, nursing education, or management.
4. Articulate methods, tools, performance measures, and standards related to quality, as well as apply quality and safety principles within an organization.
5. Collaborate across disciplines and with patients, families, and care teams to improve patient outcomes and enhance the healthcare experience.
6. Apply leadership communication skills, including health information management to lead and manage a team within a complex healthcare environment at individual and aggregate levels.
7. Demonstrate professionalism in all program activities reflective of nursing's value, and an attitude of personal growth and commitment to career-long learning.
8. Demonstrate the AONL core competencies in preparation to pursue, if desired, the Certified Nurse Manager and Leader (CNML) or other certification exam.

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Essentials (2021)

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) *Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (2021) serves as the foundation for the MSN curriculum and guides curriculum development. The *Essentials* identify domains of competence that provide a framework for nursing practice. The *Essentials* guide the preparation of graduates for diverse areas of practice in any healthcare setting. Students are encouraged to review the [AACN Essentials](#) document as program and course objectives are aligned with the domains and the post-licensure MSN program is designed to meet Level 2 competencies and sub-competencies.

American Organization of Nurse Leaders (AONL)

In addition to the AACN *Essentials*, the American Organization of Nursing Leadership (AONL) Nurse Manager Competencies serve as foundational professional nursing standards for the MSN program.

The MSN program is strategically designed to develop advanced nursing professionals who embody the comprehensive competencies outlined in the AONL Nurse Manager framework. Through academic preparation and experiential learning, students develop expertise across the three foundational domains that define exceptional nursing leadership.

In the Science domain, students engage in evidence-based practice, quality improvement methodologies, and data-driven decision making. They acquire analytical skills to evaluate healthcare outcomes, implement research findings, and utilize informatics to enhance patient care delivery. The curriculum emphasizes financial acuity, operational efficiency, and the systematic application of knowledge to solve complex healthcare challenges.

The Art component focuses on developing the interpersonal and communication competencies essential for effective nursing leadership. Students cultivate skills in relationship building, conflict resolution, and team development while learning to navigate the human dynamics of healthcare environments. This domain encompasses cultural competency, emotional intelligence, and the ability to inspire and motivate diverse healthcare teams toward shared goals.

The Leader Within dimension addresses personal leadership development, fostering self-awareness and reflective practice, ethical reasoning, and professional accountability. Students explore their own leadership philosophy while developing competencies in change management, strategic thinking, and career planning. This foundational element emphasizes the importance of continuous learning, resilience, and the cultivation of leadership presence that influences positive organizational change.

Program of Study

The program consists of 30 credits, including 500 practicum hours. The program can be completed full-time in three semesters, or part-time in six semesters. See appendix for sequential plans.

Students are required to participate in one mandatory on-campus immersion at the beginning of the program.

Transfer Policy

Refer to [Graduate Studies Student Handbook](#) (pg. 14).

Admission Requirements

General admission requirements for LC State graduate programs can be found in the [Graduate Studies Student Handbook](#) (pg. 3).

Specific admission requirements for the MSN program:

BSN-MSN

- BSN degree from an accredited program
- An active U.S. RN license in good standing
- Completion of a statistics course passed with a C (2.0) or better
- Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher calculated on the last 60 credits of undergraduate coursework

RN-MSN

- Associate degree in nursing from an accredited program
- Active U.S. RN licensure in good standing
- Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher calculated on the last 60 credits of undergraduate coursework
- Students will bridge coursework then matriculate into the MSN program

LC State's MSN program is available to Registered Nurses in specific states. See MSN web page for updated list.

Valid RN Licensure

Students must hold and maintain valid active and unencumbered U.S. RN licensure throughout the program. The student must be licensed in the state in which they will be completing practicum experiences.

Students must immediately report to the Division Chair of Nursing & Health Sciences, any changes to licensure status (including, but not limited to accusations, sanctions, restrictions by a state board, probation, suspension). Pending or actual licensure sanctions or restrictions may result in student being excused from the program as it will not be possible to complete required practicum experiences.

If a student's license expires, the student will not be able to engage in any practicum experiences until such time as the license is renewed and/ or reinstated.

Technology Requirements

Students must have access to a reliable, high-speed Internet connection and should be proficient in using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, email, and the Internet. Technology specifications for compatibility with the learning management system can be found [here](#).

Communication

For all electronic communication with faculty, students must use their LC email account or Canvas (learning management system) messaging. Please check your LC mail/ Canvas frequently to ensure receipt of important messages. Students are expected to communicate honestly and respectfully with peers, advisors, faculty, and clinical preceptors and staff.

Academic Advising

All MSN students will be assigned an academic advisor to assist with registration procedures, class scheduling, graduation, and academic affairs from admission through graduation. Students are responsible for degree and graduation requirements. Students are encouraged to consult with the advisor at least once per semester.

Student Responsibilities

- Be proactive in the advising experience.
- Schedule appointments and make regular contact with advisor.
- Accept responsibility for your educational experience.
- Develop and record an educational plan and monitor progression toward meeting program requirements. Use the tools in Warrior Web/ Student Planning to assist in this process.
- Demonstrate professional behavior.
- Clarify personal and academic goals.
- Become knowledgeable about the MSN program, policies, and procedures.
- Access and utilize campus resources as needed or advised.
- Participate in evaluating the advising process.
- Notify advisor of any issues that may affect academic performance.

Academic Advisor Responsibilities

- Advise MSN students regarding educational goals and assist with the development of clear, realistic educational plans.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Inform students of available resources.
- Identify students requiring additional support and refer accordingly.
- Use Warrior Web/ Student Planning to access official student documents such as transcripts, TRER, and class schedule.
- Assist students in maintaining educational records and auditing progression. Use appropriate program Study Plan to track progress toward meeting program requirements. Document all electronic mail, voice mail, and in person meetings.
- Assist students in meeting program and graduation requirements.
- Assist students in accessing and completing college forms.
- Assist students in problem solving and in developing decision-making skills.
- Support students in taking responsibility for their learning and educational experiences.

Progression and Retention

Students must earn a grade of “B” or higher in each course to progress in the program. If a minimum “B” grade is not earned, the course may be repeated one time.

Grading Scale

The MSN program uses the college grading scale:

Letter Grade	Point Value	Percentage
A	4.00	93 and above
A-	3.67	90
B+	3.33	87
B	3.00	83
B-	2.67	80
C+	2.33	77
C	2.00	75
C-	1.67	Less than 75
D+	1.33	67

Refer to the [Graduate Studies Student Handbook](#) for further information regarding grade scale and progression/ retention.

Late Policy

Students are expected to complete all course assignments in accordance with the course syllabus and to submit assignments by the stated due dates. If the student anticipates they

will be unable to submit an assignment by the due date, the student must communicate by email message to the course faculty at least 24 hours prior to the due date/ time. The message must include the reason the student is unable to meet the deadline and request an extension. The faculty member may approve or deny the request. If the request is approved, the faculty member and student determine the new due date. If the request is denied, the original due date will be enforced, and the assignment grade will follow established policy. The grade for an unexcused late assignment will be reduced by 10% per day when the assignment is late. Assignments will not be accepted four or more days after the due date.

Practicum Experience Requirement

MSN students will complete a practicum experience that includes a minimum of 500 clinical hours. The practicum experience provides the opportunity to engage with and learn from an expert nurse leader in one or more pre-approved healthcare settings. Students develop an individualized learning plan and specific activities to complete the required practicum project and meet identified goals and objectives. Students choose a Healthcare Leadership Synthesis or an Educator Leadership Synthesis focus and work with their faculty mentor to identify a workplace preceptor. The practicum incorporates hands-on experience and culminates in a project that aligns with your specific career objectives, guided by both faculty mentors and your clinical preceptor, with findings disseminated to communities of interest. More detailed information is contained in the practicum course syllabus.

Graduation Requirements

Refer to [Graduate Studies Student Handbook](#) (pg. 17).

Grievance, Complaint, Grade Appeal

The MSN program adheres to the [Student Complaints/ Grievances](#) policy of the college. Refer to the [Graduate Studies Student Handbook](#) for more information.

Assessment/ Program Evaluation Process

All LC State students have the opportunity to evaluate faculty and each course using the college Student Course Evaluation (SCE) process. Evaluations will be collected using an anonymous electronic format. Course evaluations will be available for completion in the final two weeks of each academic term. Faculty access to student evaluations will be restricted until after course grades are submitted and the time period for posting grades has concluded. NHS students also have the chance to provide informal feedback to faculty throughout the semester via class discussion or informal feedback forms. During the final semester of the program, students will complete an end-of-program survey. This survey will be collected using an electronic format.

One year following graduation, graduates will receive an alumni survey. All surveys are utilized to evaluate program effectiveness. Participation in the evaluation process is strongly encouraged. It is expected the student provides his/her comment(s) in an objective, professional, and ethical manner.

Student Committee Engagement

Students in the MSN program are members of the MSN Student Committee. All students are invited and encouraged to participate in committee meetings to provide ongoing input and feedback.

Conduct

The MSN program is committed to fostering a professional and respectful learning environment. All students, faculty, staff, and clinical partners are expected to demonstrate civil behavior that reflects the highest standards of nursing professionalism and promotes collaborative learning.

Definition of Civil Behavior

Civil behavior encompasses professional conduct characterized by respect, courtesy, integrity, and constructive communication. It includes demonstrating cultural competence, maintaining professional boundaries, and contributing positively to the academic and clinical learning environment.

Expected Behaviors

- Engage in respectful dialogue, even when viewpoints differ
- Use appropriate language and tone in all communications
- Maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive information shared in academic and clinical settings
- Show respect for diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences
- Accept constructive feedback professionally and implement recommended changes

Academic Dishonesty

Nursing & Health Sciences adheres to the policies described in the LC State catalog under Student Code of Conduct. Consequences for academic dishonesty are determined by the course faculty in accordance with NHS and College policies.

Academic dishonesty in any form is not tolerated. All work completed by NHS students must represent academic integrity and be the sole product of the student's original work. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

Cheating: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term “academic exercise” includes all forms of work submitted for a grade earned in a course that generates credit hours.

Examples:

- Downloading or printing electronic copies of tests to a personal computer or as a paper copy.
- Use of online papers, presentations, or other material represented as the student’s own work.
- Copying answers off another student’s test or accessing unauthorized resources when taking an online exam.
- Using notes in a closed book exam.
- Working with others when assignments are required to be completed independently.

Fabrication: Falsification or invention of any information or the source of any information in an academic exercise.

Examples:

- Making up research data or references for a scholarly paper.

Collusion: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Examples:

- Assisting another student in procuring or copying secure documents such as test questions.
- Knowingly helping another student cheat, fabricate information, or plagiarize.

Plagiarism: The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statement of another person as one’s own without acknowledgement. One sentence taken from any source that is not indicated by footnotes or quotation marks constitutes plagiarism unless indicated by footnote or textbook reference that the material is not original. Paraphrased material must have the proper reference cited at the end of the thought or the paragraph. The Nursing & Health Sciences Division requires that all formal papers be written using APA style.

Examples:

- Use of online quotes, wording, or data without proper citation of the source.
- Adopting or reproducing ideas or words of another person without acknowledgement in formal papers, reports, or patient care documentation.

The examples noted do not constitute the entirety of offenses that would be examples of dishonesty. The consequences of a violation of the academic dishonesty policy are independent of, and in addition to, any adverse College disciplinary action, which results from the student’s conduct.

Confidentiality Statement

LC State and NHS abide by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), specifically the areas of the law related to privacy and confidentiality of patient and student healthcare information. As part of this law, the College and the student agree to not use or disclose Protected Health Information (PHI) other than as permitted or required by this Agreement or as required by law. The College and the student agree to use appropriate

safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the protected health information other than as provided by this Agreement.

Protected Health Information (PHI) refers to individually identifiable health information held or transmitted by a covered entity. All information related to healthcare clients in any agency setting is strictly confidential. Any notes containing PHI used during clinical must be destroyed prior to leaving the agency. Any student who knowingly or unknowingly reveals information related to a healthcare client in other than appropriately designated settings will be referred to the Division Chairperson. Such behavior could result in dismissal from the program. NHS students who need to access patient records at clinical agencies must submit the appropriate facility request form.

Confidentiality is defined as action taken by the student or healthcare provider to preserve the anonymity of the client. Information used for class presentations or post conferences will contain no PHI. When copying any client records from any setting, all copies must have PHI removed. Confidentiality also includes the security of any electronic data, e.g., hospital computers, telephone, e-mail, fax, and cell phone conversations.

Consensual Relationships

The educational mission of the College and NHS is promoted by professionalism in student/faculty and student/clinical preceptor/facilitator relationships. Policies on student/faculty relationships are addressed in the LC State Faculty-Staff Handbook and the Student Handbook.

Professionalism is fostered by an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Actions on the part of an NHS student or NHS instructor, preceptor/facilitator, which potentially endanger this atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, must be avoided during the period in which the student and preceptor are participating in an NHS course or clinical requirement. Students and clinical instructors/preceptors/facilitators should be aware of the possibility that an apparent consensual relationship with a student may be interpreted (either now or at a later date) as non-consensual and, therefore, sexual harassment. The power differential inherent in student/preceptor relationships may compromise the student's ability to decide and thus call into question the bonafide consensual nature of the relationship.

The potential exists for the student to perceive a coercive element in suggestions regarding activities outside those appropriate to professional relationships. Moreover, instructors, preceptors and facilitators, particularly in relationships with NHS students under their supervision, must be aware of potential conflicts of interest and the possible compromise of their evaluative capacity. They also must also be aware that a relationship may give rise to a perception on the part of others that the evaluative capacity of the clinical instructor/ preceptor/ facilitator has been compromised.

- It is a violation of this policy for a student to undertake an amorous relationship or permit one to develop with an instructor, preceptor/facilitator or clinical agency staff member when under that person's supervision or evaluation, even when both parties appear to have consented to the relationship.

- NHS does recognize that consensual amorous relationships may exist prior to the time a student is assigned to a clinical instructor/ preceptor/ facilitator or is placed in a situation where the preceptor/facilitator must supervise or evaluate the student. Should this occur, it is the student's responsibility to notify his/her clinical coordinator or lead faculty for reassignment.
- A student should not be assigned to an instructor, preceptor, or facilitator with whom that student has or has had a recent consensual amorous relationship.
- A student who fails to follow this policy will be subject to probation or program dismissal as a possible outcome.
- An instructor, preceptor/facilitator who fails to follow this policy shall be removed from his/her clinical preceptor/facilitator status with NHS and the College.
- Persons who are married, or were married, are included within the definition of those persons having, or who have had, a consensual amorous relationship.
- A complaint alleging violations of the policy regarding consensual relationships may be filed by any person.

Transportation

Students are responsible for all transportation to the on-campus immersion and to and from all practicum activities.

STUDENT HANDBOOK DECLARATION FORM

To be completed by all MSN Program Students

All students accepted to the MSN Program must print a copy of this form and send it via email to the MSN Program Coordinator (slcutler@lcsc.edu).

Accountability Statement

I, _____, hereby declare that I am responsible
Print Full Name
and accountable for the information set forth in the 2025-2026 MSN Student Handbook. I understand this handbook is subject to change. I also understand that I will be informed via my WarriorMail account or a posting to the division web page (www.lcsc.edu/nursing) of any policy changes made during this academic year. My signature below indicates my agreement to familiarize myself with the contents of this Handbook and abide by these policies to the best of my ability. I understand I am to refer to the LC State Student Handbook and Graduate Student Handbook for institution-related policies and procedures. I understand I am to use WarriorMail for all electronic communication with faculty and that I am responsible for accessing WarriorMail and the NHS Division website on a regular basis.

_____ Signature	_____ Program	_____ Date
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Confidentiality Statement

I, _____, hereby declare that I have read the confidentiality statement in this handbook. I have been provided the opportunity to ask questions and understand what constitutes confidential information. I agree, as a student of LC State, to keep confidential information to which I am exposed during all clinical and classroom experiences. I understand that if I am found to have shared confidential information with unauthorized individuals in any form (verbal, written, electronic, or through any social medium), it may be grounds for immediate termination from the MSN program.

Signature _____ Date _____

Student Photo/ Video Consent

I consent for the NHS Division at LC State to place my photo in my NHS student file. The photo will be a replica of the one taken for my LC State MSN Student ID badge. I understand the purpose is to help faculty and staff become acquainted with MSN Students and to aid in identifying students should an emergency arise. I give LC State permission to copyright and publish all or any part of photographs, video, voice recordings, and/ or written/ spoken statements taken of me for use in any public relations and/ or marketing campaigns or collateral for LC State. I understand that I will receive no compensation for the use of my likeness.

In addition, if I have supplied my testimonial, it has been done by my own free will, involving no type of incentive or coercion. I understand that my testimonial may be used in connection with promoting LC State. I authorize LC State to use my name, brief biographical information, and the testimonial as defined on this form. Additionally, I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written copy, wherein my likeness or my testimonial appears.

I am 18 years of age or older, and I am competent to contract in my own name. I have read this release before signing below, and I fully understand the contents, meaning, and impact of this release. I understand that I am free to address any specific questions regarding this release by submitting those questions in writing before signing, and I agree that my failure to do so will be interpreted as a free and knowledgeable acceptance of the terms of this release.

Signature_____Date_____

Student Code Violations Consent Disclosure

I hereby authorize the Vice President for Student Affairs to release any records of LC State Student Code violations that have occurred while I have been enrolled. I understand that these records will be reviewed as part of a formal background check related to admission to my program of study.

Signature_____Date_____