

GRADUATE CATALOG

2023 - 2024



MERCY COLLEGE
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

JULY 2023

Mercy College of Health Sciences Graduate Catalog

2023-2024

Revised July 2023

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Graduate Catalog Introduction

The Graduate Catalog is applicable to students who are enrolled at Mercy College of Health Sciences Graduate School beginning Fall 2022 through Summer 2023.

The Graduate Catalog is the official listing of the policies governing graduate education at Mercy College of Health Sciences. This catalog documents policies and procedures set by the Graduate Council and is updated each academic year to reflect changes and updates to policy. While every effort has been made to make the catalog accurate as of the date of publication, the College reserves the right to change programs of study, academic policies, academic requirements, fees, course information, procedures for the confirmation of degrees, or the announced academic calendar and related deadlines without prior notice.

Graduate Calendar 2023-2024

Fall Semester 2023 (15-week term)

September 4	Labor Day – No Classes
September 5	First Day of Class
September 5	Fall Tuition Payment Deadline or Installment Payment Plan Established
September 11	Last Day to Add a Course
September 11	Last Day to Drop Courses with Refund
October 6	Fall Recess - No Classes (Faculty and Staff Professional Development Day)
October 25	Midterm
November 5*	Last Day to Drop Courses
November 6-10	Registration for Spring
November 23-26	Thanksgiving Break (No Classes after 4 pm, Wed.)
December 16	Last Day of Semester
December 17 – Jan. 7	Winter Break

Spring Semester 2024 (15-week term)

January 8	First Day of Class
January 8	Spring Tuition Payment Deadline or Installment Payment Plan Established
January 14	Last Day to Add a Course
January 14	Last Day to Drop Courses with Refund
January 15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day, No Classes
March 2	Midterm
March 11-15	Spring Break (No Classes)

March 13*	Last Day to Drop Courses
March 18-22	Registration for Summer
March 29	Good Friday (No Classes, Campus Offices Closed)
April 26	Commencement Day
April 27	Last Day of Semester

Summer Semester 2024 (14-week term)

May 13	First Day of Class
May 13	Summer Tuition Payment Deadline or Installment Payment Plan Established
May 19	Last Day to Add Classes
May 19	Last Day to Drop Classes with Refund
May 27	Memorial Day, No Classes
June 29	Mid Term
July 4	Independence Day, No Classes
July 7*	Last Day to Drop Classes
July 8-12	Registration for Fall
August 17	Last Day of Semester

Dates are subject to change.

* Dropping a course before this date will result in a grade of “W”. Dropping a course after this date will result in a grade of “F”. The last day to drop courses, less than 15 weeks long, will be at the 60% point.

Changes and Updates to the Current Edition

As changes are made to the current edition, they will be identified in this section. Updates will be noted in the Preface of the Catalog under “Last Updated.”

Notices

Campus Safety Statement

Mercy College provides information regarding campus crime statistics. This information is reported on the College website at <http://www.mchs.edu/Campus-Safety>.

Catalog & Handbook is Not a Contract

This catalog is informational and is not a contract between Mercy College and its students. The information, policies, and procedures contained in the catalog and handbook are subject to change at any time with or without notice.

College Information

Mercy College reserves the right to make changes to official documents as necessary, including changes to academic requirements, policies, and fees. Changes go into effect whenever appropriate with such notice as is reasonable under the circumstances.

Completion Rates

Mercy College provides information concerning student completion rates and performance on professional licensure/certification examinations. Institutional completion rates are available on the College website.

Confidentiality

Mercy College complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1972 and amendments, which govern access to and release of student academic and financial records. Third party access to non-directory information is not permitted without the student’s written consent, except as allowed by law. At its discretion, the institution may provide directory information, which includes student name, address, telephone number, student email address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level (i.e. freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior), degrees, honors, and awards, most recent previous educational institution attended, and participation in College activities. FERPA also recognizes that information can, in case of an emergency, be released without consent when needed to protect the health and safety of others.

Non-Discrimination

Mercy College of Health Sciences conducts all academic programs and business activities in a manner that is free from unlawful discrimination and provides equal opportunity for and equal treatment of students and employees, regardless of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion/creed,

national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U. S. veteran or any other factor protected by law. Inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the Vice President, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs at (515) 643-3180, 928 6th Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

Academic Leadership

Provost

Nancy Kertz, PhD, APRN

Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

Email or (515) 643-6615; Office Location: SC-117

Associate Provost

Ryan Marr, MDiv, PhD

Associate Provost

Email or (515) 643-6679; Office Location: SC-311

Dean of Nursing

Dr. Kristen Wessel, PhD, MSN, RN

Dean of Nursing

515-643-6731

Associate Dean of Graduate Nursing

Dr. Jane DeGooyer, EdD, MSN, RN, CNE

Associate Dean of Graduate Nursing

515-643-6737

Mission, Purpose Statement, and Outcomes

Mercy College of Health Sciences Mission

Mercy College of Health Sciences prepares graduates for service and leadership in the healthcare community by integrating its core values with a professional and liberal arts and science education.

Mercy College Graduate Purpose Statement

Following in the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy, graduate education will develop innovative health science professionals serving as leaders in the service of individuals and organizations in regional and global communities.

Mercy College Graduate Outcomes

Graduates of Mercy College of Health Sciences graduate programs will be expected to achieve the following outcomes:

1. **Ethical Responsibility:** Graduates will integrate ethical, legal, and professional standards while recognizing moral dimensions of decisions in the area of degree specialization.
2. **Advanced Knowledge:** Graduates will demonstrate professional competencies with knowledge mastery in the area of degree specialization.
3. **Communication:** Graduates will communicate effectively orally and in writing, demonstrating advanced academic and technical writing skills appropriate to the area of degree specialization.
4. **Research:** Graduates will conduct analyses of needs and problems and devise solutions using innovative practices.
5. **Servant Leadership:** Graduates will integrate principles of servant leadership and demonstrate cultural competence in working with diverse populations in interdisciplinary interactions as well as within the area of degree specialization.

Policies & Procedures

Students are responsible for abiding by the following policies and procedures:

Academic Policies

Student Treatment Policy

The College will not tolerate student mistreatment. Mercy College of Health educates students who will meet the healthcare needs of society in a caring, competent and professional manner. A profession based on the ideals of service to others should be sensitive to the humanity of its practitioners, especially during training. Insensitivity during training runs counter to the fundamental tenets of the Core Values and impairs the ability of many students to maintain their idealism, caring and compassion past training into their careers. This affects the quality of patient care, as well as collegial relationships with colleagues.

Examples of mistreatment include sexual harassment; discrimination or harassment based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability or age, humiliation, psychological or physical punishment, and the use of grading and other forms of assessment in a punitive manner. Such incidents, whether intentional or unintentional, disrupts integrity, trust, and the spirit of learning.

Students who experience mistreatment should report the specific incident(s) to the offender's supervisor and to the College Academic Dean. All incidents will be handled in an equitable manner, guaranteeing each student's rights with appropriate protections for both the complainant and accused.

College-wide Graduate School Admission Requirements

Students must meet the following requirements for Admissions:

1. U.S. bachelor degree from an accredited college or university or an equivalent degree from another country (as determined by an approved NACES evaluator). **AND**
2. Undergraduate cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher **OR** Holistic Admission Review by the Office of Enrollment Management and the Office Academic Affairs.
3. For the purpose of applying to Mercy College of Health Sciences, English may be considered your primary language if you have been raised in an environment where English is an official language of your locality and nation, and English has been the primary language used in your home. Applicants whose primary language is not English must meet an English proficiency requirement in one of the ways listed below.
 - Internet-Based TOEFL (IBT): score of 71 with minimum scores of 17 in the Speaking and Writing sections.
 - Paper-Based TOEFL (PBT): score of 530.
 - International English Language Testing System (IELTS): an overall band score of 6.0 with no sub score below 5.5.
 - Pearson Test of English-Academic (PTE): score of 48.
 - American College Testing (ACT) English sub score of 18.
 - Complete the equivalent of ENG 101 and ENG 102 with a C or better at an accredited US institution where the primary language of instruction is English.
 - Official TOEFL and PTE scores should be reported directly to Mercy College of Health Sciences by the testing agency (scanned copies, photocopies, and Web results are not accepted).

For IELTS, results should be sent directly to the Office of Admissions by the testing center where you took the IELTS. Note for students transferring from United States postsecondary schools: Mercy College of Health Sciences does not automatically waive the English requirement for students who have taken English courses at United States postsecondary institutions.

For the purpose of applying to Mercy College of Health Sciences Graduate School, English may be considered your primary language if you have been raised in an environment where English is an official language of your locality and nation, and English has been the primary language used in your home. Students are considered to be proficient in English if they have earned a U.S. bachelor's degree. (and then, after this, any other way in which you would determine English proficiency).

Considerations for Holistic Admission Review:

1. Academic Trajectory: Does the applicant show an upward trajectory in their performance?

2. Major Course Work: How does their academic performance in major courses compare to non-major course work?
3. Higher Level Course Work: How did the student perform in 300-400 level courses?
4. Written Statement from Graduate Student: Why is now the time to seek a Graduate degree? How do you plan to be successful in this journey?
5. Professional Reference Letters: Does the student provide professional references?
6. Years Between Undergraduate Degree and Requested Start Date: Has it been a significant amount of time since last enrollment?
7. Professional Service: Has the applicant been working in field or a related field?

Application Deadlines

For priority consideration, all application materials must be submitted by the dates listed below.

Semester	Application Deadline	Transcript/Test Scores Deadline
Fall	May 1	August 15
Spring	November 15	November 15
Summer	March 15	March 15

Residency Requirement and Time Limitation

Complete all Mercy College requirements and procedures for graduation including a minimum number of 30 credit hours of post-baccalaureate credits. Students may transfer in up to 12 credit hours from an accredited institution. A minimum grade of “B” (not B-) is required for transfer credit. Transfer grades are not used to calculate Mercy College Graduate School cumulative grade point average (GPA). The last 15 credits hours must be taken at Mercy College of Health Sciences Graduate School.

Graduate degrees must be completed within 7 years from the student’s original start date for graduate study.

Time Limit Extensions

In cases where the student is nearing the residency time limitation, and needs more time to complete, the student may petition the Graduate Admissions and Progression Committee for an extension.

Graduate Nursing Admissions Criteria

Admission Requirements:

Students will submit admission requirements through the Office of Admissions.

1. RN Licensure: A current RN license in Iowa or [Compact Nursing State](#) with no restriction, encumbrance, or probationary limitations imposed by the applicable Board of Nursing or any judicial entity associated with yourself, your license or your practice. The RN license must be current upon application and throughout the program. RN licenses that expire before classes begin must be updated before starting the program.
2. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree from a nationally accredited program (CCNE, ACEN, or CNEA).
3. A minimum undergraduate Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the BSN degree OR a minimum CGPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale based on 12 or more semester hours of graduate coursework. An unweighted GPA will be used to determine GPA.
4. National Certified Background Check and child and dependent adult abuse checks: This background check will be done at the applicant's expense after acceptance has been granted. The information from this report is held in confidence by the school.*
5. For the purpose of applying to Mercy College of Health Sciences, English may be considered your primary language if you have been raised in an environment where English is an official language of your locality and nation, and English has been the primary language used in your home. Students are considered to be proficient in English if they have earned a U.S. bachelor's degree.

*Applicants may be denied entry based on their criminal background checks.

Add/Drop Courses

Schedule Change

Students may change their course schedule through MyMercy until the term begins. Once the term starts schedule changes are not official until a completed Schedule Change Form is received by the Registrar's Office. Guidelines for schedule changes are as follows:

- Students may only enroll in a course during the first full week of the term (or equivalent period for shorter courses) without instructor permission.
- Students may withdraw from a course with a refund before the end of the add/drop date without having the course appear on their academic record.
- All changes in course schedules should be approved by the student's advisor.
- Students who withdraw from a course after the last day to add/drop a course with a refund date and before the end of the ninth week of the semester will receive a grade of "W". Withdrawals after this time period will result in a grade of "F". Students may withdraw from a course that is shorter than 15 weeks with a "W" after 7% of the course is completed and before 60% of the course is completed. Refer to registration information provided by the Registrar.

- Students receiving financial assistance should consult with the Financial Aid Office regarding financial consequences before changing schedules.

Auditing a Course

A student may audit a course if there is sufficient space available. Students may not audit any portion of a course that includes a clinical component. Although auditing students need not complete class assignments, take tests, or participate in class activities, they may do so with the permission of the instructor.

A student may not change from or to audit status after the first week of the course. Neither a grade nor credit will be granted for an audited course. Audited courses do not serve as prerequisites for other courses. The student's transcript will reflect "AU" for the audited class.

Directed Study

Designed to fulfill the need to have an existing course that is required by a student's major of study but currently is not being scheduled. The material covered in such courses is the same that is covered in the traditional course but is more self-directed with moderate oversight and direction by faculty. Credit assigned for a Directed Study course will be set equal to the credit value of the regular course. Students may complete a maximum of two courses of directed study work while at the College. A student must have completed fifteen credit hours at the College and have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher before taking a Directed Studies course. Course offering requires consent of the Program Chair and the Associate Provost.

Course Cancellation

Mercy College reserves the right to cancel a course. Students will receive a full refund for the course.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend, be punctual, and actively participate in all classes, laboratory, clinical sessions, preceptorships, and internships for which they are registered. Instructors may provide additional attendance requirements on the course syllabus. Students must verify their course enrollment by attending class(es) the first week of each term. Students enrolled in online courses must have meaningful academic interaction in their online course(s) the first week of the term to verify their enrollment. Failure to verify enrollment may result in students being dropped from class(es) for non-attendance.

Administrative Withdrawal

The Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost and the Associate Provost may administratively withdraw a student in situations when that student has never attended class, has established attendance but has current prolonged absences, or has exceptional circumstances preventing

the student from attending class or coming to the College to complete a withdrawal form. Exceptional circumstances may include, but not be limited to:

- Extreme medical situation in which the student is unable to initiate the withdrawal process. In such cases the Dean of Students initiates the withdrawal process.
- Behavioral situations, including where it is deemed the student may be a danger to themselves or others, may result in the student being withdrawn, suspended, dismissed, or expelled from the College. In such cases the Dean of Students, with the approval of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, initiates the withdrawal process.

Grading Policies

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is tabulated at the end of each semester. A minimum of a B is needed to pass a non-clinical graduate level course (a grade lower than this will be reported as an F on the student's transcript). A minimum grade of B is needed to pass a clinical course (a grade lower than this will be reported as an F on the student's transcript).

GPA Scale

A	=	4.0
A -	=	3.7
B+	=	3.3
B	=	3.0
B-	=	2.7
C+	=	2.3
C	=	2.0
C-	=	1.7
F	=	0.00

Grading Scale

Grades for the Graduate Nursing courses shall be determined according to the following values:

A	4.0	94 to 100
A-	3.7	92 to 93
B+	3.3	90 to 91
B	3.0	85 to 89
B-	2.7	83 to 84
C+	2.3	81 to 82
C	2.0	75 to 80
C-	1.7	70 to 74
D+	1.3	67 to 69
D	1.0	63 to 66
D-	0.7	60 to 62

F 0.0 59 or less

GPA Calculation

To calculate the GPA, the following formula should be used:

$$\text{GPA} = \text{SUM (C.U. x GRADE)} / \text{TOTAL CUs}$$

The GPA is calculated by multiplying the course unit for each course (usually 1 c.u.) by the numerical equivalent for the grade received in the course, adding the total number and dividing by the total number of credits taken. Averages are tabulated for each semester and on a cumulative basis.

Testing-Out Credits

Graduate students may receive graduate course credit by special examination (testing out of a course) if they have sufficient preparation in the subject matter and they have the instructor's approval. Application for special examination is made to the program and requires approval by the program director, chair/head, or dean of the department offering the course. For an official test out, a fee is paid, successful completion of a special examination is reported as a T, and the course credit is added to the College total.

Pass / Fail

When a course is taken as Pass/Fail, the grade of P (pass) is not calculated into the grade point average. However, if an F (fail) is received in a Pass/Fail course, it is calculated into the GPA.

Grade Notations I, W

The notation of *I* indicates an *Incomplete* grade for a course. The *I* notation must be cleared from the student's transcript before graduation. The notation *W* indicates an approved withdrawal from a course.

Course Failure

If a required course is failed, it must be repeated at the next available offering and a satisfactory grade (3.0 or greater) must be achieved. The repeated course may not be taken with the Pass/Fail Option. Any courses for which the failed course is a prerequisite may not be taken until a satisfactory grade in the prerequisite course has been achieved. However, the "F" remains on the transcript even though the student has repeated the course and obtained a passing grade or above. The "F" is still calculated into the cumulative GPA.

Students will receive an "F" in a clinical course if they fail to meet objectives or if they are removed from the clinical setting for unsafe practice at any point during the course. A student who is failing a clinical course for unsafe practice may not withdraw from the course. In the event of a failure for unsafe clinical practice, the Academic Standards and Progressions

Committee and Associate Provost will define the conditions under which the student may repeat the course.

Incomplete Grade Policy

A student who fails to complete a course within the prescribed period and does not withdraw from the course or change his or her status to auditor will receive, at the instructor's discretion, either a grade of I (incomplete) or F (failure).

Incompletes in Non-Clinical Courses

A grade of incomplete in a non-clinical course is assigned by the instructor only under the following conditions:

- The student has academic good standing in the course with a passing grade average.
- The student has no more than two outstanding course requirements unmet in the course.
- The student and instructor have completed a *Learning Plan to Achieve Complete Course Work*.
- The student and instructor have an agreed date of submission for all outstanding course requirements. This date is no later than the end of the academic term that follows the term in which the grade of incomplete is assigned.

Except in unusual and extreme situations, the "I" must be removed within the following academic term. Only with the approval of the Associate Provost, the instructor may permit an extension of time up to one year for the completion of the course. Incomplete extensions must be accompanied by a written faculty approval on file with the Registrars' Office. Any grade of incomplete which remains after one calendar year from date of assignment becomes a permanent incomplete grade designated by the mark I* on the student's record and is not credited toward any degree.

Incompletes in Clinical Courses

A grade of incomplete in a clinical course is assigned by the instructor only under the following conditions:

- The student has academic good standing in the course with a passing grade average.
- The student has clinical good standing in the course with no record of clinical practice errors risking patient safety in the course.
- The student has no more than two outstanding course requirements unmet in the course.
- The student has completed the majority of any required clinical hours (e.g. more than 50% of clinical hours are completed) in the course.
- The student and instructor have completed a Learning Plan to Achieve Complete Course Work.

- The student and instructor have an agreed date of submission for all outstanding course requirements and completion of any outstanding clinical hours. This date is no later than the end of the academic term that follows the term in which the grade of incomplete is assigned.

These conditions must be conveyed to the Registrar's Office via email and approved by the Associate Provost or her/his designee before the grade of incomplete is assigned.

The grade of incomplete may be carried on the student's transcript only until the end of the following term. Carrying this grade beyond that time holds severe implications of failure to progress to next term with delay in the student's academic and clinical progression of an academic term or full academic year. Any extensions of work toward an incomplete past the end of the following academic term must be reviewed and approved by the Academic Dean of the College.

Any grade of incomplete for a clinical course which remains after the end of the academic term following the one in which it was assigned becomes a permanent incomplete grade designated by the mark I* on the student's record. A permanent incomplete requires registering and retaking the entire clinical (theory or practice) course in its entirety to complete the degree for which the clinical course is required. The permanent grade of incomplete is not counted toward any other degree should the student elect a change or major or track.

Academic Integrity Policy

Mercy College is a learning community dedicated to the core values of knowledge, reverence, integrity, compassion, and excellence.

Knowledge is gained through coursework, labs, and clinical experiences and measured through assignments, written papers, and examinations.

Reverence is demonstrated through respectful behaviors to all in the classroom, patient care settings, and community.

Integrity requires honesty in all academic, laboratory, and clinical work since honesty and trust form the foundation for the ethical standards of all healthcare professions.

Compassion is displayed through honest, caring concern for classmates, colleagues, patients and their families, and through service to the wider community.

Excellence requires continually striving to do the highest quality work in academic, clinical, and personal settings.

Mercy College students are entering healthcare professions where honesty, integrity, and the highest ethical standards are required. These same standards are upheld in all academic and clinical work. Honesty in class work and clinical documentation is expected, along with maintaining strict confidentiality.

Examples of academic dishonesty include cheating or plagiarism, such as but not limited to:

- Copying answers from another student during a test.
- Using unauthorized resources for quizzes, tests, written work, or assignments.

- Copying or sharing test questions, materials, or assignments without instructor permission.
- Working with others on assignments where instructions state that the assignment is to be completed individually.
- Submitting work as one's own that was written by someone else.
- Providing a paper or assignment for another student to submit.
- Using phrases from a source without proper use of quotation marks and citation.
- Failing to fully rewrite and sufficiently cite paraphrased information from a source.
- Submitting the same (or nearly the same) paper in more than one course without instructor permission. This is considered self-plagiarism.
- Giving a false reason for missing classes, clinicals, tests, or exams.
- Failing to report to the instructor cheating incidents that are personally witnessed in or out of class or in clinical settings. The standards in healthcare require the reporting of any unethical behavior that is witnessed, and this professional practice begins upon entry into healthcare education.

Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of Mercy College core values and healthcare professional ethics. Academic dishonesty harms fellow students, faculty, and most importantly, patients whose care may be jeopardized by the student's resulting lack of knowledge and ethical integrity. Violations of this policy are considered a breach of the Student Code of Conduct, and consequences will follow the Student Discipline Procedure.

Every enrolled student will be required to acknowledge in writing their understanding and commitment to the Academic Integrity Policy, including honesty and trustworthiness in their academic and clinical work.

Plagiarism

Definition: Plagiarism is the representation of another person's ideas, statements, or research as one's own; and includes having another person write a paper or do an assignment, or copying, summarizing or paraphrasing another's work without appropriate and standard documentation.

Types of Plagiarism: Plagiarism can take many forms. Mercy College encourages students to take time to better understand how plagiarism can be avoided and commit to academic integrity. The most common forms of plagiarism are direct plagiarism, accidental or unintentional plagiarism, and self-plagiarism. Below are examples of other possible forms of plagiarism, but this is not an all-inclusive list:

- Copying and pasting work as one's own
- Giving a fellow student an assignment to submit as one's own
- Purchasing an assignment and submitting as one's own
- Using graphs, videos, or images from an outside source with no citation
- Recycling assignments or self-plagiarism

- Insufficient citations

Avoiding Plagiarism

1. Understand what plagiarism is and the importance of giving credit where credit is due.
2. Properly cite all sources.
3. Include quotations where necessary.
4. Paraphrase correctly. If unsure, seek advice from an expert.
5. Learn and develop your own concepts. If information cannot be changed, be sure to cite sources.
6. Utilize a plagiarism checking tool.

Plagiarism Analysis Software: Turnitin

Mercy College instructors utilize *Turnitin* plagiarism analysis software to encourage academic integrity, by preventing submissions with improperly cited content. The online tool checks student drafts submitted against its database of Internet content, proprietary databases, and previously submitted student work. *Turnitin* provides an Originality Report that identifies what, if any, portion of the work matches other sources. Some faculty may also use the *Turnitin* software to determine grades or feedback. Faculty will inform students how to use *Turnitin*.

Avoiding Plagiarism Training

Mercy College provides an opportunity for students to learn how to avoid plagiarism. Should a student be found violating the academic integrity policy for plagiarism, a student may be mandated to complete a one-on-one session with the campus writing specialist or watch a video on *Avoiding Plagiarism*.

Procedure and Sanctions

Mercy College is committed to developing future healthcare providers who embrace the institutional value of integrity. Should a student be found guilty of plagiarism, the faculty member of the course, Associate Provost, and the Provost/VP of Academic Affairs (VPAA) will determine the following:

1. The faculty member will document the academic dishonesty and report it to the Associate Provost.
2. In the case of plagiarism, the faculty member and the Associate Provost will determine if the violation was intentional or unintentional.
3. If unintentional plagiarism has occurred, the faculty member will ask the student to edit and resubmit the assignment. The student will also complete the mandatory training on *Avoiding Plagiarism*, either one-on-one with the campus writing specialist or via an assigned video, within 14 days from the date determination was made. The misconduct will be documented and reported to the Associate Provost. Should the student fail to resubmit the assignment or fail to complete the training within the specified timeframe, the student will receive a failing course grade.
4. If the integrity violation was intentional and is a first offense, the course instructor will determine an appropriate sanction. The most severe sanction that could be applied is course failure. In the case of intentional plagiarism, The student will also need to complete the mandatory training on *Avoiding Plagiarism*, either one-on-one with the

campus writing specialist or via an assigned video, within 14 days from the date determination was made. The student will also submit a written statement agreeing to act with integrity at all time. The misconduct will be documented and reported to the Associate Provost, the Provost, and placed in the student's permanent academic file.

5. If the integrity violation was a second intentional offense, the student will fail the course and be suspended for the remainder of the term. The misconduct will be documented and reported to the Associate Provost, the Provost, and placed in the student's permanent academic file.
6. If the integrity violation was a third intentional offense, the student will be dismissed from the College. The misconduct will be documented, reported to the Associate Provost, Provost, and placed in the student's permanent academic file.

A student found in violation of the academic integrity policy may file an academic grievance. See *Academic Grievance Policy*.

Academic Grievance Policy

Purpose

Mercy College of Health Sciences graduate students may initiate the academic grievance procedure if they believe an academic policy has not been followed. Academic policies apply to instructional activities, grading procedures, or other processes related to academic affairs. This policy does not apply to issues regarding student employment or sexual harassment. It applies to academic grievances only. Students should be aware that clear evidence is needed to contest a grade. Belief that a subject, skill, or course material was too difficult is not grounds for a complaint.

A student must have evidence that a specific policy was violated or that the student was treated in a prejudicial or capricious manner. This policy does not limit the Graduate School's right to change rules, policies, or practices.

Process

Step 1: Students must first contact the faculty member who allegedly violated their rights to determine if there can be a resolution. The contact should be made by the student within two business days of the event, excluding observed holidays. The student must provide a written document to the faculty member which includes:

- a. A statement concerning the nature of the complaint,
- b. Any evidence on which the complaint is based, and
- c. The outcome that the student seeks.

The student and faculty member will then meet within two business days to determine if a resolution can be reached. At the same time, the student should also submit their complaint using the form at <https://mchsstudentsuccess.wufoo.com/forms/m8f57uj1iw10s5/>, so that a

record is made of the nature and timeframe of the incident.

Step 2: If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of their meeting with the faculty member in Step 1, the student may file a written appeal to the Associate Dean of Graduate Nursing within two business days. The Associate Dean of Graduate Nursing will meet with the student and the faculty member within two business days to determine if a resolution can be reached.

Step 3: If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of Step 2, the student may file a written appeal to the Dean of Academics within two business days. The Dean of Academics will convene an Academic Response Team, which will be composed of the members of the Graduate Council. The Academic Response Team will meet with the student and faculty member within 2-3 business days. The team will investigate as appropriate and may seek assistance or information from other personnel. All discussions and written documents submitted will be treated as strictly confidential. After this review, the Academic Response Team will issue a decision to the student, the faculty member, and the Associate Dean of Graduate Nursing.

Step 4: If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of Step 3, the student may file a written appeal to the Provost/VPAA within two business days of the Academic Response Team decision.. The Provost will provide a written response within two business days. The Provost's decision is final.

Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

Students receiving federal and/or state funded aid are required to make satisfactory academic progress (SAP). This is a different policy than the College Academic Performance Policy.

Graduate students are required to maintain a 2.50 cumulative GPA. Students must also complete (with a D- or above) 67% of cumulative attempted credit hours applied to their degree or certificate including all courses taken at Mercy College. For financial aid SAP, attempted hours include completed courses as well as courses with a grade of F, W, or I, and repeated courses.

Students who do not meet these requirements at the end of a semester may be granted one warning semester of continued financial aid eligibility. After the warning semester, students will be placed on financial aid suspension and lose their financial aid eligibility until the SAP requirements are met. Students may appeal their financial aid suspension by completing the appeal form available in the Financial Aid Office.

For financial aid purposes students must complete their degree or certificate within 150% of the published length of the degree or certificate.

Graduate School Graduation Requirements

Students must meet the following requirements for completion:

1. Completion of all required courses for the major with a letter grade of a “B” or higher
2. An overall grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 on a scale on required program courses, including all transfer courses.
3. Complete course Requirements as defined by the Program.
 - a. Meets required credit hours as defined by the program.
 - b. Completes all required courses for the major within 7 years.
 - c. Complete all Mercy College requirements and procedures for graduation including a minimum number of 30 credit hours of post-baccalaureate credits.
 - d. Students may transfer in up to 12 credit hours. The last 15 credit hours must be taken at Mercy College of Health Sciences Graduate School.

Application to Graduate Status

Students must complete the Graduation Application found at [Mercy College of Health Sciences/Graduation Eligibility and Application](#) one semester prior to graduation.

Graduation Survey

All students must complete the *Graduate Exit Survey* prior to graduation. Students will receive an email with information on completion.

Participating in Commencement

Students are encouraged to participate in the Commencement Ceremony. Information regarding this special event is found on the Mercy College website.

Clinical Policies and Procedures

Clinical Compliance / CastleBranch

A national criminal background check and child and dependent adult abuse checks will be conducted for each student seeking admission to an academic program that includes a clinical placement, preceptorship, internship, or similar experiences that require patient interaction. These background checks ensure the safety of all clients served by Mercy College students and meet clinical partners' regulations governing student participation in clinical site rotations, as determined by the standards of The Joint Commission (TJC) and in compliance with state and federal laws. Students are also required to provide documentation of current immunizations and personal health information as required by the clinical standards of the profession they have been admitted to study.

When seeking admission to an academic program which requires completion of clinical, preceptorship, or internship opportunities, students have to establish an account with CastleBranch, a background screening and credential portal service. CastleBranch account instructions can be found at <https://www.mchs.edu/castlebranch>. The account will be used to pay the necessary fees for background checks and to submit your health records as a part of program admission. Students who choose not to participate in these background checks or are found to have criminal backgrounds will not be admitted to the academic program or remain enrolled in the academic program. Students who are unable to fulfill the clinical standards of the profession may also not be admitted to a specific academic program.

Failure to disclose a criminal record or founded case of abuse, regardless of whether perceived to have been expunged in the past and later found on documentation provided to the College, or as part of the information supplied to CastleBranch at the time of admission to an academic program, may also result in a denial of admission to the academic program.

The background check is based on information obtained from the student's residency history. When the College is notified by the vendor that a student has a criminal record, the student will be expected to provide clarifying information about each conviction listed on the record for further evaluation by the Mercy College Background Check Review Committee. Students who have a criminal record may be denied admission to an academic program, or they may be considered for admission only after undergoing a review by the Iowa Department of Human Services and/or an evaluation by the Mercy College Background Check Review Committee.

If the student wishes to dispute the background check findings,, the student has an opportunity to do so as outlined under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).. Denial of admission may be appealed to the Vice President of Academic Affairs & Provost if documentation of a resolution to the case can be made. Criminal and abuse registry documents are maintained by

CastleBranch and are required to be accessible by college administration while the student is enrolled. Criminal records are not part of a student's permanent academic record.

Many professional licensing boards may restrict eligibility for professional licensure/certification if a person has been convicted of a felony or has participated in other illegal or unethical behaviors. Prospective students to whom this applies are encouraged to contact the appropriate licensure/certification board prior to seeking admission to an academic program. In cases in which a licensure/certification board grants permission to test for certification/licensure following graduation from a Mercy College academic program, the College makes no guarantees regarding the ability of the graduate to find employment within the certification/licensure career field.

Students are responsible for maintaining their records in CastleBranch. Students are not permitted to attend clinicals until their records are up to date. Students who are absent from clinicals due to non-compliant CastleBranch records may be subject to clinical make-up fee(s).

Notification of Drug Screening

All students enrolled in a program with a clinical component will need to submit to a drug screen upon admission to the program. Clinical sites require drug screening to ensure the safe and effective treatment of patients and to ensure a safe workplace for employees. These are essential goals in the healthcare environment and drug testing helps sites meet these goals. Mercy College students enrolled in an academic program that does *not* include a clinical component will *not* be required to undergo drug testing.

Ten-panel Drug screening will be facilitated through CastleBranch, and final determination will be made by the medical director at the independent testing center. The standard 10-panel test will determine the presence of cocaine, marijuana, PCP, amphetamines, opiates, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, methadone, propoxyphene, & Quaaludes. If there is reason to believe that the results were inaccurate, the student or prospective student will be permitted one opportunity to retake the drug screen. If the second test is positive, the student will be responsible for any testing costs incurred. Students who fail the drug screen will be dismissed from the program and have to wait six months to reapply.

Further drug testing for cause may be required. This testing will be required at the discretion of Mercy College or the clinical agency. Students have the right to refuse to consent to drug testing. However, students declining the drug test will not be allowed to progress in their program. *If a student is not enrolled in courses for three consecutive terms, they will be subject to new-student drug screening upon their re-enrollment.*

Each student has a responsibility to maintain a drug-free working and learning environment. For further information and program-specific policies, students should consult their program-

specific handbook. If you are struggling with addiction, help is available by contacting the [Student Success Center](#). Further resources, including a hotline for assistance with addiction, are available at <https://yourlifeiowa.org/finder>.

Clinical Reporting Policy

Students must first contact their clinical instructor as soon as possible to report suspected patient abuse or other witnessed inappropriate conduct in a clinical setting.

Clinical Responsibility and Compensation Restrictions Policy

In a clinical setting/session, students must not take the responsibility for or the place of qualified staff. However, after demonstrating competency, students may be permitted to undertake certain defined activities under appropriate supervision and direction. Students may be employed in a clinical setting outside regular educational hours, provided the work does not interfere with regular academic responsibilities. The work must be at the student's discretion, paid, and subject to standard employment policies.

Confidentiality of Patient Information Policy/Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Students must maintain patient confidentiality at all times without exception. Students are required to comply with regulations contained in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Students are legally responsible for maintaining patient confidentiality and are personally liable for any and all breaches of patient confidentiality. A breach of patient confidentiality is considered a Student Code of Conduct violation and falls under that policy.

Students must follow these confidentiality rules:

- Do not discuss clients off the unit. This means anywhere off the unit (e.g., other locations in the medical center, in the cafeteria, in the elevator, in the student's car, in other public places, at a second place of employment, in the mall, at home with family or friends, in the classroom, and/or any other settings.)
- Do divulge a client's name off the unit for any reason..
- If a student knows a client or the client's family, notify the instructor or the contact person immediately (e.g., neighbor, classmate, friend, current or former colleague at work, family, etc.).
- If a student knows a client or the client's family on a professional basis (has taken care of them in another medical setting), notify the instructor or the contact person immediately.
- Students should not acknowledge a client outside the unit or at a later date in any other setting (e.g., church, the mall, in the medical center, party, school, etc.). Do not nod, smile, greet, or acknowledge the client even casually in any way, unless the client first nods, smiles, or greets the student. Limit interaction to a polite acknowledgement.
- Do not discuss anything with the client related to his/her hospital stay anywhere off the

unit, even if the client initiates the conversation. Students should indicate that they can't discuss it off the unit for confidentiality reasons..

- Do not discuss clients with an instructor, other than the instructor on the unit.
- Do not send information about clients via email. This includes sending assessments, care plans, or journals.
- Do not use client names or their families' names in assessment care plans.
- Do not use client names with other clients or with their peers. If a student is approached by a client who wants to discuss another client, refer them to staff immediately.

Illness Policy

Students who are ill should not attend class, lab, or clinical. Students who become ill during class, lab, or clinical time will be sent home at the discretion of the instructor. The Attendance Policy will apply. Concerning infectious diseases, the College will follow the MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Infectious Control Policy during class and lab and will follow the specific clinical site's policy during clinical. The student is responsible for the cost of any treatments or medications prescribed.

Information Policy

Mercy College reserves the right to make changes as necessary, including changes in requirements, programs, policies, and fees. Changes shall go into effect whenever appropriate, with such notice as is reasonable under the circumstances. Students may be notified of changes and updates via their student email and/or the College website.

Student Injury or Exposures to Blood-borne Pathogens Procedure

All employees and students will follow standard precautions to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials. All blood or other potentially infectious materials will be presumed infectious, regardless of the perceived status of the source individual.

Students sustaining an illness, injury, or accidental percutaneous (puncture wound) and/or mucous membrane exposure to blood or body fluids or bloodborne pathogens shall comply with the following guidelines.

Students who are injured or exposed to bloodborne pathogens in a clinical setting should follow the clinical site policies governing such injuries or exposures. If a student is injured or exposed to bloodborne pathogens during the clinical experience, the student must report the injury or exposure immediately to the faculty member supervising the clinical experience.

Injuries or exposures shall include but are not limited to actual bodily injury as well as exposure to bloodborne and/or communicable diseases occurring on the premises of the clinical site while the student is in the clinical setting or coming to/leaving the clinical site,. Students who incur injuries and/or exposures at a clinical facility must comply with that facility's policy and procedure pertinent to the injury/exposure. This compliance includes completing all required documentation and reporting as required by the clinical site where the injury and/or exposure occurred.

At a minimum, all student injuries or exposures must be reported via MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Medical Center's Incident Reporting Information System (IRIS), which can be located on MercyNet.

The faculty member responsible for the student shall ensure that the student receives appropriate medical attention and the IRIS report is completed immediately following the injury or exposure. In the case of a serious injury, the faculty member must immediately contact the Academic Dean.

In the event of serious or life-threatening injury or illness, treatment should be implemented at the clinical facility if emergency treatment is available. If emergency treatment is not available on-site, emergency personnel should be summoned without delay and the student should be transported to the nearest medical facility for emergency treatment.

If the clinical facility does not provide care indicated for the injury/exposure or if it is a non-emergent injury/exposure, the student should seek medical treatment at either a MercyOne Urgent Care or the MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Medical Center Emergency Department, depending on the outlined criteria below.

Mercy College is not responsible for student healthcare costs. Students are responsible for their own healthcare insurance and/or costs related to healthcare treatment, whether an injury/exposure occurs on campus or in a clinical setting.

All employees and students will follow Standard Precautions to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials. All blood or other potentially infectious materials will be considered infectious, regardless of the perceived status of the source individual.

Students sustaining an accidental percutaneous (puncture wound) and/or mucous membrane exposure to blood or body fluids or blood borne pathogen shall comply with the following guidelines.

Clinical Site:

- Administer first aid immediately after exposure. Cleanse the wound and surrounding area with soap and water (for a needle stick), or flush eyes, nose, or mouth with copious amounts of tap water (for a splash to the face).
- Faculty and students shall follow the clinical site's policies regarding OSHA's bloodborne pathogen and other infection control/isolation policies.
- Students shall promptly contact the faculty in charge of the clinical or laboratory setting following injuries or exposures to blood-borne pathogens. This contact shall be done at the time of the injury/illness/exposure or as soon as the injury/illness/exposure is suspected. Students under the supervision of a preceptor when a clinical faculty is not physically present at the site shall notify their assigned preceptor as well as the lead faculty for the clinical course.
- If exposure/injury occurs at a MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Des Moines Medical Center Clinical site Monday-Friday, between 7:30AM-3:30PM, the student will

report to MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Medical Center Employee Health Services.

- If exposure/injury occurs after hours or when Employee Health Services is closed, the House Supervisor should be contacted for further instructions and assessment.
- Any time the exposure/injury occurs at a location other than MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Clinical Site the student should be directed to follow the clinical site's policy. If the clinical site refuses to care for the student, the student should be directed to the nearest MercyOne Urgent Care Clinic.
 - MercyOne Urgent Care Clinics have varying hours of operation. For more information on specific clinics and hours visit:
<https://www.mercyone.org/desmoines/find-a-service-or-specialty/urgent-care>.
 - Any student injured when MercyOne Urgent Care Clinics are closed should report to MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Emergency Department for further evaluation and treatment.

The student and faculty will work together to enter details of the incident into the Incident Reporting Information System (IRIS) for further investigation by MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center's Risk Management Team. The IRIS incident report should be completed as if the incident were regarding an employee/staff member; later in the report, it can be specified that the individual is a student.

Classroom or Lab:

- Administer first aid immediately after exposure. Cleanse the wound and surrounding area with soap and water (for a needle stick), or flush eyes, nose, or mouth with copious amounts of tap water (for a splash to the face).
- Students shall promptly contact the faculty in charge of the classroom or laboratory setting following injuries or exposures to blood-borne pathogens. This contact shall be done at the time of the injury/illness/exposure or as soon as the injury/illness/exposure is suspected.
- Any time the exposure or injury occurs during a classroom or lab setting the student should be directed the nearest MercyOne Urgent Care Clinic.
 - MercyOne Urgent Care Clinics have varying hours of operation. For more information on specific clinics and hours visit:
<https://www.mercyone.org/desmoines/find-a-service-or-specialty/urgent-care>.

Any student injury occurring not during MercyOne Urgent Care Clinic hours of operation should report to MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Emergency Department for further evaluation and treatment.

The student and faculty will work together to report details of the incident into the Incident Reporting Information System (IRIS) for further investigation by Mercy's Risk Management Team. The IRIS incident report should be completed as if the incident were regarding an employee/staff member; later in the report, it can be specified that the individual is a student.

Incident reports will be gathered from MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center's Risk Management team on a monthly basis by Services. The office will track the number of student incidents. If incidents occur, a report will be sent to the Academic Dean quarterly.

Directions on how to complete an IRIS form in various situations are located on the Student Health Services webpage at <https://www.mchs.edu/Students/Student-Health-Services>.

Incident Reporting

Students should promptly report any vandalism or security incidents to the Facilities Manager. Between the hours of 4 p.m. and 7 a.m., incidents should be reported directly to the MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety Office, (515) 247- 3111.

Lecture/Laboratory/Clinical Cancellation Policy

In the event that a professor is not present at the beginning of a scheduled class session, students should remain in the classroom for at least 10 minutes. In the event that the College receives late notice of a course, laboratory session, or clinical cancellation, the College will attempt to post outside the assigned classroom notice of cancellation. Students should also check the learning management system (Canvas) site for the course for further instructions concerning the class session makeup plans.

Title IX Information (see Title IX/Sexual Misconduct section)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Policies

Policy Statement

The following constitutes College policy concerning student rights of access to personal educational records and confidentiality in compliance with the FERPA. Certain definitions and principles contained in the law and guidelines are as follows:

- A student is defined as one who has attended, or is attending, Mercy College of Health Sciences and whose records are in the files of the college. Attendance is defined as the date of first enrollment at the College or participation in a college-sponsored program or activity, whichever occurs earlier.
- Educational records do not include files retained by individuals that are not accessible to any other person except a designee or replacement.
- Directory (public) information is limited to name, local and home address and telephone, email address, college, class, major field of study, dates of attendance, enrollment status, anticipated graduation date, degrees and awards received, the most recent educational institution attended and a photograph of a student taken for college purposes. Directory (public) information also includes class rosters listing students in College academic courses (Desire to Learn); such rosters may only be used for the purpose of conducting that course.
- Record means any information or data recorded in any medium, including but not

limited to handwriting, print, tapes, computer files, microfilm or microfiche.

Introduction and Purpose

To inform students of their rights and responsibilities pertaining to their college records, in compliance with federal notification requirements. To protect the privacy of student records. To articulate definitions relating to student records, how they may be accessed and disclosed, the complaint procedure and other information relevant to the student record. The official FERPA form (Permission to Release Student Information) can be found [here](#).

Scope and Applicability

College employees (faculty, staff and student employees) and other covered individuals (e.g., affiliates, vendors, independent contractors, etc.) in their accessing and handling of student records, data or information in any form (paper, digital text, image, audio, video, microfilm, etc.) during the course of conducting College business (administrative, financial, teaching, research or service). This policy shall apply to all offices and divisions of Mercy College of Health Sciences and to all current or former students of the College.

Release of Directory Information

Directory information may be released unless the student files the appropriate form in the Registrar's Office requesting that directory information not be released. Directory information that cannot be restricted includes whether the individual was ever enrolled, and degrees awarded.

Release of Grades

Reports of a student's grades are not routinely mailed. Students may access their grades electronically on MyMercy website. The posting of a student's grades must be done in a manner designed to maintain confidentiality. Grades or evaluations linked to personal identifiers (names, College ID numbers, or social security numbers) may not be publicly disclosed without specific permission from the student. Grades or evaluations may only be posted on office doors or on websites by using randomly generated codes or numbers.

Record Storage

Students have records in one or more of the following offices:

- Registrar's Office
- Financial Aid
- Student Accounts
- Division of Student Affairs
- Division of Enrollment Management
- Human Resources (Federal Work Study)

Record Access and Exceptions

A student's record is open to the student, except as listed below. Any reference to student records or to access to student records in this document is subject to these exceptions:

- Confidential letters of recommendation placed in files before January 1, 1975.
- Financial records of the student's parents or any information contained therein.
- Employment records, except for those cases in which the employment is required as part of the student's program.
- Medical and psychological records.
- Letters of recommendation or other documents that carry a waiver of the student's right to access.
- Records compiled by campus security solely for the purposes of law enforcement.
- Student education records are open to college officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information contained in the records.
- A college official is an employee or other agent of the college. A college official may also be a person or company with whom the college has contracted to carry out a function on the college's behalf.
- The determination of a legitimate educational interest will be made by the person responsible for the maintenance of the record. This determination will be made scrupulously and with respect for the individual whose records are involved. A legitimate educational interest requires that the individual seeking access must have the requested information to perform a job function.

Conditions of Access Waivers for Student References

To ensure the confidentiality of references, certain documents may carry waivers signed by the student relinquishing the right of access to the document. Waivers are subject to the following conditions:

- Waivers can be signed only for the specific purposes of application for admission, candidacy for honor or honorary recognition and candidacy for employment.
- Waivers cannot be required.
- The student shall be told, upon request, the names of those supplying references.
- All items in the academic record not covered by waivers are open to the student.
- Material not covered by waivers may not be protected by keeping it out of the student's file.

Third-Party Access

Normally, records can be released, or access given, to third parties (i.e., anyone not a member of the faculty or staff), only with the written consent of the student.

Without the consent of the student, releases to third parties may be given only as follows:

- To federal officers as prescribed by law
- As required by state law
- To research projects on behalf of educational agencies, providing that the agencies guarantee no personal identification of students
- To accrediting agencies carrying out their functions
- In response to a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- By Campus Security to other law enforcement agencies in the investigation of a specific criminal case
- To parents of students who are dependents as defined and verified by IRS standards
- A student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) regarding the student's use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance if there has been a determination by the college that the student's use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance constitutes a violation of a college rule or regulation; and the student is under the age of 21 at the time of disclosure to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s)
- A student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in connection with an emergency
- To appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons

Continued Record Maintenance

Nothing in this College FERPA policy requires the continued maintenance of any student record. However, if under the terms of this policy a student has requested access to the record, no destruction of the record shall be made before access has been granted to the student.

Records of Deceased Students

FERPA rights cease upon death. However, it is the policy of College that no records of deceased students be released after the date of death, unless specifically authorized by the executor of the deceased's estate, by the next of kin or as stipulated in the Record Access and Exceptions section of this policy.

Record Correction Requests

Students have the right to ask to have records corrected that they believe are inaccurate, misleading or in violation of their privacy rights. The procedures are as follows:

- The student must ask the custodian of the record to amend the record. The student should identify the part of the record that the student wants changed and the reasons.
- Mercy College of Health Sciences may comply or may decide not to comply with the request. If not, the College will inform the student of the decision and advise the student of the right to a hearing. Requests for a hearing are to be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Upon request, the College will arrange for a hearing and so notify the student.
- The hearing will be conducted by a hearing officer who is a disinterested party.

However, the officer may be an official of the institution. The student may be assisted by one or more individuals.

- The College will prepare a written decision based solely upon the evidence presented at the hearing. The decision will include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.
- If the College decides that the challenged information is not inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's right to privacy, it will notify the student that they have a right to place in the record a statement commenting on the challenged information or set forth reasons for disagreeing with the decision.
- The statement will be maintained as part of the student's record as long as the contested portion is maintained. If the College discloses the contested portion of the record, it must also disclose the statement.
- If the College decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's right of privacy, it will amend the record and notify the student in writing that the record has been amended.

Creation, Permanence and Disposal of Student Records

The following is a general guideline regarding the disposal of student records:

- Only such records as are demonstrably and substantially relevant to the educational purposes of the college shall be generated or maintained;
- Permanent retention of student records is limited to those records which are of long-range value to the individual or the college;
- All duplicate copies of permanent records, other than those maintained by the custodian of the permanent records, shall be maintained only for the minimum period of time required to serve the basic official function of the individual or department generating or maintaining them. Such records shall be destroyed as soon as they are no longer needed (i.e., within one year following graduation or two years after the last date of attendance). A student will be granted access to their records prior to their destruction when the student has an unsatisfied request outstanding.

Directory Information

In compliance with the federally enacted regulations and College policies, directory information regarding students attending Mercy College of Health Sciences shall be the:

- Student's name
- Local address
- Permanent address
- Email Address
- Telephone listings
- Year at the college

- Dates of attendance
- Academic college and major field of study
- Enrollment status
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Degrees, honors and awards received
- Most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Photographic or electronic pictures or images

Public information pertaining to any individual student may be released by the Registrar upon inquiry unless the student has not agreed to release directory information. Partial or whole lists of students by name and address will not be released for commercial purposes.

Each major administrative unit shall define the kinds of reports and information that may be released to the public.

Information contained in personal files of the student is considered confidential information. With the exception of the information noted above, all student records are considered to be confidential and are open only to College personnel (individuals under contract) who need the information to carry out their official responsibilities (assigned duties and functions).

Although College personnel are authorized access to this information on a “need-to-know” basis (to perform specific duties and functions), they are not permitted to release information to persons outside the College unless authorized in writing by the student, by a court order or according to the exceptions listed in the Record Access and Exceptions section.

Only the official or designated person responsible for the records has the authority to release them. Records may be disclosed to a third party only on condition that the recipient will not permit others to have access to the information without the written consent of the student.

Rights of Access and Review of Records

Students have the right to inspect, review or receive an interpretation of copies of their educational records, except as excluded below. This right may be exercised by completing a written request to access the records. Such requests should be honored as quickly as possible and reasonably, normally within 48 hours; if detailed documentation and/or interpretation are required, the request should be honored within ten days. In all cases, requests for such information must be honored within 45 days.

If a copy(ies) of a portion or all of the records in a student’s file is requested, the custodian of the records may charge a fee for copies made, provided the fee does not effectively prevent students from exercising their right to inspect and review (under supervision of a college employee) their records. No fee will be charged to the student to search for or to retrieve

records. Each custodian of records is responsible for requiring proper identification of the individual making the request about their records.

Custodians of Student Records

The Office of the Registrar shall be responsible for the proposal, interpretation, enforcement and publication of general policies and procedures consistent with state and federal laws and guidelines as they relate to the creation, maintenance, use, dissemination and destruction of records of students who are attending or have attended Mercy College of Health Sciences and shall coordinate the development of general policies and procedures with the appropriate college officials listed below.

Each type of student record is the responsibility of a designated college official and only that professional staff member or designate has authority to release records. Please note that some student records listed below are outside the scope of the Office of the Registrar. The responsible officials are:

Academic and Admissions Records (after matriculation)

Official: Registrar

Location: Office of the Registrar

Admissions Records (prior to matriculation)

Official: Director for Admissions

Location: Division of Enrollment Management

Alumni Records

Official: Manager of Alumni Affairs

Location: Office of Alumni Affairs

Disciplinary Records

Official: Dean for Student Affairs

Location: Division of Student Affairs

Employment (Work-Study and Student Employment)

Official: Vice President of Human Resources

Location: Human Resources

Financial Aid

Official: Director of Financial Aid Services

Location: Office of Student Financial Aid

Student Accounts

Official: Vice President of Business and Regulatory Affairs

Location: Business Office

Security Records

Official: Vice President of Business and Regulatory Affairs

Location: Office of the Department of Business and Regulatory Affairs

Veterans Records

Official: Registrar

Location: Registrar's Office

Student Activities

Official: Director of Student Engagement

Location: Office of Student Engagement

Special Considerations for an Online Course Environment

FERPA policy for online and blended courses typically includes areas of focus and details regarding the protection of student information and also the information that is shared between an instructor and student as part of the online course.

- Faculty teaching online courses for the College will use the institutional Learning Management System (LMS) for delivery of the course to ensure the security of student work and grades.
- Faculty teaching online courses for the College will use the College's secure online system for electronically submitting grades to the Registrar.
- All emails between the instructor and students in an online course need to occur through the LMS or via the College email system so that communications between the instructor and student, e.g., grades, feedback on student work, etc., remain confidential and protected by the College.
- LMS account information must be kept secure by faculty and students enrolled in online courses. Students in a course cannot access other students' work or grades. Faculty and students cannot share their personal LMS login information with anyone or give access to the course in the LMS to others who are not officially enrolled in the course. Exceptions are allowed for other College faculty and administration to access a course when the appropriate justification is provided and approved.
- Faculty teaching in the online environment will follow all College FERPA guidelines for sharing educational record information with other College faculty and staff and others outside the College.
- During the online course and once it is archived, all student information is protected including course data and participation.

Complaint Procedure

If a student believes the College is not in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the student should check first with the office involved and/or the Vice President of Student Affairs.

If a student wishes to file a complaint with the federal government concerning the College's failure to comply with FERPA, they must submit the complaint, in writing, to the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920 (www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/students.html). The Family Policy Compliance Office will notify the student and the College when the complaint has been received. They will investigate the complaint and may require further information. Following its

investigation, they will provide written notification of its findings and basis for such findings. In the event the College is found not to be in compliance, it will be afforded the necessary time to comply. If it does not then comply, additional action may be taken by the Family Policy Compliance Office. For guidelines concerning this complaint procedure, see 34 CFR Paragraph and the subsequent regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Exclusions or Special Circumstances

Faculty, staff and/or student employees who violate this College policy may be subject to disciplinary action for misconduct and/or performance based on the administrative process appropriate to their employment.

Students who violate this College policy may be subject to proceedings for non-academic misconduct based upon their student status.

Faculty, staff, student employees and/or students may also be subject to the discontinuance of specified information technology services based on the policy violation.

Contact:

Office of the Registrar
Mercy College of Health Sciences
515-643-6744

Information Technology Policies

Responsibilities of Mercy College Students

- Consistent with the core values and complies with the policies of Mercy College of Health Sciences.
- Respects the confidentiality of student records, identification numbers, grades, account numbers, personal information, passwords, and complies with HIPAA guidelines.
- Complies with all laws, including copyright, license agreements, and contracts.
- Does not harass, intimidate, threaten, or harm others, computers, or network resources.

Copyright

Educational use of copyrighted materials permits only limited copying for study and research. Copying includes print materials such as books, articles, and pictures as well as music, videos, software, computer files, and graphic images. Additional copyright information can be found at <https://libguides.mchs.edu/copyright>.

Peer-to-Peer File Sharing

File sharing programs allow users to share files online. Examples of such programs are eMule, BitTorrent and Gnutella clients like LimeWire. The use of file sharing to share copyrighted music, games, and movies over the Internet without permission violates the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and is illegal. Using a computer to distribute copyrighted materials can incur legal penalties for those offering materials and those downloading them. Criminal penalties for violation of federal copyright law include fines up to \$1 million and a maximum jail sentence of 10 years.

Privacy and Monitoring

The College reserves the right to monitor and access any data, including the contents of any College computer, activity logs, or College communications, for legitimate reasons, including but not limited to security, performance, backup, and troubleshooting. Inquiries for reasons of academic integrity may be made after obtaining approval from the Program Chair. Disclosure of information, without notice to the user, will also be made when required by court order or other legal authority, or when the College determines there is an urgent and compelling need.

Examples of Prohibited Behavior

This list is not intended to be a comprehensive list but to provide selective examples of prohibited behavior.

- Attempting to obtain passwords or access other user accounts, sharing a personal username and password with any other person, or using another person's account.
- Circumventing any security system or procedure. This includes any unauthorized activities intended to compromise system or network security such as hacking.
- Using information technology resources to obtain unauthorized access to records, data, or other forms of information owned, used by, or pertaining to the College or individuals.
- Modifying system or network facilities or attempting to crash systems or networks.
- Deliberately introducing a computer virus, worm, spyware, or other malicious software into information technology resources that belong to Mercy College.
- Tampering with software protections or restrictions placed on computer applications or files.
- Using the College computer systems or network to send spam, pranks, chain letters, pyramid schemes, "flaming," or other similar types of broadcast messages.
- Sending messages that are malicious, harassing, or threatening.
- Accessing, transmitting, or otherwise making use of pornographic materials of any kind available over the Internet.
- Using College information technology resources for personal for-profit purposes.
- Impersonating another user or otherwise falsifying a username in email.
- Duplicating or transmitting copyrighted material beyond Fair Use without permission.
- Physically damaging information technology resources.
- Using information technology resources in a manner that is disruptive of the workplace

or educational purpose of the College, or which otherwise hinders the effectiveness of the institution.

Social Media Policies

Social media and networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, etc.) are dynamic communication tools that help people connect and communicate with various groups and individuals.

The College supports student participation in online communities as a communication, learning, and networking tool. Students may be disciplined for personal use of social media when usage is in violation of other Mercy College policies.

Because social media is ever-changing, the following guidelines have been developed to help students navigate the online opportunities while following College policies and procedures and protecting their personal and professional reputation.

The following “best practices” have been compiled to serve as a guide as students participate in social networking for a College group or as individuals.

General

When participating in social networking sites remember:

- Students should be honest about their identity. Participate only under the student’s name.
- Students should have all the facts before posting something.
- Cite sources where applicable.
- Be respectful and courteous in posting and communicating.
- Students should think before posting. There’s no such thing as a “private” social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even after it has been deleted.
- Maintain confidentiality. Never post patient, other confidential or proprietary information.

Protecting Student Identity

While students should be honest about themselves, they should not provide personal information that identity thieves could use against them. Students should not list their home address or telephone number or their work telephone or e-mail address.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policies

Sexual Harassment Policy

Mercy College (College) fosters respect and dignity for all members of the College community by providing an educational and work environment free from discrimination and harassment, including Sexual Harassment.

The College prohibits discrimination based upon race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, sex (including Sexual Harassment), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, genetic information, disability, veteran or military status or any other protected status or characteristic protected by law.

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education's implementing regulations for Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") (see 34 C.F.R. § 106 et seq.), the College prohibits Sexual Harassment that occurs within its Education Programs or Activities.

The College provide persons who have experienced Sexual Harassment ongoing remedies as reasonably necessary to restore or preserve access to the Mercy College Education Programs or Activities.

Scope

Sexual Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on sex is a form of prohibited conduct. For purposes of this policy, Sexual Harassment includes Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment, Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking. The specific definitions including examples of such conduct, are listed below.

This policy applies to all members of the College community (employees, students, applicants for employment, customers, third-party contractors, and all other persons) that participate in the College's Education Programs or Activities, including third-party visitors on campus.

Mercy College's prohibition on Sexual Harassment extends to all aspects of its educational programs, activities and operations, including, but not limited to, admissions, employment, academics, and student services.

This policy does not apply to Sexual Harassment that occurs off-campus, in a private setting, and outside the scope of the College's Education Programs or Activities; such sexual misconduct may be addressed in the employee and student conduct policies.

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education’s implementing regulations for Title IX, this policy does not apply to Sexual Harassment that occurs outside the geographic boundaries of the United States, even if the Sexual Harassment occurs in Mercy College’s Education Programs or Activities.

Members of the College community who commit Sexual Harassment are subject to the full range of discipline including verbal reprimand; written reprimand; mandatory training, or counseling; mandatory monitoring; partial or full probation; partial or full suspension; fines; permanent separation from the institution (that is, termination or expulsion); physical restriction from Mercy College property; cancellation of contracts; and any combination of the same.

Reporting Sexual Harassment

The College has designated the following Title IX Coordinator to coordinate its compliance with Title IX and its implementing regulations and to receive inquiries regarding Title IX, including reports of Sexual Harassment. Any person may report Sexual Harassment to the Title IX Coordinator. Reports may be made in person, by regular mail, telephone, electronic mail, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person’s verbal or written report. In-person reports must be made during normal business hours, but reports can be made by regular mail, telephone, or electronic mail at any time, including outside normal business hours.

Title IX Coordinator:

INSERT

Vice President, Employee Engagement and Human Resources
(515) 643-6640
Sullivan Center-110
928 6th Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50309

Deputy Title IX Coordinator-Students:

Lyneene Richardson
Dean of Students
(515) 643-6659
ACE-181
928 6th Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309
lrichardson@mercydesmoines.org

The Counselor at Mercy College is the only individual who is not required to report an issue of sexual harassment, discrimination, or retaliation to the Title IX Coordinator.

Reports of Sexual Harassment may also be filed with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights by calling (800) 421-3481 or visiting: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintprocess.html>.

Definitions

Complainant: An individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that may constitute Sexual Harassment. The Complainant must be, at the time of filing the Formal Complaint, participating in or attempting to participate in the College's Education Programs or Activities.

Respondent: An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute Sexual Harassment. The Respondent must be participating in or attempting to participate in the College's Education Programs or Activities.

Formal Complaint: A document filed by a Complainant and/or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging Sexual Harassment against a Respondent and specifically requesting the College investigate the allegation of Sexual Harassment in accordance with this policy. A "document filed by a Complainant" means a document or electronic submission (such as an email) that contains the Complainant's physical or electronic signature or otherwise indicates that the Complainant is the person filing the Complaint. A parent, friend, or other third party cannot file a Formal Complaint on behalf of a Complainant. However, the Title IX Coordinator may sign a Formal Complaint as long as the decision to do so is clear and not unreasonable.

Title IX Team: Members of Mercy College who participate in the investigation of a Formal Complaint.

Hearing Panel: A panel of individuals, free of a conflict of interest or bias, responsible for issuing a written determination of responsibility after a live hearing.

Administrative Resolution: Investigation of a policy violation and recommended finding by an administrator with an opportunity to appeal.

Administrative Officer: The individual who will conduct the Administrative Resolution process and determine the resolution. This individual will not be the Title IX Coordinator or Investigating Officer.

Investigating Officer: An individual, free of a conflict of interest or bias, assigned by the Title IX Coordinator with gathering facts about an alleged Sexual Harassment, assessing the relevance and credibility and preparing a written report.

Advisor: An individual chosen by the Complainant and Respondent or appointed by Mercy College to accompany the party to meetings, provide advice to the party, and conduct cross-examination for the party at the hearing.

Preponderance Standard: The standard of “more likely than not” used to determine if the allegation occurred.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual Harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that constitutes Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment, Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking.

Quid Pro Quo: Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment is when an employee of Mercy College conditions an aid, benefit, or service of the College to an individual who participates in unwelcome sexual contact.

Hostile Environment: Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment is unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person access to Mercy College Education Programs or Activities.

In determining whether a hostile environment exists, Mercy College will consider the circumstances, including factors such as the actual impact the conduct has had on the Complainant; the nature and severity of the conduct at issue; the frequency and duration of the conduct; the relationship between the parties (including whether one individual has power or authority over the other); the context in which the conduct occurred; and the number of persons affected. The College will evaluate the circumstances from the perspective of a reasonable person in the Complainant’s position. A person’s adverse subjective reaction to conduct is not sufficient, in and of itself, to establish the existence of a hostile environment.

Some specific examples of conduct that may constitute Sexual Harassment if unwelcome include, but are not limited to:

- Unreasonable pressure for a dating, romantic, or intimate relationship or sexual contact.
- Unwelcome kissing, hugging, or massaging.
- Sexual innuendos, jokes, or humor.
- Displaying sexual graffiti, pictures, videos, or posters.
- Using sexually explicit profanity.
- Asking about, or telling about, sexual fantasies, sexual preferences, or sexual activities.
- E-mail, internet, or other electronic use that violates this policy.
- Leering or staring at someone in a sexual way, such as staring at a person’s breasts or groin.
- Sending sexually explicit emails, text messages, or social media posts.
- Commenting on a person’s dress in a sexual manner.

- Giving unwelcome personal gifts such as lingerie that suggest the desire for a romantic relationship.
- Insulting, demeaning, or degrading another person based on gender or gender stereotypes.

Sexual Assault: Sexual Assault includes the sex offenses of Rape, Sodomy, Sexual Assault with an Object, Fondling, Incest, and Statutory Rape.¹

- **Rape** is the carnal knowledge of a person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. There is “carnal knowledge” if there is the slightest penetration of the vagina or penis by the sexual organ of the other person. Attempted Rape is included.
- **Sodomy** is oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.
- **Sexual Assault with an Object** is using an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. An “object” or “instrument” is anything used by the offender other than the offender’s genitalia.
- **Fondling** is the touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.
- **Incest** is sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by Iowa law.
- **Statutory Rape** is sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent as defined by Iowa law.

Domestic Violence: Domestic Violence is felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of Iowa, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of Iowa.

Dating Violence: Dating Violence is violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

Stalking: Stalking is engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.

The conduct would include two or more acts, including but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device or means follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens or communicates to or about, a person, or interferes with a person's property.

Consent: Consent refers to words or actions that a reasonable person from the perspective of the Respondent would understand as agreement to engage in sexual activity. Consent is a voluntary and knowing act. A person who is incapacitated is not capable of giving consent. Lack of consent is critical in determining whether Sexual Harassment has occurred. Consent must be given for each form of sexual contact and with each sexual partner. Consent requires affirmative, clear, unambiguous acts or statements by each person involved. Consent is not passive.

- If coercion, intimidation, threats, and/or physical force are used, there is no consent.
- If a person is mentally or physically incapacitated or impaired by alcohol or drugs such that the person cannot understand the fact, nature, or extent of the sexual situation, there is no consent.
- If a person is asleep or unconscious, there is no consent.
- Consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity.
- Previous consent for sexual activity does not give consent for future sexual activity.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time. A person who initially consents to sexual activity is deemed not to have consented to any sexual activity that occurs after he or she withdraws consent.
- Within the state of Iowa consent cannot be given by a minor under the age of 16.

Incapacitation: Incapacitation refers to the state where a person does not appreciate the nature or fact of sexual activity due to the effect of drugs or alcohol consumption, medical condition or disability, or due to a state of unconsciousness or sleep.

Incapacitation is a state where an individual cannot make an informed and rational decision to consent to engage in sexual contact because the individual lacks conscious knowledge of the

nature of the act (e.g., to understand the “who, what, where, when, why or how” of the sexual interaction) and/or is physically or mentally helpless. An individual is also considered incapacitated, when asleep, unconscious, or otherwise unaware that sexual contact is occurring.

Incapacitation can only be found when the Respondent knew or should have known that the Complainant was incapacitated when viewed from the position of a sober, reasonable person. One’s own intoxication is not an excuse for failure to recognize another person’s incapacitation.

Incapacitation may result from the use of alcohol and/or other drugs; however, consumption of alcohol or other drugs, inebriation, or intoxication alone are insufficient to establish incapacitation. Incapacitation is beyond mere drunkenness or intoxication. The impact of alcohol or drugs varies from person to person, and evaluating incapacitation requires an assessment of how consumption of alcohol and/or drugs impacts an individual’s:

- Decision-making ability;
- Awareness of consequences;
- Ability to make informed judgments;
- Capacity to appreciate the nature of circumstances of the act.

No single factor determines incapacitation. Some common signs that someone may be incapacitated include slurred speech, confusion, shaky balance, stumbling or falling down, vomiting, and unconsciousness.

Supportive Measures: Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered, as appropriate, and reasonably available, and without fee or charge, that are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Mercy College’s Education Programs or Activities without unreasonably burdening another party. These measures include measures designed to protect the safety of all parties implicated by a report or Mercy College’s education environment, or to deter Sexual Harassment. Supportive measures may include contact information for counseling, community resources for Sexual Harassment and law enforcement. They may also include mutual restrictions on contact between the parties implicated by a report.

Retaliation: Retaliation is intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX and its implementing regulations or because an individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this policy.

Education Programs or Activities: Education Programs or Activities refers to all the operations of the College, including, in-person and online educational instruction, employment, research

activities, extracurricular activities, and community engagement and outreach programs. The term applies to all activity that occurs on campus or on other property owned or occupied by Mercy College. It also includes off-campus locations, events, or circumstances over which Mercy College exercises substantial control over the Respondent and the context in which the Sexual Harassment occurs.

Preliminary Assessment

After receiving a report, the Title IX Coordinator will conduct a preliminary assessment to determine:

- Whether the conduct, as reported, falls or could fall within the scope of this policy; and
- Whether the conduct, as reported, constitutes or could constitute Sexual Harassment.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct reported could not fall within the scope of the policy, and/or could not constitute Sexual Harassment, even if investigated, the Title Coordinator will close the matter and may notify the reporting party if doing so is consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”). The Title IX Coordinator may refer the report to other College offices, as appropriate.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct reported could fall within the scope of the policy, and/or could constitute Sexual Harassment, if investigated, the Title IX Coordinator will proceed to contact the Complainant.

As part of the preliminary assessment, the Title IX Coordinator may take investigative steps to determine the identity of the Complainant, if it is not apparent from the report.

Contacting the Complainant and Respondent

If a report is not closed as a result of the preliminary assessment and the Complainant’s identity is known, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly contact the Complainant to discuss Supportive Measures available, to discuss and consider the Complainant’s wishes with respect to Supportive Measures, to inform the Complainant about the availability of such measures with or without filing a Formal Complaint, and to discuss the process of filing and pursuing a Formal Complaint.

The Complainant will also be provided options for filing complaints with the local police and information about resources that are available on campus and in the community.

During this time, the Respondent will be notified of a Formal Complaint, by the Title IX Coordinator and will be notified of the availability of Supportive Measures for the Respondent. Mercy College will offer and make available Supportive Measures to the Respondent in the same manner in which it offers and makes them available to the Complainant.

The College will also offer and make available Supportive Measures to the Respondent prior to the Respondent being notified of a Formal Complaint, if the Respondent requests such measures.

Confidentiality of Supportive Measures provided to either a Complainant or Respondent will be maintained, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality does not impair the College's ability to provide the Supportive Measures in question.

Filing a Formal Complaint

A Complainant may file a Formal Complaint with the Title IX Coordinator requesting that the College investigate and resolve a report of Sexual Harassment in person, by regular mail, or by email using the contact information specified above.

In any case, including a case where the Complainant does not want the investigation to take place or does not want to file a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator may file a Formal Complaint on behalf of the College if doing so is not clearly unreasonable. The Title IX Coordinator will evaluate the allegation to ensure the safety of the campus and to comply with federal or state law.

The Title IX Coordinator has discretion to determine if an investigation should be initiated and may sign a Formal Complaint to initiate the investigation after completing a violence risk assessment. Such action normally will be taken in limited circumstances involving serious or repeated conduct or where the alleged perpetrator may pose a continuing threat to the College community.

If the Complainant or the Title IX Coordinator files a Formal Complaint, the College will begin an investigation and proceed to resolve the matter. In all cases where a Formal Complaint is filed, the Complainant will be treated as a party, regardless of the party's level of participation.

In a case where the Title IX Coordinator files a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will not act as a Complainant or otherwise as a party for purposes of the investigation and resolution.

Mercy College may consolidate Formal Complaints against more than one Respondent, or by more than one Complainant against one or more Respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of Sexual Harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances. Where the investigation and resolution involve more than one Complainant or more than one Respondent, references in this policy to the singular "party," "Complainant," or "Respondent" include the plural, as applicable. A Formal Complaint of Retaliation may be consolidated with a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment.

Conduct that Constitutes a Crime

Any person who wishes to make a complaint of Sexual Harassment that also constitutes a crime—including Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking—is encouraged to make a complaint to local law enforcement. If requested, the College will assist the Complainant in notifying the appropriate law enforcement authorities. An alleged victim may refuse to notify such authorities. In the event of an emergency, contact 911.

Parties who have obtained a legal temporary restraining order or no contact order against the Respondent should provide the information to the Title IX Coordinator. The College will take all reasonable and legal action to implement the order.

Special Guidance Concerning Complaints of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking

A victim of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking, should do everything possible to preserve evidence by making certain the crime scene is not disturbed.

Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, or Dating Violence should not bathe, urinate, douche, brush teeth, or drink liquids until after they are examined and, if necessary, a rape examination is completed. Clothes should not be changed. When necessary, victims should seek immediate medical attention at an area hospital and take a full change of clothing, including shoes, for use after a medical examination. Preservation of evidence may be necessary for proof of the crime or in obtaining a protection order.

For cases of stalking, it is important to take steps to preserve evidence to the extent that such evidence exists. This evidence may be in the form of letters, emails, or text messages rather than evidence of physical contact or assault. This type of non-physical evidence will also be useful in all types of Sexual Harassment investigations.

Once a report of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking is made, the victim has several options such as, but not limited to:

- Obtaining Supportive Measures.
- Contacting parents or a relative.
- Seeking legal advice.
- Seeking personal counseling.
- Pursuing legal action against the perpetrator.
- Filing a Formal Complaint.
- Requesting that no further action be taken.

No Retaliation

It is a violation of this policy to engage in Retaliation against any member of the Mercy College community who reports or assists in making a report or Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, participated in an investigation, testified at a hearing, filed an appeal, tries to interfere with an individual's Title IX rights, refuses to participate in an investigation of a Formal Complaint, or who assisted in the process.

Persons who believe they have been retaliated against in violation of the policy should file a complaint with the Title IX Coordinator. Complaints of retaliation may be subject to the same procedures as Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment.

Academic Freedom

The College will construe and apply this policy consistent with the principles of academic freedom. In no case will a Respondent be found to have committed Sexual Harassment based on expressive conduct that is protected the principles of academic freedom.

The exercise of the principles of academic freedom does not constitute retaliation.

Timing of Complaints

The College encourages timely reporting of Sexual Harassment. A delay in filing a report may limit the ability to investigate and respond to the conduct appropriately.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to preserve the confidentiality of the identity of any individual who has made a report or Formal complaint; the parties involved and witnesses, except as required by this policy, permitted by FERPA or as required by law. The College will also maintain the confidentiality of its various records generated in response to reports and Formal Complaints, including information concerning Supportive Measures, notices, investigation materials, adjudication records, and appeal records. However, the identity of any person or the contents of any record, if permitted by FERPA, may be revealed, if necessary to carry out the College's obligations under Title IX and its implementing regulations including the conduct of any investigation, resolution, or appeal under this policy or any subsequent proceeding, or as otherwise required by law. The parties to a report or Formal Complaint will be given access to investigation and resolution materials in the circumstances specified in this policy.

While confidentiality will be maintained as specified in this section, the College will not limit the ability of the parties to discuss the allegations at issue in a particular case. Parties are advised, however, that the manner in which they communicate about, or discuss a particular case, may constitute Sexual Harassment or Retaliation in certain circumstances and be subject to discipline according to the processes specified in this policy.

Certain types of Sexual Harassment are considered crimes for which Mercy College must disclose crime statistics in its Annual Security Report that is provided to the campus community and available to the public. These disclosures will be made without including personally identifying information.

Mercy College reserves the right to designate which Mercy College individuals have legitimate educational interest in being informed about incidents that fall within this policy.

Bad Faith Complaints and False Information

While the Mercy College encourages all good faith complaints of sexual harassment, it has the responsibility to balance the rights of all parties.

It is a violation of this policy for any person to submit a report or Formal Complaint that the person knows, at the time of filing the complaint, to be false or frivolous. It is also a violation of this policy for any person to knowingly make a materially false statement during the course of an investigation, resolution, or appeal under this policy. Violations of bad faith complaints and/or false information are not subject to the investigation and resolution processes in this policy; instead, they will be addressed under other policies and standards.

Making a false statement in bad faith, even if made during an investigation, is not considered retaliation.

Education and Training

Mercy College offers educational programming and awareness programs for members of the College community. Educational topics include but are not limited to: relevant definitions, procedures, policies, safe and positive options for bystander intervention; and risk reduction information.

Training will be provided for members of the Title IX team, annually, on issues related to, Sexual Harassment. The training will include how to conduct investigations and complaint resolutions as well processes to protect the victim's safety and promote accountability. Training will also include training on relevant technology to be used at any live hearing and the relevance and permissible use of sexual history, as well as any other requirements outlined in 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(1)(iii) and any other applicable federal or state law.

Investigation and Resolution of the Formal Complaint

Members of the Title IX team participating in the investigation shall be relieved of his or her obligations under these complaint resolution processes within a reasonable timeframe fairly and impartially. If a member of the team determines that he or she cannot apply these processes fairly and impartially because of the identity of a Complainant, Respondent, or

witness, or due to any other conflict of interest, the Title IX Coordinator will designate another appropriate individual to participate in the processes.

Mercy College reserves the right to utilize external resources to assist in the investigation and resolution of the formal complaint.

The purpose of the investigation is to determine whether it is more likely than not that the alleged behavior occurred and, if so, whether it constitutes Sexual Harassment in violation of this policy.

In a case where the Complainant files a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will evaluate the Formal Complaint and must dismiss it if the Title IX Coordinator determines:

- The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint would not constitute Sexual Harassment, even if proved; or
- The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint falls outside the scope of the policy.

In the event the Title IX Coordinator determines the Formal Complaint should be dismissed, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice of dismissal to the parties and advise them of their right to appeal. The Title IX Coordinator may refer the subject matter of the Formal Complaint to other College offices, as appropriate.

Within five (5) business days of the Title IX Coordinator receiving a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will send a written notice to the Complainant and Respondent that includes:

- A physical copy of this policy or a hyperlink to this policy;
- Sufficient details, including (if known) the identities of the parties, the conduct at issue and the date and location of the alleged incident;
- A statement indicating the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged Sexual Harassment and that a determination of responsibility will not be made until the conclusion of the resolution process and any appeal;
- The requirement that all statements must be accurate;
- The parties have the right to an advisor of their choice. Should a party not have an advisor, one will be provided, free of charge, for the purpose of conducting the cross examination;
- Information for the Complainant and Respondent of their right to inspect and review evidence and information about resources available on campus and in the community.

Should Mercy College elect, at any point, to investigate allegations that are materially beyond the scope of the initial written notice an additional written notice will be provided describing the additional allegations to be investigated.

After the written notice of Formal Complaint is sent to the parties, an Investigating Officer will be selected by the Title IX Coordinator, who will undertake an investigation to gather evidence relevant to the alleged misconduct, including inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.

The Investigating Officer will begin the investigation as soon as practical. During the course of the investigation, the Investigating Officer may receive counsel from College administrators, College's attorneys, or other parties as needed.

The burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination in the resolution lies with Mercy College and not with the parties.

Parties of the investigation and any witnesses will receive a written notice of any interview, meeting or hearing they are expected to attend with sufficient notice to prepare. The notice will include dates, time and location, the participants and the purpose.

During the investigation, both parties will have equal opportunity to present witnesses including both fact and expert witnesses, along with relevant evidence and to present other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. The investigator retains discretion to limit the number of witness interviews the investigator conducts if the investigator finds that testimony would be unreasonably cumulative, if the witnesses are offered solely as character references and do not have information relevant to the allegations, or if the witnesses are offered to provide information that is categorically inadmissible, such as information concerning sexual history of the Complainant. The investigator will not restrict the ability of the parties to gather and present relevant evidence on their own.

A party that is aware of and has a reasonable opportunity to present particular evidence and/or identify particular witnesses during the investigation, and elects not to, will be prohibited from introducing any such evidence during the resolution absent a showing of mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect.

All parties and witnesses involved in the investigation are expected to cooperate and provide complete and truthful information.

The investigator will take reasonable steps to ensure the investigation is documented. Interviews of the parties and witnesses may be documented by the investigator's notes, audio recorded, video recorded, or transcribed. The particular method utilized to record the interviews of the Complainant, Respondent, and witnesses will be determined by the investigator in the investigator's sole discretion, although whatever method is chosen shall be used consistently throughout a particular investigation.

The Complainant and the Respondent have the right to be accompanied by an advisor of their choice during interviews and meetings.

The Complainant and the Respondent have equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence gathered during the investigation directly related to the allegations in the formal complaint, including any evidence the College does not intend to rely upon in a hearing. Each party and the advisors will be sent, electronically, the evidence and will have ten (10) business days to submit a written response. The Complainant and Respondent and their advisors are permitted to review the evidence solely for the purposes of this process and may not duplicate or disseminate the evidence.

The Investigating Officer will review the statements and evidence presented, review documentary materials, and take any other appropriate action to gather and consider information relevant to the Formal Complaint. The investigation will end in a written report that will be submitted to the Hearing Panel.

After the period for the Complainant and Respondent and their advisors to provide a written response as has expired, the investigator will complete another written investigation report that fairly summarizes the various steps taken during the investigation, summarizes the relevant evidence collected, lists material facts on which the parties agree, and lists material facts on which the parties do not agree. When the investigation report is complete, the investigator will send a copy to the Title IX Coordinator. The investigator will also send the investigation report to each party and their advisor, in either electronic or hard copy form.

Although the length of each investigation may vary depending on the circumstances, the College strives to complete each investigation within thirty (30) to forty-five (45) business days of sending the written notice of Formal Complaint.

Administrative Resolution

After the Investigating Officer has sent the report to the parties, the Title IX Coordinator will send to each party a notice advising them of two different resolution processes: a live hearing, which is the default process, and an Administrative Resolution process. Administrative Resolution is in lieu of a live hearing. The Complainant and Respondent must consent to utilizing the Administrative Resolution process. A written consent form will be sent to all the Complainant and Respondent who will have three (3) business days, from the date of the consent form, to return the signed form. If either the Complainant, Respondent or both do not return the signed consent form within the timeframe, it will be determined that the Administrative Resolution process is not desired, and a live hearing will be used. The Complainant and Respondent are encouraged to seek advice from their advisor or others prior to consenting to an Administrative Resolution process.

The Title IX Coordinator will appoint an Administrative Officer. The Administrative Officer will send written notice to the Complainant and Respondent of his/her appointment; a deadline for the Complainant and Respondent to submit any written response to the investigation report, date and time to meet with the Administrative Officer, separately. The meetings will not be held any earlier than ten (10) days from the date of the written notice.

The written response must include the extent the Complainant or Respondent disagrees with the report; if any evidence should be excluded from consideration; whether any allegations are supported by a preponderance of the evidence; and whether the allegations constitute Sexual Harassment.

After reviewing the written responses, the Administrative Officer will meet separately with each party to provide an opportunity to make any statements or ask questions. After reviewing the information, The Administrative Officer will determine the resolution.

Hearing

The investigation will be followed by a live hearing in which the hearing panel, Complainant, Respondent, advisors and witnesses attend. Hearings will be recorded and available to the parties of the investigation for inspection and review on reasonable notice, including for use in preparing any subsequent appeal. The Title IX Coordinator provides the Hearing Panel a copy of the investigation report and a copy of all evidence sent to the parties by the investigator.

The Title IX Coordinator will select the appropriate Hearing Panel depending on whether or not the Respondent is an employee or a student. One of the panelists will be appointed as Hearing Panel Chair.

After the Hearing Panel is appointed, the Chair will promptly send a written notice to the parties notifying them of:

- The Hearing Panel appointments;
- Deadline to submit any written response to the investigation report;
- Date for the pre-hearing conference;
- Date and time for the hearing.

Neither the pre-hearing conference, nor the hearing itself, may be held any earlier than ten (10) business days from the date this written notice was sent.

The Complainant's or Respondent's written response to the investigation report must include:

- The extent he/she disagrees with the investigation report, any argument or commentary regarding the disagreement;

- Any argument that evidence should be categorically excluded from consideration at the hearing based on privilege, relevancy, the prohibition on the use of sexual history, or for any other reason;
- A list of any witnesses that the Complainant and Respondent wants to be sent an attendance notice to attend the hearing;
- A list of any witnesses attending the hearing without an attendance notice issued by the Hearing Panel Chair;
- Any objection to the policy or procedures;
- Any request that the Complainant and Respondent be separated, physically, during the pre-hearing conference and/or hearing;
- Any other accommodations with respect to the pre-hearing conference and/or hearing;
- The name and contact information of the advisor who will accompany the Complainant and Respondent at the pre-hearing conference and hearing;
- If an advisor is not available, a request that the College provide an advisor for purposes of conducting questioning.

A written response to the investigation report may also include:

- Information regarding whether any of the allegations in the Formal Complaint are supported by a preponderance of the evidence; and
- Information regarding whether any of the allegations in the Formal Complaint constitute Sexual Harassment.

Prior to the hearing, the Hearing Panel Chair will conduct a pre-hearing conference with the Complainant, Respondent and their advisors. The pre-hearing conference will be conducted live, with simultaneous participation by the Complainant and Respondent their advisors. However, upon request of the Complainant or the Respondent, separate rooms can be used to separate them. Technology will be used to enable them to participate simultaneously by video and audio.

In the Hearing Panel Chair's discretion, the pre-hearing conference may be conducted virtually, by use of video and audio technology, where all participants participate simultaneously.

During the pre-hearing conference, the Hearing Panel Chair will discuss the hearing procedures; address matters raised in the written responses to the investigation report, as the Hearing Panel Chair deems appropriate; whether any stipulations may be made to expedite the hearing; the witnesses requested be served with notices of attendance and/or witnesses the parties plan to bring to the hearing without a notice of attendance; and resolve any other matters that the Chair determines, in his/her discretion, should be resolved before the hearing.

After the pre-hearing conference, the Hearing Panel Chair will send notices of attendance to the witnesses. The notice will advise the individual of the date and time of the hearing and to contact the Hearing Chair immediately if there is a material and unavoidable conflict.

The individual who is requested to attend should notify his/her manager or instructor, if attendance at the hearing will conflict with job duties, classes, or other obligations. Managers and instructors are required to excuse the individual of the obligation, or provide some other accommodation, so that the individual may attend the hearing.

Mercy College will not issue a notice of attendance to any witness who is not an employee or a student.

Participants at the hearing include the Hearing Panel Chair, the Hearing Panel, any additional panelists (if applicable), the hearing facilitator (if applicable), the Investigating Officer, the Complainant and Respondent, advisors, witnesses, the Title IX Coordinator and anyone providing authorized accommodation or assistive services as determined by the College. Except as otherwise permitted by the Hearing Panel Chair, the hearing will be closed to all persons except those identified above. With the exception of the investigating Officer, the Complainant and the Respondent, witnesses will be sequestered until they have completed their testimony.

The Complainant and Respondent will be given the names of individuals participating in the hearing, all pertinent evidence and the final investigation report at least ten (10) business days prior to the hearing. Names of the Hearing Panel will be given to them at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing. Objections to the Hearing Panel must be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator no later than one (1) business day prior to the hearing. The Title IX Coordinator will determine if the objection is one of bias or conflict and warrants removal from the hearing process.

The Hearing Panel will be given a list of the names of the Complainant and Respondent, witnesses and advisors at least five (5) business days in advance of the hearing. Any panelist who cannot make an objective determination must recuse themselves from the hearing.

The hearing will be conducted live, with simultaneous participation by the Complainant and Respondent and their advisors. By default, the hearing will be conducted with the participants together in the same physical location. However, upon request of either party, the parties will be separated into different rooms with technology enabling them to participate simultaneously by video and audio.

In the Hearing Panel Chair's discretion, the hearing may be conducted virtually, by use of video and audio technology, where all participants participate simultaneously by use of technology.

Each Complainant and Respondent will have the opportunity to address the Hearing Panel directly and to respond to questions posed by the Hearing Panel.

Advisors will be permitted to cross examine the other party and any witnesses with relevant questions and follow-up questions, including those bearing on credibility. The Complainant and Respondent are not allowed to cross examine. Cross examination must occur in real time, directly and orally. The Complainant and the Respondent will have the opportunity to raise objections to testimonial or non-testimonial evidence and to have such objections ruled on by the Hearing Panel Chair and a reason for the ruling provided.

The Complainant and Respondent and their advisors will have access to the investigation report and evidence that was sent to them. While the Complainant and Respondent have the right to attend and participate in the hearing with an advisor, a Complainant, Respondent and/or advisor who materially and repeatedly violates the rules of the hearing in such a way as to be materially disruptive, may be barred from further participation and/or have their participation limited, as the case may be, in the discretion of the Hearing Panel Chair.

Subject to the minimum requirements specified in this section, the Hearing Panel Chair will have sole discretion to determine the manner and particulars of any given hearing, including the length of the hearing, the order of the hearing, and questions of admissibility. The Hearing Panel Chair will independently screen questions for relevance in addition to resolving any objections raised by the parties and will explain the rationale for any evidentiary rulings.

The hearing is not a formal judicial proceeding and strict rules of evidence do not apply. The Hearing Panel Chair will have discretion to modify the procedures when good cause exists to do so, provided the minimal requirements specified in this section are met.

The Complainant and Respondent will have an opportunity to submit evidence that the party did not present during the investigation due to mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect.

If the Complainant, Respondent and/or witnesses prefer not to attend or cannot attend the hearing in person, he/she should request alternative arrangements from the Title IX Coordinator at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing. The Title IX Coordinator will allow remote testimony without compromising the fairness of the hearing.

Should the Complainant, Respondent or witness refuse to submit to cross-examination, that individual's statement will not be considered and a decision will be reached based on the remaining relevant evidence. A conclusion will not be reached solely based on the fact that the individual refused to be cross examined.

The Complainant and Respondent will be given the opportunity to make a brief closing argument. After the hearing is complete, the Hearing Panel will objectively evaluate all relevant evidence collected during the investigation, including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, together with testimony and non-testimony evidence received at the hearing, and ensure that any credibility determinations made are not based on a person's status as a Complainant, Respondent, or witness. The Hearing Panel Chair will take care to exclude from consideration any evidence that was ruled inadmissible at the pre-hearing conference, or during the hearing. The Hearing Panel will resolve disputed facts using a preponderance of the evidence standard and reach a determination regarding whether the facts that are supported by a preponderance of the evidence constitute one or more violations of the policy as alleged in the Formal Complaint.

In the event the Hearing Panel determines the Respondent is responsible for violating this policy, the Hearing Panel Chair will, prior to issuing a written decision, consult with an appropriate College Cabinet member with disciplinary authority over the Respondent. This individual will determine any discipline to be imposed. The Hearing Panel Chair will also, prior to issuing a written decision, consult with the Title IX Coordinator who will determine whether and to what extent ongoing support measures or other remedies will be provided to the Complainant.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Hearing Panel will issue a written determination of responsibility using preponderance of the evidence. The determination will include identification of the allegations potentially constituting Sexual Harassment made in the Formal Complaint, description of the process taken upon receipt of the Formal Complaint, including notification to the parties, interviews with the parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather non-testimonial evidence, and the date, location, and people who were present at or presented testimony at the hearing, findings of fact made under a preponderance of the evidence standard that support the determination, a statement and rationale for each allegation that constitutes a separate potential incident of Sexual Harassment, including a determination regarding responsibility for each separate potential incident, a statement of any disciplinary actions taken, whether any ongoing support measures or other remedies will be provided to the Complainant, and a description of the appeal process and grounds for appeal.

The Hearing Chair's written determination will be sent to the Complainant and the Respondent which concludes the hearing process, subject to any right of appeal as specified below.

Although the length of each resolution by hearing will vary depending on the circumstances, the College strives to issue the Hearing Panel Chair's written determination within fourteen (14) business days of the conclusion of the hearing.

The notice of outcome will be shared with the Complainant, Respondent and advisors within seven (7) business days of receiving the determination from the Hearing Panel Chair. The notice will include the determination, rationale and any applicable sanction(s).

The written determination will become final upon the earlier of when:

- the parties are notified of the determination on appeal;
- or the time to file an appeal has passed with neither party appealing.

Dismissal During Investigation or Resolution

Mercy College will dismiss a Formal Complaint at any point during the investigation or resolution process if the Title IX Coordinator determines that one or more of the following is true:

- The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint would not constitute Sexual Harassment, even if proved; or
- The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint falls outside the scope of the policy.

A Formal Complaint may be dismissed, at any point, during the investigation or resolution process if the Title IX Coordinator determines that any one or more of the following is true:

- The Complainant provides the Title IX Coordinator written notice that the Complainant wishes to withdraw the Formal Complaint or any discrete allegations therein (in which case those discrete allegations may be dismissed);
- The Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by Mercy College; or
- Specific circumstances prevent Mercy College from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the Formal Complaint, or any discrete allegations therein (in which case those discrete allegations may be dismissed).

In the event the Title IX Coordinator dismisses a Formal Complaint pursuant to this Section, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice of dismissal to the parties and advise them of their right to appeal. The Title IX Coordinator may refer the subject matter of the Formal Complaint to other College offices, as appropriate. A dismissal pursuant to this Section is presumptively a final determination as it pertains to this policy, unless otherwise specified in writing by the Title IX Coordinator in the written notice of dismissal.

Treatment Records and Other Privileged Information

During the investigation and resolution processes, the investigating Officer and Hearing Panel, are not permitted to access, consider, disclose, permit questioning concerning, or otherwise use:

- A party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party; or

- Information or records protected from disclosure by any other legally recognized privilege, such as the attorney client privilege;

unless the College has obtained the party's voluntary, written consent to do so for the purposes of the investigation and resolution process.

The Investigating Officer and/or Hearing Panel may consider any such records or information otherwise covered by this section if the Complainant or Respondent holding the record consents to disclosing the records or information to support their allegation or defense.

Sexual History

During the investigation and resolution processes, questioning regarding a Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence is offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the conduct alleged, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the Respondent and are offered to prove consent. A Complainant who uses information otherwise considered irrelevant by this section for the purpose of supporting the Complainant's allegations, will be determined to have waived the protections of this section.

Interim Measures

At any time after receiving a report of Sexual Harassment, the Title IX Coordinator may determine that interim remedies or protections for the parties involved or witnesses are appropriate. These interim remedies may include separating the Complainant and Respondent, placing limitations on contact between the Complainant and Respondent, suspension, or making alternative class-placement or workplace arrangements.

After conducting an individualized safety and risk analysis, the College may remove a Respondent from campus when there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any individuals stemming from the allegations of Sexual Harassment. The College will notify the Respondent of the decision and will allow an opportunity to challenge the decision within 24 hours after removal.

In the case of a Respondent who is a non-student employee, and in its discretion, the College may place the Respondent on administrative leave at any time after receiving a report of Sexual Harassment, for a period leading up to the investigation and resolution process.

For all other Respondents, including independent contractors and visitors, the College retains broad discretion to prohibit such persons from entering onto its campus and other properties at any time, and for any reason, after receiving a report of Sexual Harassment or otherwise.

Failure to comply with the terms of the interim remedies or protections may constitute a separate violation of this policy or other Mercy College policies.

Pending Criminal

Some instances of Sexual Harassment may also constitute criminal conduct. In such instances, the Complainant is also encouraged to file a report with the appropriate law enforcement authorities. The pending criminal investigation does not relieve the College of its responsibilities under the law. Therefore, to the extent doing so does not interfere with any criminal investigation, the College will proceed with its own investigation and resolution of the Formal Complaint.

Sanctions and Remedies

The College will impose reasonable steps to correct the effects of such conduct on the Complainant and others and to prevent the recurrence of discrimination, harassment and retaliation. Those include no-contact orders, change in class schedule for students, the provision of counseling or other support services, training and discipline for appropriate parties, up to and including termination for employees or dismissal from the College for students.

Appeals

The Complainant or Respondent may appeal the determination of a resolution or dismissal of a Formal Complaint on one or more of the following grounds:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome;
- New evidence not reasonably available at the time responsibility was determined that could affect the outcome of the matter; and/or
- The Title IX Coordinator, the Investigating Officer or the Hearing Panel had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally, or against the individual Complainant or Respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

No other grounds for appeal will be allowed.

Method of Appeal

An appeal must be filed with the Title IX Coordinator within seven (7) business days of receipt of the written report determining the outcome of the complaint. The appeal must be in writing and contain the following:

- Name of the Complainant.
- Name of the Respondent.
- A statement of the determination of the complaint, including corrective action, if applicable.
- A detailed statement of the basis for the appeal including the specific facts, circumstances, and argument in support of it.
- Requested action, if applicable.

An Appeal Chair will be designated to determine if the request meets the grounds for appeal. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Appeal Chair will conduct an initial evaluation to confirm the appeal is timely filed and falls under at least one of the permitted grounds for appeal. If the Appeal Chair determines that the appeal is not timely, or that it does not fall under a permitted ground for appeal, the Appeal Chair will dismiss the appeal and provide written notice of the same to the Complainant and Respondent.

If the appeal meets the grounds for an appeal, the Appeal Chair will provide written notice to the Complainant and Respondent. The individual not appealing will have five (5) business days to respond to the appeal. The Appeal Chair will obtain, from the Title IX Coordinator, any records from the investigation and resolution processes necessary to resolve the grounds raised in the appeal.

Upon receipt of any opposition, or after the time period for sending an opposition has passed without one being filed, the Appeal Chair will decide the appeal and send a written decision to the Complainant and Respondent which explains the outcome of the appeal and the rationale.

The determination of a Formal Complaint, including any discipline, becomes final when the time for appeal has passed with no party filing an appeal or, if any appeal is filed, at the point when the Appeal Chair has resolved the appeal, either by dismissal or by sending a written decision.

No further review beyond the appeal will be allowed.

Although the length of each appeal will vary depending on the circumstances, the College strives to issue the Appeal Chair's written decision within fourteen (14) business days of an appeal being filed.

Informal Resolution

At any time after the Complainant and Respondent are provided written notice of the Formal Complaint and before the completion of any appeal, the parties may voluntarily consent, with the Title IX Coordinator's approval, to engage in mediation, facilitated resolution, or other form of dispute resolution with the goal of determining a final resolution of the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint and agreed upon by the Complainant and Respondent in writing.

Informal resolution may be used in lieu of the formal investigation and determination procedure.

The Title IX Coordinator will consider the following factors to assess whether an informal resolution is appropriate:

- The amenability to the informal resolution by the Complainant and Respondent;

- The likelihood of a resolution, taking into account the dynamics between the Complainant and Respondent;
- Cleared violence risk assessment/ongoing risk analysis;
- Disciplinary history;
- Complaint complexity;
- Rationality of the Complainant and Respondent; and
- Goals of the Complainant and Respondent.

Prior to initiating an informal resolution process, the Complainant and Respondent will be given a written notice of the allegations, a description of the informal resolution process, information regarding the individual responsible for facilitating the informal resolution (Title IX Coordinator or designee), explanation of the effect of participating in informal resolution and/or reaching a final resolution will have his/her ability to resume the investigation and resolution of the allegations at issue in the Formal Complaint, and description of any other consequence resulting from participation in the informal resolution process, including a description of records that will be generated, maintained, and/or shared.

During the informal resolution process, the investigation and resolution processes that would otherwise occur are halted and all related deadlines are suspended.

The Complainant will not be required to resolve the issue directly with the Respondent.

If the Complainant and Respondent reach a resolution through the informal resolution process, and the Title IX Coordinator agrees that the resolution is not clearly unreasonable, the Title IX Coordinator will provide a written document with the terms of the agreed resolution and present the resolution to the Complainant and Respondent for their written signature. Upon their signatures and the Title IX Coordinator's signature, the resolution is considered final, and the allegations addressed by the resolution are considered resolved and will not be subject to further investigation, remediation, or discipline by the College, except as otherwise provided in the resolution itself, absent a showing that the Complainant or Respondent induced the resolution by fraud, misrepresentation, or other misconduct or where required to avoid an injustice to either or to Mercy College.

The Complainant or Respondent may withdraw their consent to participate in informal resolution at any time before a resolution has been finalized.

Absent an extension by the Title IX Coordinator, any informal resolution process must be completed within twenty-one (21) business days. If an informal resolution process does not result in a resolution within twenty-one (21) business days, and there has been no further extension, temporary suspension, or other contrary ruling by the Title IX Coordinator, the informal resolution process will be deemed terminated, and the Formal Complaint will be resolved using the investigation and resolution processes. The Title IX Coordinator may adjust any time periods or deadlines in the investigation and/or resolution process that were suspended due to the informal resolution.

Informal resolution cannot be used in situations in which an employee is accused of Sexual Harassment against a student.

Recordkeeping

Throughout all stages of the investigation, resolution, and appeal, the Investigating Officer, the Title IX Coordinator, and Appeal Chair are responsible for maintaining documentation of the case. This includes documentation of all proceedings conducted under these complaint resolution procedures which may include written findings of fact, transcripts, and audio recordings. Mercy College will maintain all documentation pertaining to the case for a period of seven (7) years.

Intersection with Other Processes

These complaint resolution processes are the exclusive means of resolving complaints alleging violations of the Sexual Harassment Policy. To the extent there are any inconsistencies between this process and other Mercy College grievance, complaint, or discipline processes, this complaint resolution process will control the resolution of complaints alleging violations of this policy.

This policy applies only to Sexual Harassment. Complaints of other forms of sex discrimination are governed by the Mercy College's Employee and Student code of policies.

¹The College's definition of "Sexual Assault" is mandated by federal regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Those regulations require the College to adopt a definition of "Sexual Assault" that incorporates various forcible and non-forcible sex crimes as defined by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting System. See 34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a).

Student Affairs

Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center

The Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center (SSC) provides students with opportunities to enhance their education through academic advising, personal counseling, tutoring services, testing accommodations for students with disabilities, and other academic support services. The SSC is designed to provide free services to help students who may need additional support during their academic experience. The SSC is located at the south end of the first floor of Academic Center for Excellence (ACE). For more information about services housed under the Student Success Center, visit: <https://www.mchs.edu/Academics/Campus-Services/Student-Success-Center>

Graduate Nursing Handbook

The Graduate Nursing Handbook is a vital resource containing necessary student information regarding student expectations, policies, procedures, and general campus information. Graduate nursing students are responsible for reading and adhering to the information in the Handbook and must abide by the policies and procedures contained therein. Questions about information in the Graduate Nursing Handbook should be directed to the Dean of Student Affairs, whose office is located in the Norkaitis Student Success Center.

Student Services

Financial Aid

Financial Aid is administered according to the regulations of the current U.S. Department of Education Financial Aid Handbook, available in the Financial Aid Office. Financial aid awards and other resources can be found via the 'Financial Aid Checklist' section of MyMercy. The Financial Aid staff will assist students in understanding and applying for federal and state aid and private financial assistance.

Work Study Program

The federal work study program offers employment opportunities for eligible students who are currently enrolled and in good standing. Positions may be available in various areas of the College. Contact the Financial Aid Office for additional information at (515) 643-6715.

Library Resources

The Mercy College Library provides the College community instructional consultation, research support, and access to information to promote lifelong learning and infuse opportunities to develop information literacy throughout the College experience. The library provides reference assistance, research help, and information literacy instruction to individuals and groups. Email library@mchs.edu or connect with library staff via text or chat to consult with a librarian. The Mercy College Library provides a collection of print, audiovisual, and electronic resources to support the coursework and research of students, faculty, and the wider community. Access to online resources is available through [the library website](#) and through each course's online classroom. Interlibrary loans offer access to millions of articles held by libraries worldwide. Students also have access to materials at more than 600 libraries across the state through the College's participation in Iowa's Open Access Program.

Campus Ministry

Campus Ministry provides opportunities where students and faculty/staff are offered a variety of ways to explore, challenge, develop and live out their faith. Rooted in the heritage of the Sisters of Mercy, Campus Ministry promotes the institution's Catholic Christian values unifying the community with retreats, service, friendship and prayer. Located in Brennan Hall, Campus Ministry offers a warm and welcoming place where members of the community gather to share

stories, reflect on their spirituality and seek support and pastoral guidance. Campus Ministry's programs are inclusive of all faith backgrounds and designed to make every student, faculty and staff member feel comfortable and welcome in the College community. Whether experiencing a retreat activity, a community-building event, participating in one of the community service projects or praying together in the chapel, Campus Ministry offers opportunities to explore one's spirituality and develop one's faith.

Student Support Services

Academic Advisor

Each student is personally responsible for assuring that all academic requirements for graduation are met. To assist with this task, an academic advisor is assigned to each student. Students should meet with their academic advisors each semester to plan their program of study and semester schedules. The name of the student's academic advisor is listed in MyMercy.

Registration

Registration dates are listed in the *Academic Calendar* and students should register during the assigned registration period. Students should meet with their academic advisor prior to registration to plan their course of study, select courses, and verify prerequisites. The academic advisor will provide students with their assigned online registration date and time. Students register for classes using MyMercy. Changes to their registration may be made through MyMercy until the start of the term or prior to the course start for courses that begin after the first week of the term.

MyMercy

MyMercy is the College's online tool for viewing academic and administrative records. Students can use MyMercy to view academic records such as course schedules, unofficial transcripts, grades, degree audits, financial aid information, and student accounts. MyMercy is also used to register for classes.

Student Email Account

All students are provided a Mercy College email account. This email account is the official method for the College to communicate with students. Students are expected to check their College email accounts on a regular basis.

Username and Passwords

Students use the same username and password for all Mercy College services, including MyMercy, student email, printing and Canvas. Contact Information Technology support (IT) for assistance with username and passwords.

Learning Management System

Mercy College provides end-user support for instructors and students using Canvas. Students should contact their instructor first when having a technical problem within a particular online course.

Students may leave a message with the Information Technology support helpdesk, and the support personnel will respond during the next business period. The Information Technology Support phone number, web-form, and support hours are listed on the college webpage.

Distance Education

Distance education occurs when instructional content is delivered as an online blended/hybrid course via technologies such as the Internet and audio-conferencing to communicate with students synchronously or asynchronously. Synchronous interactions may take place using live chat sessions and videoconferencing while asynchronous communications may involve e-mail, discussion boards, and feedback on submissions.

An online course is when all instruction occurs synchronously or asynchronously online through substantive and regular engagement between the student and the instructor. A blended/hybrid course is when a significant portion of instruction is delivered online while a portion of the course occurs in didactic or clinical formats. The online portion is approximately 25 - 75% of the total course. Online and blended/hybrid courses may provide increased flexibility and independence for students but it also means that online students must learn to manage their time well, balance competing demands, and have sufficient technological skills and resources to ensure their success in this learning environment. Successful online students are self-directed, motivated, and comfortable working with technology. Students can take online courses from any location in which Mercy College is authorized to conduct educational activities (see State Authorization Reciprocity). Online and blended/hybrid courses will meet the same learning outcomes as face-to-face courses.

State Authorization Reciprocity for Distance Education

If a student is located outside the state of Iowa while enrolled in online classes at Mercy College, the College must be authorized to deliver the education within the state where the student will be located. Mercy College complies with the authorization requirement as a participant under the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), an agreement among member states that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. SARA is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions located in another member state. SARA is overseen by a National Council and administered by regional education compacts. The state of Iowa is a member of the Midwest Higher Education Compact. The state of Iowa became a member of NC-SARA on June 1, 2015 and assigned administrative responsibility for the program to the Iowa College Student Aid Commission.

Mercy College attempts to work directly with states that do not participate in NC-SARA to secure any required approvals to enable residents of those states to enroll in online degree programs. While Mercy College endeavors to comply with the requirements established in each state, various state conditions and fees may prohibit Mercy College from achieving authorization in every state.

Programs offered through Mercy College are designed to meet the state of Iowa's requirements for licensure or certification. Unless noted, Mercy College has not reviewed its outcomes as related to specific licensure or certification requirements necessary for a respective occupation or profession. It is the students' responsibility to understand the requirements of their respective state and certification exams, which may change during the duration of their program. Mercy College cannot guarantee a student's eligibility to qualify for exams or certifications.

Mercy College Distance Education Student Location Determination Policy

In accordance with the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and the Department of Education, students participating in a Mercy College distance education program will have their location determined at the time of initial enrollment through their address provided and verified on their application. A student who permanently relocates with the intent of living in a new state for greater than one year, should notify the College through the change of address form that can be found on the College website: <https://mchs.edu/Students/Change-of-Address>.

Technology Support Services

Refer to College-wide Campus Services at: <http://www.mchs.edu/Academics/Campus-Services/Technology-and-Support>.

Graduate Nursing Program Information

Masters of Nursing: Organizational and Systems Leadership Program

Masters of Nursing: OSL Program Outcomes

Graduates from the Mercy College of Health Sciences Masters of Science in Nursing: Organizational and Systems Leadership will be expected to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Integrate knowledge from general education, theory, and nursing science to support the delivery of nursing practice to diverse populations in varied healthcare settings.
2. Apply leadership skills in organizational and systems management for quality and safe patient care.
3. Analyze information and data using quality improvement methods to improve healthcare outcomes.
4. Participate collaboratively with teams to translate research findings for the improvement of healthcare practice and outcomes.
5. Analyze patient care technologies using organizational and systems management theories to support safe patient care.
6. Advocate for health policies, using leadership skills, to improve health outcomes of populations and quality of healthcare delivery systems.
7. Collaborate in interprofessional teams in the design, coordination, and evaluation of patient centered care.
8. Integrate preventative health promotion and population-based health concepts in the planning, delivery, management and evaluation of patient care for improvement of health outcomes.

Aligned with *The Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing* (AACN, 2011). Upcoming revisions will include the [new AACN Essentials](#).

Graduate Information Processes

Electronic Data Management & Required Tracking

An electronic data management system used by the graduate program to manage and monitor data associated with graduate student clinical experiences, and ensure compliance with accreditation standards. It is the student's responsibility to comply with the established orientation process, which will enable him or her to understand, navigate, and maintain documents within the system. Information stored includes up-to-date:

- Required health records including student immunizations and background checks
- Affiliation agreement with clinical sites
- Site requests for clinical placement
- Preceptor eligibility verification for clinical rotations
- Clinical site information as identified on appropriate forms
- Schedule of clinical rotation hours
- Tracking of clinical rotation hours

- Evaluations for clinical rotations

To ensure the safety of all clients served by Mercy College students and to meet regulations of our clinical partners regarding student participation in clinical site rotations as determined by standards of The Joint Commission (TJC) and in compliance with state and federal laws, a national criminal background check and child and dependent adult abuse checks will be conducted on each student seeking admission to an academic program that includes a clinical, preceptorship, internship, or similar experience that may require patient interaction. Further, students are also required to provide documentation of current immunizations and personal health information as required by the clinical standards of the profession they have been admitted to study.

When seeking admission to an academic program with clinical, preceptorship, or internship opportunities, students will be required to establish an account with the College provider for background checks, documentation, and tracking. The student is responsible for paying the required fees directly to the vendor for this service in order to finalize admission to the academic program. Students who choose not to participate in these checks or are found to have criminal backgrounds may not be able to be admitted to the academic program or remain in the academic program. Students who are unable to fulfill the clinical standards of the profession may also not be able to be admitted to that specific academic program.

Failure to disclose a criminal record or founded case of abuse (regardless of whether perceived to be expunged in the past and later found on documentation provided to the College) or as part of the information supplied to the vendor at the time of admission to an academic program may also result in a denial of admission to the academic program.

A student's background is checked based on information obtained from the student's residency history. When the College is notified by the vendor that a student has a criminal record, the student will be expected to provide clarifying information about each conviction listed on the record for further evaluation by the Mercy College Background Check Review Committee. Students who have a criminal record may be denied admission to an academic program. They may be considered for admission only after undergoing a review by the Iowa Department of Human Services, and/or an evaluation by the Mercy College Background Check Review Committee. Students must also submit to annual background checks while enrolled in nursing courses.

If the student wishes to dispute the findings reported by the vendor, the student will be granted an opportunity to do so as outlined under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), guided by the instructions of the vendor. Denial of admission may be appealed to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost if documentation of a resolution to the case can be made. Criminal and abuse registry documents are maintained by the vendor and are required to be accessible while enrolled at the College. Criminal records are not part of a student's permanent record.

Various licensing boards may restrict eligibility for professional licensure/certification if a person has been convicted of a felony or has participated in other illegal or unethical behaviors.

Students under these situations are encouraged to contact the appropriate licensure/certification board prior to seeking admission to an academic program. In cases where a licensure/certification board does grant permission to eventually test for certification/licensure following successful completion of a program and graduation from a Mercy College with an academic degree or certificate, the College makes no stipulations on the ability of the student to find employment within the certification/licensure career field.

Required Documentation

Students must complete required training and retrain as needed throughout the program, building on previous knowledge to accommodate new aspects in the program. The following must be initiated and uploaded:

1. Initiate a criminal background and a child and dependent adult abuse check with the College specified vendor along with the required payment to the vendor within 2 months prior to student orientation. The student must authorize the vendor to provide the results of these checks as part of the final verification for admission to the program.
2. *Upload a Physical Exam documentation* (within 3 months of acceptance to the program), authenticated by an APRN, physician, or PA. Use the *Health and Physical Form* to complete documentation for the physical.
3. Complete documentation needed on immunizations and upload into the vendor's software. It is advised to submit the Immunization form to your primary health care provider as soon as possible in order to ensure its completion in advance of the admission deadline to the program established by the Chair. The Immunization form verifies compliance with the following:
 - a. Two-step TB skin testing done within the past year; then a TB Skin test yearly after admission. If a positive PPD or history, a negative chest x-ray report.
 - b. Begin the Hepatitis B series or positive Hepatitis B Surface titer, or provide a letter from a student's physician stating need for exemption.
 - c. Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR vaccine) two doses or titers of all three diseases showing full immunity.
 - d. Chicken Pox (Varicella): proof of disease by physician documentation or a positive titer or two doses of Varicella vaccine.
 - e. Seasonal flu vaccination is required to participate in courses that include a clinical rotation during flu season.
4. Provide proof of health insurance and Professional Malpractice / Liability Insurance
5. Medical excuses/documentation
6. Standard Precautions documentation
7. Upload into the vendor's software proof of completion and current certification in American Heart Association Basic Life Support Provider.
8. Copy of an unencumbered* Registered Nurse's license in the state(s) where you reside/work or will be doing clinical training.
9. Additional documentation and requirements may occur based on the requirements of the specific affiliating agencies. *Students are responsible for any additional costs associated with fulfilling any additional agency-specific requirements.*

Failure to complete any of the procedures for the program may delay or end the enrollment process.

*Iowa Code 2.8(5) states a clinical component may not be taken by a person:

- a. Who has been denied licensure by the Board.
- b. Whose license is currently suspended, surrendered or revoked in any U.S. jurisdiction.
- c. Whose license/registration is currently suspended, surrendered or revoked in another country due to disciplinary action.

Disclosure of offenses post-background check completion

Current, full-, and part-time Graduate students are required to immediately report to their Program Coordinator any criminal activity including arrests, criminal charge or conviction after the background check was completed, and during the remaining course of the program. Required disclosures also include any allegations, investigations and/or disciplinary action from any licensing board or agency.

Maintaining Health Insurance, Immunization and Certification Requirements

All Graduate students must maintain current documentation within the electronic data management system. If a student fails to provide updated documentation of requirements, the student will not be allowed to begin/continue clinical course work and/or register for additional courses.

Preceptorship Rotations

Specific requirements are found in the *Graduate Nursing Preceptorship Manual*.

MSN: Organizational and Systems Leadership Courses

Core Course	Credit Hours
MAT 500 Statistical Methods	3
NUR 504 Translating Research into Evidence Based Practice	3
NUR 516 Advanced Pathophysiology	3
NUR 512 Advanced Pharmacology	3
NUR 514 Advanced Physical Assessment	3
NUR 524 Quality Improvement and Patient Safety	2
NUR 644 Clinical Prevention and Population Health	2

Specialization Courses	
NUR 681 Organizational & Systems Leadership I	3
NUR 522 Health Systems Leadership and Interprofessional Practice	3
NUR 661 Evidence-Based Management & Quality Improvement	3
NUR 683 Planning, Management & Evaluation of Programs	2
NUR 626 Finance, Policy, and Economics of Healthcare	3
NUR 506 Informatics for Healthcare Practice	2
NUR 687 Organizational and Systems Leadership Immersion	2 (120 hours clinical)
Total	37 Credit Hours

19 (core) + 16 (concentration) + 2 (practicum) = 37 credit hours

Course Descriptions

Course Name Course Description	Credits/ Practice hours
<p>MAT 500 Statistical Methods (Core) Designed to familiarize graduate students with research design and data analysis including scientific methodology, data collection, and statistical analyses. Includes an introduction to computerized data manipulation, analyses, interpretation, and presentation.</p> <p>Pre-requisites: Undergraduate Statistics Course</p>	3
<p>NUR 504 Translating Research into Evidence Based Practice (Core) Examination of evidence using qualitative and quantitative methods from primary research employed to answer questions in nursing practice for system-wide practice improvements. Concepts include patient safety and quality principles, quality/process improvement, and evidence-based practice processes. Emphasis is on problem identification, including a specific area of interest to build upon throughout the program; design principles; and accessing, analyzing, disseminating and applying research for evidence-based practice.</p> <p>Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: Graduate Statistics or Statistical Methods</p>	3

<p>NUR 512 Advanced Pharmacology (Core) This course provides the knowledge and skills to pharmacologically manage a client’s common health problems in a safe, high quality, cost-effective manner. Emphasis is on the development of therapeutic decision-making in drug selection for the client based on health problems, individual variations, and economic considerations. The focus is on prescriptive practices, client education, and monitoring of the therapeutic response to pharmacologic agents in diverse clients across the lifespan.</p> <p>Prerequisite: Admission to program</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>NUR 514 Advanced Physical Assessment (Core) Development of advanced clinical skills in assessing and maintaining the health of individuals across the life span through history taking, physical examinations, and diagnostic/therapeutic procedures.</p> <p>Prerequisite: Admission to program</p>	<p>3 (2,1) 60 Hours Lab</p>
<p>NUR 644 Clinical Prevention and Population Health (Core) This course enables the MSN student to integrate and synthesize concepts in clinical prevention and health promotion recommendations. The student will explore the core components of the Clinical Prevention and Population Health Framework.</p> <p>Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: NUR 504</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>* NUR 522 Health Systems Leadership and Interprofessional Practice (Concentration) Explores healthcare delivery systems and the economic, ethical, legal and political factors that influence healthcare. This course applies leadership skills in effectively implementing safety and quality improvement initiatives within the context of the interprofessional team using effective communication skills. Leadership professional organizations will be examined.</p> <p>Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: NUR 504</p>	<p>3*</p>
<p>NUR 506 Informatics for Health Care Practice (Concentration) This course assists MSN students to acquire the knowledge and skills essential for using data for information systems/technologies to evaluate and improve health care. A foundation is provided for the appraisal of health information systems in various settings. Consideration is given to how those systems can be employed to maximize the quality of healthcare. Informatics tools for data extraction, organization, and interpretation are compared.</p>	<p>2</p>

<p>Evaluation of information sources is examined.</p> <p>Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: NUR 504</p>	
<p>* NUR 661 Evidence-Based Management & Quality Improvement (Concentration)</p> <p>This course provides a multidisciplinary background in the science of healthcare quality management. Students will learn to develop and plan for execution of quality improvement plans and will use a quality indicator assessment program, such as AHRQ or NDNQI. These will be used as the framework to develop a paper that identifies quality indicators, their measurements and nursing interventions to improve the quality measurement. Valued-based purchasing will be defined and interventions to assure quality and cost containment will be discussed.</p> <p>Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: NUR 522</p>	<p>3*</p>
<p>NUR 516 Advanced Pathophysiology (Core)</p> <p>This course provides an advanced understanding of concepts in human physiology and pathophysiology as a foundation for the advanced nursing practice role. Concepts related to biological sciences including cell biology, tumor biology, immunology, genetics, and pathology will be presented. The focus of this course is on principles, theories, and current research related to physiological and pathophysiological system alterations across the lifespan.</p> <p>Prerequisites/Co-requisites: Admission to Program</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>* NUR 524 Quality Improvement and Patient Safety (Core)</p> <p>This course prepares students to design, implement and evaluate evidence-based quality health care practices for patient populations (individuals and aggregates) in acute, home or community settings. Working as partners in interdisciplinary teams, students will assess organizational culture, gather safety information, analyze data and translate findings that could be used to promote system changes within an organization.</p> <p>Prerequisites/Co-requisites NUR 504</p>	<p>2*</p>
<p>* NUR 626 Finance, Policy, and Economics of Healthcare (Concentration)</p> <p>This course explores healthcare finance and economics from the perspective of health care providers and non-financial managers of health services. Financial management principles, the healthcare co system, reimbursement process and factors influencing the financial environment are discussed with emphasis on strategies to promote and sustain the financial viability of</p>	<p>3*</p>

<p>healthcare. This course will also address the impact of policy in health care, particularly access, delivery, financing and regulation.</p> <p>Prerequisites/Co-requisites: NUR 504</p>	
<p>* NUR 681 Organizational & Systems Leadership (Concentration) Analysis and evaluation of organization and leadership theories and their relationship to complex health care systems. Strategies for effective leadership include systems thinking, organizational culture, communication, resource utilization, ethics, and change models required to lead cost-effective quality and safety improvements within health care organizations and in an interdisciplinary environment. The impact and role as a contributing professional will be examined.</p> <p>Prerequisites/Co-requisites: NUR 522</p>	<p>3*</p>
<p>* NUR 683 Planning, Management & Evaluation of Programs (Concentration) This course focuses on acquisition of knowledge and leadership skills necessary for assessment, design, implementation and evaluation of effective health programs and projects. Emphasis is placed on the use of health programs and projects to improve systems of care and health outcomes and the evaluation of these systems.</p> <p>Pre-requisites/ Co-requisites: NUR 522</p>	<p>2*</p>
<p>NUR 687 Organizational and systems Leadership Immersion (Immersion) All previous course concepts are applied in this course as students integrate what they have learned in the program in a practicum experience related to nursing leadership. Students are expected to integrate nursing knowledge and advanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the development of a comprehensive project grounded in contemporary nursing leadership theory and practice. Students develop projects based on their interests and practicum placement that can incorporate a wide range of leadership issues, such as safety, quality and performance improvement, organizational and systems management, interdisciplinary relationships and collaboration, and staff development. Practicum hours: 150 hours.</p> <p>Pre - requisite: NUR 681</p>	<p>2 (120 Hours Clinical)</p>

19 (core) + 16 (concentration) +2 (practicum) = 37 credit hours

***Practice Experiences:**

Coursework for the Master's of Science in Nursing: Organizational and Systems Leadership is embedded with practice experiences which do not involve hands-on patient care. Experiences are built into your coursework and are completed as part of the course (5 practice hours per courses identified with (*). Practice experiences provide opportunities for application of course content in real world situations. Coursework including the practice experiences will provide evidence of students attaining course and program learning outcomes, which is also important for meeting accreditation standards.