

# GRADUATE NURSING HANDBOOK 2023-2024



# **Mercy College of Health Sciences Graduate Nursing Handbook**

## **2023-2024**

Revised July 2023

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# **Graduate Nursing Handbook**

## **Preface**

Graduate Nursing Policies are specific to the Graduate Nursing programs. Graduate Nursing students must abide by these policies in addition to the Mercy College of Health Sciences Graduate School policies.



## **Letter from the Dean**

Dear Graduate Student,

We want to welcome you to Mercy College of Health Sciences Graduate School and the Department of Nursing. We are excited to serve you during the completion of your Graduate Nursing degree. Our goal is to prepare you to lead and serve in healthcare by surrounding you with an environment of collaboration, personal growth, and nursing knowledge, guided by research and ethical behaviors throughout your graduate program.

We are committed to honoring your unique clinical experiences and the skills you will bring with you to your graduate program. We look forward to embracing your individual talents in the learning environment.

Graduate Students will work with faculty and mentors from a variety of practice partners to cultivate a passion for creativity and nursing excellence as they contribute to the Profession of Nursing. We look forward to our graduates' successes in creating a better healthcare system for all patients in every sector of life.

The purpose of this Graduate Catalog is to provide an orientation to the program and your responsibilities as a Mercy College of Health Sciences graduate student. We ask you to read this Catalog carefully and refer to it during your studies here. Please know that your academic advisor is ready to answer any questions you might have related to this Catalog.

All Staff and Faculty of Mercy College of Health Sciences will strive to support you as you complete this program. Please reach out to us whenever you need to, and keep in close contact with your academic advisor. We will be happy to help in any way.

Congratulations on your decision to seek your graduate degree.

Dr. Kristen Wessel, PhD, MSN, RN  
Dean of Nursing

## Graduate Nursing Leadership

### Accreditation

Refer to: [Mercy College of Health Sciences > About > Accreditation \(mchs.edu\)](https://mchs.edu/about/accr/):

- College: Higher Learning Commission
- Iowa Board of Nursing

At the January 20, 2021 board meeting, the Iowa Board of Nursing approved the application for interim approval for the Master of Science in Nursing: Organizational and Systems Leadership Program, submitted by Mercy College of Health Sciences.

### Iowa Board of Nursing

400 SW 8th St, Suite B

Des Moines, IA 50309

Phone: (515) 281-3255

[www.nursing.iowa.gov](http://www.nursing.iowa.gov)

### Contact Information

Current contact information is found on the [Mercy College of Health Sciences Directory](#):

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Associate Dean of Graduate Nursing

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## Graduate Nursing Mission Statement

Following in the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy College of Health Sciences prepares graduate nurses to lead and serve patients, populations, and systems in Iowa and the nation. Graduates will use advanced nursing knowledge guided by research and ethical behavior to support nursing practice.

## 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.

## 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 Dean of Graduate Nursing will define the conditions under which the student may repeat the course.

A student may only attempt a required Nursing course twice. A student will be withdrawn from the graduate nursing program for failing a required Nursing course twice or withdrawing from the course on the first attempt and failing the course on the second attempt or vice versa.

## **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.

These conditions must be conveyed to the Registrar’s Office via email and approved by the Associate Dean or her/his designee before 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 Dean for Academic Affairs, 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 Dean of Graduate Nursing 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.

## **Readmission to a Nursing Graduate Program**

Graduate students are readmitted through the College Graduate Council. Readmission decisions for master's students will be made by the Graduate Council.

Procedure:

1. The student should indicate interest in readmission by contacting the Admission's Office at least six months before the desired return date. The following materials are required for the readmission petition to be considered:
  - a. A letter requesting readmission addressed to the Graduate Council.
  - b. Two letters of recommendation, preferably from nurse managers or those who have supervised the student (to be sent directly from the recommender to assigned student advisor).
  - c. A current resume
  - d. Any transcripts from institutions attended since separating from Mercy College of Health Sciences. The Registrar will forward the materials to the Graduate Council.
2. The Graduate Council Chair will communicate with the applicant if any additional admissions requirements, such as an interview, are needed.
3. Graduate Council Nursing Representatives will review the applicant's readmission materials and communicate their recommendation to the Graduate Council Chair prior to the next scheduled meeting. If the Graduate Council Nursing Representative recommends readmission, an updated plan of study will be provided.
4. The Graduate Council Chair will notify the student of the decision.

## **Progression Policy for Graduate Nursing Students**

### **Good Standing**

A student in good standing is defined as a student who:

- Maintains the proper GPA
- Maintains the proper course load (without incompletes)
- Is not on academic probation
- Does not have two consecutive semesters of non-enrollment
- Is on an approved leave of absence
- Is not on financial hold nor carrying past due balances
- Has completed the immunizations, background check, and drug screening processes with no identified problems

A student must maintain a **cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0** to remain in good academic standing and to graduate from the School of Nursing and the College.

### **Academic Probation**

A student will be placed on probation if she/he:

- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 2.5 at the end of any semester

- Has a term GPA below 2.5 at the end of any semester
- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 for two consecutive semesters
- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 in Nursing core, theory, and clinical courses (required courses)
- Has failed a required Nursing core, theory, or clinical course (required course)

A student on probation may not take classes pass/fail.

### **Academic Warning**

A student who has a cumulative GPA or single semester term GPA between 2.5 and 3.0 will be given a warning notice.

### **Dismissal**

A student will be withdrawn from the School of Nursing for failing a required Nursing course twice.

A student who has been on academic probation for at least one semester and who has a cumulative GPA below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters may be withdrawn from the nursing program. The Associate Dean of Graduate Nursing will conduct this review.

### **Credit Load, Program Length & Non-Enrollment**

Eight (8) or more credit hours per semester is considered a full-time credit load at the graduate level. Less than eight credit hours is a part-time credit load. Part-time students must develop a schedule resulting in completion within 7 years. Courses are offered using online learning. The Graduate Nursing programs are cohort based programs and students must maintain continuous enrollment with the cohort. If the student must stop out then re-enrollment is required for readmission with the next cohort. A student who needs to stop-out (not enroll) must submit a Petition for Non-Continuous Enrollment and be approved to not enroll. Students who do not enroll any semester, without approval, may be dismissed from the program.

### **Graduation Information**

#### **Completion 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 within seven years of the student's initial enrollment into the program.
2. An overall grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, including all transfer courses.
3. Complete all course and program requirements.
4. Complete all Mercy College requirements and procedures for graduation including a minimum 37 credit hours of post-baccalaureate credits.



## Preparing for Certification

Those who graduate from a Nursing Graduate School program are encouraged, but not required, to participate in national certification for all concentration specialty areas. Refer to each concentration for this requirement. Additional information on the certification examinations will be provided for each concentration prior to graduation.

## Academic Integrity

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(s) 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.

# Clinical Policies and Procedures

## 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 must 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 made at the time of the injury/illness/exposure or as soon as the injury/illness/exposure is suspected.
- Any time exposure or injury occurs during a classroom or lab setting 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 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.

## **Policies & Procedures**

### **Alcohol & Drug Policies**

#### **Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use Policy**

The laws of the State of Iowa regulating the purchasing, dispensing, possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages shall apply to all members of the College community. Each person shall be expected to abide by those laws and will be held responsible, by civil law enforcement, for his or her own actions in any situation involving violations of Iowa state laws regarding alcoholic beverages.

- Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed, possessed, distributed, or sold on campus without specific authorization.
- Alcoholic beverages may not be served or consumed by students on campus.

#### **Alcohol Concern**

The use of alcoholic beverages, though acceptable for persons of legal age, is a matter of concern because Mercy College is committed to maintaining an academic and social environment conducive to the intellectual and personal development of students and to the safety and welfare of all members of the College community. The College believes that it cannot deny persons of legal age the right to use alcoholic beverages, but sees its responsibility as preventing the abuse of drinking privileges by encouraging individuals to behave in an

appropriate and responsible manner where the use of alcoholic beverages is concerned. It is expected that Mercy students who use alcohol will:

- be of legal age,
- make healthy choices that avoid high-risk behaviors, and
- maintain control of self and circumstances.

Mercy College does not condone alcohol use which results in:

- abuse to oneself, others, or property
- compromised control of oneself, circumstances, or values
- negative effects on academics, health, or relationships
- a pattern of problems
- violation of the law

Consistent with the Mercy College core values, it is expected that students will take ownership in and responsibility for establishing and reinforcing community alcohol standards as follows:

By creating and maintaining a view on alcohol that:

- alcohol should not be the focal point of any activity
- supports an individual's decision not to drink
- understands that students who drink together have an obligation to be informed, supportive peers who look out for one another's welfare

As part of a responsible alcohol educational effort, all students will receive information on:

- alcohol standards and policies
- signs of alcohol problems
- how to explore and understand their own drinking choices
- available campus and off-campus resources
- levels of alcohol impairment
- effects of tolerance on alcohol consumption
- effects of other drugs on alcohol consumption
- how to calculate blood-alcohol levels
- emergency responses and procedures
- issues that drive substance abuse

### **Drug Free Schools Act**

The Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, Section 120, require all students and employees to be informed of the institution's drug and alcohol policy guidelines. The following is Mercy College's policy related to a drug-free

campus environment, which applies to all Mercy students, faculty, and staff. Should a student have any questions, please contact the Dean of Student Affairs or designee.

### **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Policy**

1. Mercy College prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees on its property or as a part of any of its programs or activities. Students and employees who engage in prohibited or illegal conduct face sanctions, including suspension, dismissal, expulsion, termination of enrollment and/or employment, and referral for prosecution. Health risks associated with the use of illicit drugs and alcohol abuse vary with the nature of the substance and pattern of abuse and include, but are not limited to:
  - a. depression and/or mood swings
  - b. dependency
  - c. organ damage
  - d. mental problems, hallucinations, confusion
  - e. accidents
  - f. violent reactions

Further information concerning the uses and penalties associated with controlled substances is summarized below. Materials outlining health risks in detail and with specificity concerning particular drugs are available from Student Health Services.

2. The unlawful use, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcoholic beverages may result in local, state, and federal legal sanctions which may include fines, imprisonment, or both. Legislation is extensive in this area, and penalties vary with the type of illicit drug and/or alcohol abuse. Ordinances and statutes collected in local, state, and federal codes including but not limited to Title 21, Chapter 13 of the United States Code, Chapters 123, 124, 124A, and 124B of the Iowa Code, and Chapters 10 and 70 of the Municipal Code of the City of Des Moines, should be consulted. A partial description of applicable sanctions is listed below.
3. Drug and alcohol counseling is available from the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center. Violators of the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy begin the Student Discipline Procedure at Step 3. Students on campus, in clinical settings, or participating in college-sanctioned activities will be subject to College discipline procedures if they:
  - a. Use, possess, distribute or sell alcohol.
  - b. Are under the influence of alcohol.

- c. Possess, manufacture, distribute, dispense, buy, transfer, sell, or use illegal drugs, alcohol, or legal drugs without a physician's prescription.
  - d. Engage in off-campus possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensing, buying, transferring, selling, or using of illegal drugs resulting in a conviction.
- 4. If a Mercy College student is convicted of any violation, the student is required to inform the Dean of Student Affairs or designee within five days of the conviction. Drug or certain alcohol-related convictions may result in disciplinary measures up to and including expulsion.
- 5. The Dean of Student Affairs or designee will notify all appropriate agencies and registries of relevant drug or alcohol-related convictions within thirty days of receiving the information. Students licensed as LPNs or Allied Healthcare providers are additionally subject to all sanctions imposed by the Iowa Nurse Practice Act and Allied Health Licensure Guidelines and will be referred for disciplinary action where appropriate.

#### **Federal Penalties and Sanctions**

21 U.S.C. 844(a): 1st conviction up to 1-year imprisonment and fined at least \$1,000 or both.

After 1 prior drug conviction at least 15 days in prison, not to exceed 2 years, and fined at least \$2,500, or both.

After 2 or more prior drug convictions at least 90 days in prison, not to exceed 3 years, and fined at least \$5,000, or both.

21 U.S.C. 853(a)(2) and 881(a)(7): Forfeiture of personal and real property used to possess or to facilitate possession of a controlled substance if that offense is punishable by more than 1 year of imprisonment. (See special sentencing provision re: crack.)

21 U.S.C. 862(b): Denial of federal benefits, such as student loans, grants, contracts, and professional and commercial licenses, up to 1 year for first offense, up to 5 years for second and subsequent offenses and completion of drug treatment program and community service.

21 U.S.C. 881(a)(4): Forfeiture of vehicles, boats, aircraft or any other conveyance used to transport or conceal a controlled substance and any real property used to facilitate such crime.

Revocation of federal licenses and benefits are vested with the authorities of individual federal agencies.

Note: Federal penalties for manufacture or distribution of controlled substances include prison sentences ranging up to life in prison and fines ranging up to \$2 million. 21 U.S.C. 960.

### **State Penalties and Sanctions**

Iowa Code §123.46: (consumption of alcohol in public places; public intoxication). Either imprisonment, not to exceed 30 days, or a fine of at least \$50, but not more than \$100.

Iowa Code §§123.47: (Providing alcoholic liquor, wine or beer to persons under age 21; possession or control by persons under age 21). First offense: fine of \$200 to \$1,000. Second offense: fine of \$500 and completion of substance abuse evaluation or suspension of driver's license for up to 1 year.

Third and subsequent offenses: fine of \$500 and suspension of driver's license for up to 1 year.

Iowa Code §123.49: (Providing alcoholic liquor, wine or beer to an intoxicated person).

Imprisonment not to exceed 30 days or fine not to exceed \$625.

Iowa Code §124.401(1) and (2): (Manufacture, delivery, or possession with intent to manufacture or deliver a controlled substance or counterfeit or simulated controlled substance). Depending on the nature and amount of substance, penalties range from imprisonment for periods not to exceed 2 years, 5 years, 10 years, 25 years or 50 years and/or fines not to exceed \$5,000, \$6,250, \$7,500, \$50,000, \$100,000 or \$1,000,000.

Iowa Code §124.401(5): (Possession of a controlled substance). Substances other than marijuana: imprisonment not to exceed 1 year and/or fine not to exceed \$1,875. Marijuana: imprisonment not to exceed 6 months and/or fine not to exceed \$1,000. Suspended sentences may include probation and required participation in drug treatment program.

Iowa Code §124.406: (Distribution of a controlled substance to a person under age 18). Depending on nature of substance and ages of parties, penalties range from imprisonment for periods not to exceed 25 years, 10 years, 5 years, or 2 years and/or fines not to exceed \$5,000, \$6,250, \$7,500, or \$10,000.

Iowa Code §124.407: (Sponsoring, promoting or assisting with a gathering with knowledge that controlled substance will be distributed, used or possessed there). Controlled substances other than marijuana: imprisonment not to exceed 5 years and/or fine not to exceed \$7,500.

Marijuana: imprisonment not to exceed 1 year and/or fine not to exceed \$1,875.

Second or subsequent offenses of most of the above-referenced offenses may be punished by imprisonment for a period up to three times the term otherwise authorized and/or a fine of up to three times the amount otherwise authorized.



Iowa Code §124A.4: (Manufacture, delivery or possession with intent to deliver an imitation controlled substance). Depending on ages of the participants, penalties may range from imprisonment for periods not to exceed 1 year, 2 years or 5 years and/or fines not to exceed \$1,875, \$6,250 or \$7,500.

Iowa Code §124B.9: (Sale, transfer, furnishing or receipt of a “precursor substance” with knowledge or intent it will be used to unlawfully manufacture a controlled substance). Imprisonment not to exceed 10 years and/or fine not to exceed \$10,000.

### **Local Penalties**

Violations of local ordinances dealing with alcohol consumption, such as public intoxication and similar offenses, generally are punishable by fines not to exceed \$500 or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days.

Please see the Student Code of Conduct section of the Student Handbook for disciplinary procedures concerning drug or alcohol violations.

## **Tobacco-Free Environment Policy**

All College property and grounds are tobacco-free. The use of all tobacco products (including cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, pipes, e-cigarettes, etc.) on college property is prohibited in and around any and all buildings of the College, grounds, parking lots, sidewalks or plazas. While on campus or on campus property, College students shall not use tobacco products.

## **Weapons Policy**

### **Weapons Permit Policy**

The College prohibits anyone from possessing, carrying, or storing weapons of any kind on College property, or in privately owned vehicles parked in College parking lots, even if there is no intent to use the item as a weapon, and even if the item is kept in the locked car or other secure place.

### **Weapon Definition**

Weapon is defined as any form of weapon or explosive; chemical, toxic, or biological devices; all firearms; sharp-edged instruments, martial arts weapons, and any other item that may be used with the intent to commit violence, as defined above, against person or property. If a student is unsure whether an item is considered a weapon under this policy, the student should contact MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety.



## **Wellness Policies & Information**

### **CPR Certification**

Students (except MLS) must submit proof of completion and current certification in the American Heart Association CPR for Healthcare Provider prior to the start of clinical education.

### **Health Insurance**

All students enrolled at Mercy College are financially responsible for their medical care. Students are encouraged to have health insurance. Students may be required to provide verification of insurance coverage for participation at some clinical sites. Failure to demonstrate health insurance coverage may prevent clinical access and jeopardize course completion.

### **Professional Malpractice / Liability Insurance**

Students who are currently enrolled in a Mercy College degree/certificate program, who are functioning within the scope of their practice, and are being supervised by an approved instructor/preceptor during a scheduled clinical experience on MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center's campus, or with a contracted affiliate, are covered under the Professional Malpractice Insurance of MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center.

### **Health Records**

If it is necessary for a student to submit health-related documentation to the Student Health Nurse, the records become the property of the College and cannot be returned. All student health records are maintained in a separate confidential file and do not become part of the student's permanent file.

### **Serious Disease Policy**

Students with infectious, long-term, life-threatening, or other serious diseases may continue to attend the College as long as they are physically and mentally able to meet their academic responsibilities without undue risk to their own health or the health of other students, patients, or employees.

### **Serious Disease Definition**

Serious diseases for the purposes of this policy include, but are not limited to, cancer, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, hepatitis, tuberculosis, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). The College will support, where feasible and practical, educational programs to enhance student awareness and understanding of serious diseases.

### **Serious Disease Procedure**

The mere diagnosis of a communicable disease including but not limited to HIV, AIDS, AIDS-Related Complex (ARC), or AIDS virus antibodies, or any other serious communicable disease is

not in itself sufficient basis for imposing limitations, exclusions, or dismissal from College programs. Harassment of individuals with or suspected of being infected with any disease is not acceptable behavior at the College and is strictly prohibited.

In working with students diagnosed with HIV, AIDS or any other serious communicable disease, the College will proceed on a case-by-case basis. With the advice of medical professionals, these factors will be considered in determining the student's enrollment eligibility:

- The condition of the person involved and the person's ability to perform clinical or academic responsibilities
- The probability of infection and possible consequences to other members of the College community based on the expected interaction of the person in the College setting
- Reasonable accommodations and modifications necessary to meet the individual's needs
- Risk to the person's health by remaining in the College community
- Other appropriate factors. Any additional factors the College, its professors, and clinical instructors deem necessary.

Any determination with respect to a student's enrollment eligibility will be made following consultation with the affected student, the student's treating physician (if available), and other persons as needed. Disclosure will take place only if deemed medically advisable and legally permissible. The appropriate Health Department will be informed of all cases of diseases required to be reported under state or federal law.

### **Standard Precautions**

Mercy College follows the rules and regulations established by clinical sites, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Center for Disease Control, and the State of Iowa.

Students are expected to use standard precautions and to comply with all safety standards and procedures. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct. Students must immediately report to their instructor any exposure to potentially infectious materials. The instructor will follow Clinical Site protocols.

Students are responsible for any expenses and should submit charges to their health insurance provider. Students are also responsible for reporting any injury or illness which occurs during a clinical experience via MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center's Incident Reporting Information System (IRIS).

Twenty-four-hour emergency medical care is available through the MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Emergency Department at regular emergency room fees.

Students may also choose to see their own healthcare practitioner for their healthcare needs.

### **When to Return to the College**

The CDC recommends that individuals with influenza-like illness remain at home and away from other people until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications. This could take from two to five days based on the flu season.

Mercy College will not require a medical doctor's note to return to class or clinical rotations following a bout of the flu. Students do not need to visit the College Student Health Nurse for permission to return to class or clinical rotations for absences caused by the flu.

## **Vaccination Policy & Information**

### **Seasonal Vaccination Policy**

All students enrolled in classes will be offered free seasonal influenza (flu) vaccination each year. Students enrolled in clinical or practicums in clinical settings are required to obtain and provide documentation of a seasonal influenza vaccination prior to the November date established by MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center, the end of the second week of the spring semester, or student's clinical start date; whichever is first. Students not enrolled in clinical education will not be required to obtain the vaccination as a condition of enrollment but are strongly urged for their personal health to obtain a vaccination. Students enrolled in clinicals or practicums who fail to obtain a seasonal influenza vaccination prior to the times designated by the College will be excluded from participation in clinical or practicum settings until seasonal influenza vaccination is obtained. Students requesting vaccination accommodations will also need to submit all documentation prior to the timeline listed above.

### **Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Reasonable Accommodation Request**

Students may request reasonable accommodation based on (1) a medical contraindication to the influenza immunization, or (2) a religious practice or creed that prohibits immunization. Reasonable accommodation does not exempt you from the annual influenza prevention program but rather is an alternate method of compliance in place of the influenza immunization.

### **Flu Vaccination Clinics on Campus**

The College offers seasonal influenza (flu) vaccinations on campus at various times during the fall and spring semesters. Students will be required to show their student badges in order to obtain a free influenza vaccination. On-campus flu clinics will be announced by student email, Canvas announcements, and displayed on TV monitors throughout campus. Students are required to upload documentation of their seasonal influenza vaccination into their CastleBranch record or provide documentation of the vaccination to the Human Resources Office if the student does not have a CastleBranch account. Students who have obtained a

seasonal influenza vaccination elsewhere will be required to upload this documentation into their CastleBranch record or provide documentation of the vaccination to the Human Resources Office. CastleBranch accounts can be accessed at <https://discover.castlebranch.com/>.

### **Accommodation based on a Medical Discrepancy**

To request a reasonable accommodation, submit all of the following items for review:

1. Medical documentation signed by the healthcare provider describing the medical condition, and an explanation as to why the condition prevents the student from receiving the influenza vaccination.
2. Accommodation suggestions from the healthcare provider to safely continue student responsibilities without an influenza vaccination.
3. Documentation should be turned in to the Human Resources Office.

### **Accommodation based on Religious Practice**

To request a reasonable accommodation, due to religious practice or creed, submit the following items for review:

1. Documentation that supports and demonstrates how your religious practice or creed prevents you from receiving the influenza vaccine.
2. A signed statement from your religious leader.

Documentation for Reasonable Accommodation Request must be submitted to Human Resources prior to the November date established by MercyOne, the second week of spring semester, or clinical start date; whichever is first for the student. Requests for waiver will be reviewed, and students will be notified of a decision.

Students who have been granted an accommodation will be required to wear a surgical mask for the duration of the influenza season while the student is attending clinical or practicum sites. Students may remove the mask during breaks and mealtimes. The mask should be secured to the face and rest on the bridge of the nose covering the mouth. The mask should be discarded at the end of the clinical and immediately if it becomes soiled or moist.

### **Medical Excuses**

The Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center staff does not issue medical excuses for academic obligations. Course requirements and attendance are academic matters between the student and the faculty. The responsibility for class attendance and performance rests primarily with the student. The Student Health Nurse or Counseling staff do not excuse students from classes or academic work. Students who miss class because of illness or other emergencies should contact their faculty by telephone or e-mail as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements to complete missed assignments. Faculty members who wish to verify that a student was in contact with the Student Health Nurse and/or the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center may contact the Dean of Student Affairs.

Mercy College expects that students will be honest with their professors regarding their ability to complete work, and professors are expected to work with students on these issues. The Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center is available to aid students or faculty members who have concerns about attendance issues.

# Code of Conduct Policies

## Student Code of Conduct Policy and Discipline Policies and Procedures

The purpose of the Student Code of Conduct is to provide and maintain an environment conducive to learning at Mercy College, including all clinical education sites. In cases where a student engages in inappropriate conduct, the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

Inappropriate conduct includes, but is not limited to the following: academic dishonesty, alcohol and controlled substances infractions, violations of tobacco-free environment policy, arson, assault, inappropriate computer use, disorderly conduct, fire alarms and equipment tampering, gambling, hazing, hate crimes, possession of unauthorized keys or identification badge, breach of patient confidentiality, perjury, submitting fraudulent records, property damage, harassment or abuse including sex, race, religious, color, ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, cultural harassment or abuse, stalking, theft, trespass, weapon possession, use of tobacco of any kind on campus or at a clinical site, use of foul language, accessing pornography while on campus, and inappropriate dress.

Acts in violation of city, county, state, or federal ordinances, regulations, or laws may violate the Student Code of Conduct. The College may begin the disciplinary process whether or not the act results in an arrest and/or conviction. Alternate transportation from the reporting site will be arranged for the student if the conduct observed involves substance abuse.

### Professional and Ethical Conduct Examples

Professional and ethical conduct means that students will demonstrate:

- Honesty
- Accountability
- Confidentiality
- Respect for all persons of race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, status as a disabled veteran or veteran of war, or any other factor protected by law
- Adherence to all College policies and procedures
- Active participation in the learning process
- Behavior that supports learning for all students
- Safe practice when caring for clients
- Appropriate requests for supervision / guidance
- Accountability for the conduct of personal guests

Examples of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Disruption of the educational process and atmosphere in the classroom, at clinical sites, and all College property, including but not limited to interfering with the instructors' ability to teach and students' ability to learn and refusal to comply with faculty or staff requests regarding vocal or physical behavior
- Abuse and/or neglect of clients and patients
- Accessing pornography at the College



- Unsafe clinical practices
- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Unauthorized entry, obstruction, or occupation of any room, building, or area of the College
- Falsifying reports
- Breach of patient confidentiality
- Use of inappropriate or threatening language
- Bullying or cyberbullying
- Physical assault
- Chemical or emotional impairment
- Conviction of any crime involving illegal drugs, child abuse, or moral turpitude
- Possession of dangerous weapons
- Use of computers or software in violation of the Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy
- Discrimination/harassment of any kind on the basis of a protected class status
- Violation of Tobacco-Free Environment Policy

## **Student Rights Policy and Procedures/Student Code of Conduct**

A student accused of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct has the following rights:

- To receive documentation of the charge of the alleged inappropriate conduct within a reasonable timeframe.
- To file a grievance form contesting the allegation.
- To hear all the evidence upon which the allegation is based and to respond to the allegation.
- To remain silent about any incident in which the accused is a suspect on the basis of self-incrimination.

### **Student Discipline Procedure**

Mercy College reserves the right to initiate discipline at any step of the disciplinary process depending on the severity of the inappropriate conduct.

**Step 1:** College staff or faculty who observe or are notified of an act of student misconduct shall attempt to resolve minor, inappropriate conduct privately with the student. The incident will be documented with a report forwarded to the appropriate Program Chair for academic issues or Dean of Student Affairs for nonacademic misconduct violations.

**Step 2:** If the student misconduct is unresolved, or if additional violation(s) of the Student Code of Conduct are observed, the misconduct shall be reported to the appropriate Program Chair or Dean of Student Affairs in writing. The original violation(s) should also be documented. If the observing party is the Program Chair, and the matter is academic, the behavior or violation should be reported to the Academic Dean.

Upon a second offense, the Program Chair, appropriate Academic Dean or Dean of Student Affairs will meet with the student and prepare a written warning and develop a written action plan as warranted stating the consequences of the violation and any future violations. The student may be referred to the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center if necessary. A copy of this warning and written action plan will be placed in the student's file and removed at graduation if there is/are no further violations. The Program Chair or appropriate Dean will monitor the student's conduct.

**Step 3:** Discipline for serious and illegal inappropriate conduct may warrant automatic progression to Step 3 of the Disciplinary Procedure. Students with unresolved or repeated inappropriate conduct will meet with the appropriate Dean or Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost.

Students may be temporarily suspended during an investigation of any alleged incident of serious and/or illegal inappropriate conduct. The appropriate Dean or Vice President will make a decision on the disciplinary action to be imposed.

- The College will also report illegal conduct to the appropriate authority for legal action.
- The student shall be provided with notice of the written action plan.
- The student may file a grievance as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct Grievance Procedure if the student would like to contest the outcome of the procedure.

Further repeated violations or inappropriate conduct can result in temporary suspension, suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the College.

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy may result in a lower grade for the class, failure on the test or assignment, temporary suspension, suspension, dismissal, or expulsion.

Disciplinary action may continue for Student Code of Conduct violations that occurred prior to a student's withdrawal from Mercy College.

Mercy College reserves the right to refer a student to the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center, temporarily suspend, suspend, dismiss, or expel a student from the College or a College-related activity if the student's conduct is inappropriate.

### **Student Discipline Definitions**

**Interim Measures:** At any time after receiving a report regarding violation of the student code of conduct, the Dean of Student Affairs 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 student from campus when there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any individuals stemming from the allegations of student code of conduct violation(s). The College will notify the Respondent of the decision and will allow an opportunity to challenge the decision within 24 hours after the removal.

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.

**Suspension:** A student can be suspended from all college classes and activities and not permitted to be on college property or assigned clinical sites for a specified period due to an infraction of the Student Code of Conduct. Should a student be suspended from a class, the student is not allowed to partake in class discussions, engage course faculty, complete testing, or submit course assignments.

**Dismissal:** A student dismissed from a program, or the college, may be permitted to return to the college through the Readmission Policy.

**Expulsion:** A student expelled from the College is not permitted to return to the College. Disciplinary action may continue for actions or events that occurred prior to a student's withdrawal from the College.

## **Student Code of Conduct Grievance Procedure**

Students disputing a decision regarding the student's breach of the Student Code of Conduct may file a Student Code of Conduct Grievance Form with the Student Affairs Office no later than seven (7) academic working days following notification of the final decision or written action plan as set forth in Student Discipline Procedure.

The Grievance form is available from the Dean of Student Affairs.

### **The Student Grievance Committee**

The Student Grievance Committee is an ad hoc committee appointed by the Dean of Student Affairs. The membership consists of the Dean of Student Affairs or designee and three (3) voting members consisting of faculty members from the Graduate School.

### **Student Grievance Committee Procedure**

**Step 1:** Upon receipt of a timely filed grievance, the Dean of Student Affairs or designee will arrange a meeting of the Student Grievance Committee within seven (7) academic working days of receipt of the written grievance. The seven (7) day academic working deadline may be extended if circumstances warrant an extension. The Dean of Student Affairs shall inform all

parties to the initial grievance of the date, time, and place of the committee meeting and provide necessary materials to all parties involved. The student and any other party to the original grievance will attend and will be given a reasonable time to present relevant information. Both the student and the other party to the original grievance may ask a non-attorney support person to accompany him or her to the Grievance Committee meeting. The non-attorney support person does not serve as an advocate on behalf of the student or other party, and the student must agree to maintain the confidentiality of the process.

**Step 2:** The Dean of Student Affairs or designee shall preside over the Student Grievance Committee, which shall review relevant materials, hear discussion presented by all parties, and consider the matter. The voting members of the Student Grievance Committee shall make a recommendation to the Dean of Student Affairs or designee presiding.

**Step 3:** The Dean of Student Affairs or designee at his or her discretion shall be free to accept or reject the recommendation of the Committee. The Dean shall make a decision and inform all parties in writing of the decision within five (5) academic working days of receipt of the recommendation of the Student Grievance Committee. The five (5) academic working days deadline may be extended if warranted. The decision of the Dean shall be final and binding unless appealed as set forth below.

**Step 4:** The Dean shall place a signed and dated copy of the written decision in the separate grievance file maintained with the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost's Office.

Any student who has filed a student code of conduct grievance should continue to attend all classes, labs, and clinical sessions unless specifically notified to the contrary.

## **Student Code of Conduct Grievance Appeal Procedure**

Students disputing the Dean of Student Affairs or designee's decision regarding a Student Code of Conduct Grievance may file a written appeal letter with the Vice President for Associate Provost & Provost no later than five (5) academic working days following notification of the Dean's decision.

**Step 1:** The appeal must state the reasons justifying further consideration of the decision rendered by the Dean or designee.

**Step 2:** The Associate Provost & Provost shall review the Student Grievance Committee records and the student's written appeal. If warranted, additional information may be requested by the Vice President from the participants of the Student Grievance Committee.

**Step 3:** The Associate Provost & Provost will inform the student in writing of the decision within ten (10) academic working days of the receipt of the Student Code of Conduct Grievance

Appeal letter from the student. The ten (10) academic working days deadline may be extended if warranted. The decision of the Associate Provost & Provost regarding the Student Code of Conduct Grievance Appeal shall be final and binding.

## **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).

### **Academic Advising**

All students are assigned to an academic advisor who will be a consistent resource throughout the college experience. Advisors assist students by providing individualized advising, occupational information, and academic planning assistance. However, each student is personally responsible for assuring that all academic requirements for graduation are met.

Advisors may refer students to the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center for information regarding accommodations as they relate to their educational programs, for counseling, and for assistance with personal or professional concerns.

Upon request, advisors will schedule appointments outside of the posted hours. A record of academic advising sessions is maintained by the advisor.

### **Advisor Responsibilities**

- Post designated office hours for student advising.
- Meet with each advisee to plan student program and semester schedules each semester.
- Provide guidance in the selection of courses and monitor the student's academic progress toward graduation.
- Document advising sessions by placing the appropriate signed and dated paperwork in the student's advising folder.
- Help students adjust to the college experience, and, when necessary, direct them to appropriate resources and support services.

### **Advisee Responsibilities**

- Know the information contained in the College Catalog and College Student Handbook and act accordingly.
- Visit your advisor during registration and at the beginning of each semester.
- Contact the advisor immediately if an academic problem occurs, such as notification of unsatisfactory progress from an instructor and/or Registrar.

- Create a tentative schedule of classes and contact the advisor for review and approval of registration.
- Discuss schedule changes with the advisor before submitting schedule change paperwork to the Registrar and/or Financial Aid office.

## **Catherine's Cabinet/Community Resources/Emergency Funding**

### **Catherine's Cabinet**

Catherine's Cabinet is Mercy College's on-campus student food pantry providing supplemental support to students who are facing food insecurity and need assistance. Catherine's Cabinet offers non-perishable food and some non-food items and operates on a "take what you need", first-come, first-served basis. There are two campus locations: ACE 184 and SC 122.

### **Community Resource Guide**

Mercy College has compiled a Community Resource Guide that provides a variety of non-academic resources that are available in Des Moines and surrounding areas. A link to the most current Guide can be found at: <https://www.mchs.edu/Academics/Student-Resources/Catherines-Cabinet>

### **Mercy College Student Emergency Needs Fund**

The Mercy College Student Emergency Needs Fund offers up to \$500 in assistance to eligible students who are facing a non-academic, financial emergency. A financial emergency is defined as an unforeseen expense that, if not quickly resolved, could impact a students' ability to attend class or remain enrolled at Mercy College. In order to be eligible, you must be a currently enrolled full-time or part-time student and have a qualifying financial emergency expense. Eligible expenses include housing/rent, utilities, automobile/transportation expenses, childcare, and medical/dental expenses. Academic expenses such as tuition, fees, or books are **not** covered. Approved funding is paid directly to the vendor providing the service. Eligible students need to submit an application and supporting documentation of the expense. For more information, visit our website: [www.mchs.edu/student-emergency-funds](http://www.mchs.edu/student-emergency-funds).

## **Counseling**

The Student Success Center provides a professional counselor for students who are looking for help in addressing personal concerns, emotional issues or struggling academically. Counseling sessions are free and completely confidential.

The initial session includes paperwork (contact information, consent forms, etc.) and a meeting with the counselor to collect background information about the concern. The counselor works with students to determine the best action plan for individual needs. Some students meet only once or twice to consult about a situation. For others, ongoing sessions may be appropriate. In some cases, students are referred to an outside practitioner from a large network of

community resources. Students may call or email the counselor directly for self-referral or make arrangements through their advisor.

The Mercy College student counselor also offers opportunities for students to develop personally and academically through various programs occurring on campus. Counselor office programming covers a variety of topics including: Stress Less Days, holistic approaches to self-care, on-line learning strategies, and much more. If a student has a program suggestion or would like to find ways to get involved with improving student wellness on campus, they can contact the student counselor or the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center by emailing: [studentsuccess@mchs.ed](mailto:studentsuccess@mchs.ed).

## **Disability Services**

Mercy College of Health Sciences is committed to providing accommodative services to physically, emotionally and/or cognitively challenged students in compliance with federal laws, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990. This policy applies to all students with disabilities regardless of location, delivery or time frame of scheduling classes involved.

### **ADA Services**

ADA Services are an extension of the Student Success Center (SSC) at Mercy College of Health Sciences. The ultimate goal of ADA Services is to promote and support students' self-advocacy: the ability of a student to articulate information concerning a physical, emotional, sensory or learning challenge to the appropriate college personnel for the purpose of obtaining accessibility to the programs and services offered at Mercy College of Health Sciences. The following information should guide the college community, working collaboratively with ADA Services, in assisting such students.

Accommodations are intended to be used proactively. Instructors are required to work with students and the Student Success Center (SSC) in a good faith effort to determine reasonable accommodations. However, accommodations are not reasonable if they constitute a fundamental alteration of an essential academic requirement of the program or class. Please note that granted accommodations are not effective retroactively. Students will not be able to re-do assignments or re-take exams with accommodations that are originally completed prior to accommodations being asked for and received.

### **Eligibility**

Mercy College of Health Sciences complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act of 2008 (ADAAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Fair Housing Act, and other applicable federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination based on disability. These laws define a disability as a physical or mental impairment that *substantially limits* one or more major life activities. Eligibility for academic accommodations is based on documentation that

clearly demonstrates a student has one or more functional limitations in an academic setting, and that one or more accommodations is needed to achieve equal access. The ADAAA is a federal civil rights statute that supports the rights of individuals with disabilities to access employment, state and local government programs and services, and public services. It is the policy of Mercy College of Health Sciences for students with disabilities to register with the ADA Services in the Student Success Center (SSC). Students must register in order to access these rights and to determine eligibility for accommodations. ADA Services takes into consideration the student's history, and supporting documentation related to the disability when making accommodation determinations.

The disability service model in higher education is very different from the one that students (and parents) are accustomed to in K-12 school districts. Students' self-advocacy responsibilities increase within postsecondary education due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents need to foster this change and encourage students to utilize appropriate skills to be self-reliant in advocating for services. Responsibility for the postsecondary experience lies in the hands of the student.

Disability documentation is confidential information from an appropriately certified professional who is knowledgeable about the student's condition. Such professionals include physicians, educational psychologists, therapists, mobility specialists, and rehabilitation counselors. Documentation is used to determine eligibility for disability services and accommodations.

Documentation must include the following components:

- Completed by a licensed or credentialed examiner (not a family member);
- A description of the disability, including the diagnosis and history;
- A description of the current impact in daily living and in an educational setting;
- A description of the past use of services.

Examples of disability documentation include but are not limited to:

- Educational, psychological, or medical records;
- Reports and assessments created by healthcare providers, psychologists, or an educational system;
- Documents that reflect education and accommodation history, such as Audiology Reports and Vision Assessments;
- Student Success Center (SSC) verification form of a disability;
- Statement from a health or other service professional;
- Vocational Assessment.



### **Testing Anxiety Documentation Guidelines**

Beginning with the revisions to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 2008, test anxiety is no longer considered a disability under federal law.

Students applying for academic accommodations related to anxiety, must have a diagnosis of an anxiety disorder (such as Generalized Anxiety Disorder) and documentation must include examples of an area of life in which anxiety creates a disability beyond the testing situation.

### **ADHD Documentation Guidelines**

The ADHD Disability Assessment must be completed as thoroughly as possible by a qualified healthcare professional. A qualified healthcare professional is typically a licensed clinical psychologist, neuropsychologist, psychiatrist, or a medical provider trained in mental health assessment. This professional should have comprehensive training and relevant experience in the full range of psychiatric disorders and use a differential diagnostic practice to arrive at the ADHD diagnosis.

### **Applying for Accommodations**

**Step 1:** The student must complete the Request for Reasonable Accommodation Consideration and submit to the Dean of Student Affairs – Student Success Center, ACE 181.

**Step 2:** Students must provide The Student Success Center (SSC) with documentation from their health care provider. The Dean of Student Affairs will review the documentation regarding eligibility status. In order to be reviewed, students must be currently enrolled, or a prospective student who has been accepted and plans to start the following term. The Dean of Student Affairs reviews the recommendations in the professional report submitted on the student's behalf and determines eligibility for services. Please allow one week from the time all materials have been received for this review to be completed.

**Step 3:** Once student eligibility status has been confirmed, the student will be invited to schedule an intake appointment to discuss services. During the intake appointment, approved accommodations will be outlined and the Confirmation of Accommodation (COA) form requesting accommodations for specific classes can be completed by the student and the Dean of Student Affairs.

**Step 4:** Each semester students must contact the Student Success Center to renew the Confirmation of Accommodation (COA) form. Students will submit the form to each instructor of the class in which they will use accommodations and work with the instructor to determine how the accommodation will best be provided.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

#### ***Student Rights***

*Students have the right to;*

- Equal access to academic courses.
- Receive reasonable accommodations in a timely manner.
- Confidentiality regarding disability specific information.
- Appeal decisions related to accommodation determinations.
- Request changes or additions to current accommodations. Please allow one week from the time materials have been received for the re-evaluation process.
- Self-select which approved accommodations are most appropriate to use in each class. **Students must give 24 hours' notice if choosing to utilize different accommodations, unless specified in the COA. (Example: opting to take a quiz in class, not using extra time)**
- Request information be available in accessible formats, including accessible instructional materials.
- Be free from discrimination and/or retaliation.
- Utilize informal and/or formal grievance procedure if one or more of the above rights is not afforded.

### ***Student Responsibilities***

*Students are required to;*

- Accurately portray approved accommodations to instructors.
- Register with ADA Services as an individual with a disability by contacting the SSC at (515) 674-6659.
- Request Confirmation of Accommodation forms (COA) for each class in which the student would like to use accommodations.
- Meet with instructors as soon as COA forms are received from the Student Success Center. (Best practice is to meet with SSC and instructors at the beginning of the semester.)
- Review COA with instructors and discuss implementation of accommodations in the respective class.
- Understand that academic accommodations are not retroactive.
- Assume any costs associated with obtaining testing, reports, and examinations, etc. associated with documenting a disability.
- Talk to the instructor first if problems or concerns arise regarding accommodations. If the situation cannot be resolved, then notify the Dean of Student Affairs.

### ***Instructor Rights***

*Instructors have the right to;*

- Require that a student provide instructor with a Confirmation of Accommodation form (COA) from the SSC before providing any requested accommodations.
- Require that a student meet with the instructor to discuss accommodations at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the student receives the COA form.

- Question the SSC regarding accommodations that the instructor believes may result in a fundamental alteration to an essential component of the course.

### ***Limitations to Instructors Rights***

*It is not the Instructor's right to;*

- Deny a student reasonable accommodation(s) listed on their Confirmation of Accommodation form (COA).
- Ask students questions about a disability including the diagnosis or nature of the disability.
- Ask if the accommodation is necessary.
- Request documentation of a disability.

### ***Instructor Responsibilities***

*Instructors are required to;*

- Ensure instructional materials are in accessible formats, which include captioned videos, text readable documents, etc.
- Finalize textbooks and reading lists in a timely manner to allow time for books to be converted into an accessible format.
- Include a statement in the syllabus as to how students can receive accommodations.
- Announce to the class at the beginning of each semester, the preferred method of communication regarding disabilities and accommodations.
- Meet with students **individually and privately** to discuss the implementation of approved accommodations, as outlined on the Confirmation of Accommodation (COA) form provided by the SSC. *(Meeting should not take place in an open classroom with others present or in the hallway where others may overhear the discussion.)*
- **Allow students to self-select which approved accommodations are most appropriate to use in each class. Students must give 24 hours' notice if choosing to utilize different accommodations, unless specified in the COA. (Example: opting to take a quiz in class, not using extra time)**
- Provide accommodations in a timely manner.
- Refer students who self-identify as having a disability but are not registered, directly to the SSC.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of accommodation notifications and communications regarding students' disabilities.
- Contact the SSC with any questions or concerns about an approved accommodation, or how to best work with a student who has a particular disability.

### ***Exam Services***

- As a student, it is your responsibility to register one week prior to when your exam is to take place in order to be guaranteed space in the testing center. For students with

approved ADA exam accommodations, please use the following site to request testing time in the center: <https://mercycollegeiowa.wufoo.com/forms/q3tehm308n5qki/>

- The Testing Center is located on the first floor of the ACE building on the College Hill side (at the northeast corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Crocker). To find the Testing Room, enter through the double doors on the West side of the building. From the main lobby, take a right to go toward the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center. You will need your badge to enter the Student Success Center after hours. The Testing Center is in Room 185, please see the test proctor in Room 186.
- Students that qualify for exam services should be familiar with the following policy and procedures. Student and Instructors, please note the following instructions and guidelines:
- Each student is responsible for consulting with his/her instructor regarding exam accommodations by presenting the *Confirmation of Accommodation (COA)* to the instructor. Once the student and the instructor review the COA, the instructor should complete the *Semester Testing Form* and tentatively plot all exams and return the form to the SSC within a week of receiving the form. The instructor should also turn in a *Proctor Test form* at least 24 hours prior to each exam.
- Students should return the white copy of the signed COA to the SSC.
- All exams must be scheduled with the SSC by the student, one week prior to the exam date. If the request is approved and scheduled through the SSC, both the student and instructor will receive an email confirmation to their Mercy account.
- Testing services are available beginning at 7:30 am and must be completed by 7:00 pm.
- Exam materials (including the Proctor Sheet) must be delivered to the SSC or to the Dean of Student Affairs' mailbox in the faculty lounge at least 24 hours before the scheduled exam.
- If the exam materials are not received 24 hours before the scheduled exam, the SSC reserves the right to cancel the scheduled exam.
- The SSC Testing Center will adhere to the test times submitted on the Proctor Sheet. Students must remember the dates and times for exams and are expected to arrive at the SSC 10 minutes prior to the time indicated by the instructor on the form.
- If a student is late to a scheduled exam, the end time will not be extended.
- If a student is unable to take a scheduled exam, the student must notify the SSC and the instructor as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor to reschedule the exam. (The SSC will confirm a rescheduled exam at a time that is agreed upon by all parties.)
- All personal belongings and/or any materials not indicated on the Proctor Sheet must be stored in the storage lockers, located outside of the exam area.
- Once an exam begins, students may only leave the testing room for a quick restroom break or if breaks are allowed as a designated accommodation.
- Limited food or drink is allowed in the testing room unless it is a designated accommodation.

- If a student drops a course for which exams have been scheduled at the SSC, the student should notify the SSC as soon as possible. Other students may be able to use the reserved time and space.
- All the SSC testing facilities are monitored by closed circuit cameras with recording capabilities.
- Mercy College of Health Sciences takes the issue of cheating very seriously. If cheating or other academic dishonesty is observed or suspected, the instructor will be notified immediately. The Mercy College Code of Conduct can be found in the College Student Handbook.

### **Common Accommodation Descriptions**

#### ***Allow audio recording of class***

Students may audio record lectures and discussions. Video recording classes is not permitted. The student is responsible for providing their own recording device. *The SSC has a limited number of recording devices that can be checked out on a semester by semester basis, according to availability.*

#### ***Allow short breaks during class or exams***

A student may require a short break during class or exams. The nature of the break will depend on the needs of the individual.

#### ***Class Notes***

The goal of the Class Notes accommodation is to ensure that students with qualifying conditions have notes comparable to what they would take if their disability did not interfere with note-taking. This accommodation is not a substitute for attendance.

It is important to initially determine if note-taking services are needed for a course. In some cases, they may not be needed, such as:

- Due to the nature of the course, notes are not necessary.
- A course pack may be available that contains complete notes for the course.
- Notes are already available online through other means, such as the class Canvas or website.

The instructor is responsible for providing a thorough copy of class notes. These notes need to be more thorough and comprehensive than a PowerPoint or outline.

Here are three options for how that may happen:

1. An instructor may provide a copy of teaching notes.
2. An instructor may arrange for notes to be provided by a volunteer student in the class. For more information about identifying a volunteer student note-taker, contact the SSC.
3. Where practical, an instructor can assign a group or groups of students to take notes and to upload them for access by the whole class, including student(s) with a

disability. This can provide the additional benefit of students working together regarding their understanding of the material and provide the instructor with rapid feedback regarding what students are understanding and viewing as important from course lectures.

### **Disability-Related Absence and Deadline Modification**

All disability-related accommodations are designed to provide equal access to the student. A reasonable accommodation preserves both the integrity of the course and the student's right to participate in classroom activities. Appropriate accommodations do not change or lower the essential academic elements of the course.

There are several ways for the student to meet essential course requirements while using this accommodation. Flexibility may be accomplished by adjusting course policies on attendance, work deadlines, or exam or quiz schedules.

Courses have specific syllabus information regarding attendance, exam schedules, and assignment deadlines. This accommodation requires a course-by-course assessment to determine what is reasonable and appropriate. Not every class can or will be flexed in the same way. There may be reasonable limits to flexibility based on the design and structure of each course and the specific course learning objectives. This accommodation should not result in a fundamental alteration of the course. If this accommodation is deemed necessary, the instructor will be contacted by the SSC to discuss reasonable accommodations prior to the student approaching the instructor with the COA form.

### **Extended Time for Exams and Quizzes**

Students will be provided extended test-taking time, (50%) more time for in class tests, quizzes and exams. Unlimited time is not an available accommodation and does not apply to competency skills and check off exams.

### **Grammar/Spelling**

Students that have a disability that may impact their ability to produce in-class writing assignments or exams that are correct in terms of grammar and/or spelling will not have points subtracted for this unless it is a fundamental component of the class to produce writing samples on demand.

### **Large Print**

The material should be available with enlarged text such as 18 point with bold font.

### **Leaving the Classroom When Symptoms Occur**

Some students with medical conditions may need to leave the class if problems due to their medical condition occur. It is recommended that students who have issues during class, email

or contact their instructor as soon as possible after the incident occurs and then work with the instructor to make up any missed work. If this happens continuously, the SSC recommends that the instructor arrange a conference with the SSC and the student to determine appropriate action.

### **Occasional Exceptions to the Absentee/Tardiness Policy**

The student is required to notify the faculty member and the SSC as soon as possible (prior to the beginning or directly after a class). Each faculty member makes the determination as to how many absences in general are acceptable in order to pass the class.

### **Preferential Seating**

Students may select a seat in a location that is most beneficial for their learning in the classroom. Students with visual impairment may select a seat closer to the front of the room so that they can more easily access the instructor and visual aids used for instruction (bulletin boards, posters, etc.). Students with a hearing impairment may select a seat closer to the instructor in order to better hear the instructor's voice. Please notify the instructor if there is difficulty obtaining preferential seating in class.

### **Reduced Distraction Environment for Exams and Quizzes**

A distraction-reduced testing environment is a setting outside the usual classroom that limits interruptions and other environmental influences.

### **Use of a Calculator**

In some cases, students with very specific learning disabilities in math may be approved to use a basic 4-function calculator in class and on exams. Instructors can determine if this fundamentally alters course objectives.

## **Student Engagement**

### **Career Services**

Mercy College Career Services is led by the Student Engagement office located in the Student Success Center. Career Services offers a wide range of services that include resume reviews, cover letter reviews, writing letters of intent, mock interviews, interview attire resources, interview preparation, online job board, and job fairs. Students may request assistance at any time. Students are encouraged to begin their job search preparation at the start of their time at Mercy College.

- **Job Fairs:** Typically occur during the fall and spring terms each year. Students will have an opportunity to meet participating employers and gather information from employer tables. Job fairs typically last a full week to provide opportunities for students to participate at a time convenient for them. Employers typically offer the opportunity to

provide resume reviews and give feedback to the student. Students are encouraged to take full advantage of job fair opportunities to explore job opportunities and future place of employment.

- **Interview Attire:** Career Services has a wide variety of community resources where students can potentially obtain affordable interview attire. Students are encouraged to view the [Community Resource Guide](#) for resources.
- **Mock Interviews:** Students may request to participate in mock interviews at any time throughout the year. Mock interviews are conducted in-person, via video and/or by phone. Tips on interview preparation are available through the Career Services page on the Mercy College website.
- **Online Job Board:** Career Services is frequently sent job postings applicable to healthcare. When positions come available, Career Services works to post new positions on the Mercy College job board. For more information, see: <https://mchs.edu/Experience/Student-Support/Career-Services>.
- **Resume/Cover Letter/Letter of Intent Review Process:** Students can submit one or more documents to the Student Engagement office for review. Documents are then reviewed by the Director of Student Engagement, a review team, and the writing tutor; and will receive direct feedback. The review process can be managed fully online for convenience and timeliness of responses.

### **Constitution Day**

The College recognizes Constitution Day every September 17 (or the adjacent workday.) This federal observance recognizes the adoption of the United States Constitution. Educational programming and activities are announced to the campus community and all are encouraged to participate.

### **MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Employment**

MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Des Moines is an equal opportunity employer. A wide variety of Medical Center positions are available to students, many with flexible hours to fit student schedules. Students may apply online at <http://www.mercydesmoines.org>.

### **Voter Registration**

Registration information is available at <https://www.mchs.edu/Students/Voter-Registration>. Voter registration forms can be downloaded from the Secretary of State's website for the state in which you reside. In Iowa these forms are found at: <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/voterregistration.html>. Forms are also available from the Reception Desk or the Financial Aid Office. Students are encouraged to learn more about voter registration by calling 888-SOS-VOTE.



### **Steps to Success Program**

The Steps to Success program is a free program designed to assist first time Mercy College students with their academic preparedness while connecting the participant with a member of the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success center. Participants will be asked to attend or watch success seminar videos that range from foundational skills to deeper understanding of foundational presentations, closing with sessions geared towards finals preparation. The program is completely free to students. Students should contact the Student Success Center if they would like to participate or learn more about the program.

### **Success Seminars**

The Student Engagement office oversees student success seminars. Seminars are designed to assist students in their academic and personal success. Topics may include textbook study, test taking strategies, stress management, community resources, APA, avoiding plagiarism, and much more. All students are welcome to participate in Student Success seminars and are completely free to students. Students must [sign-up](#) one time for open access to live seminar sessions at least 24 hours in advance. Most seminars have been recorded and are available through MS Teams under the channel called [Success Seminar Recordings](#). Students are encouraged to reach out to the Student Engagement office if they would like to set up a one-on-one appointment with an expert to cover topics or ask further questions to aid in their success. Live seminar schedules are made available to students and sent to student email during fall and spring terms. If a student is unsure of an available topic or would like to suggest a seminar topic, please contact the Student Engagement office.

### **Student Organizations**

Student clubs and organizations are overseen by the Student Engagement office located in the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center. From program specific to general campus organizations, students are encouraged to take part in at least one student organization. Being a member of a student organization can assist with professional networking, resume building, leadership development, and help build the campus community. For more information, visit the [website](#).

### **Student Diversity Organization**

The Diversity Organization provides a support system for students from diverse backgrounds and offers an opportunity for students to gather to learn from each other. This organization interacts with various groups throughout the campus and the greater Des Moines metro area.

### **Student Senate**

Student Senate provides an opportunity for students to participate in college life by electing student representatives to the Student Senate. Student Senate is the overarching organization of all campus organizations and clubs. Student Senate is an excellent leadership opportunity; it meets regularly throughout the year. The Student Senate is advised by members from the

Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center team. Student Senate will hold general campus meetings on a regular basis to provide opportunity for the general student population to convene and discuss applicable topics: student handbook policies, planning of upcoming campus events, service projects, campus improvement suggestions and much more. For additional information, please contact the Student Engagement office.

### **Other Student Organizations**

- Campus Ministry Team
- Iowa Association of Nursing Students (undergraduate)
- Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS)
- Science Club

### **Graduate School Committees and Councils**

Students are encouraged to participate in Graduate School Committees and Councils to provide a voice for students in academic areas. The following Graduate School Committees and Councils have graduate student representative participation:

- Graduate Council
- Graduate Nursing Faculty Committee
- Nursing Advisory Council

## Personal/Club Sites

- In personal posts, students should be clear that they are sharing their personal views and are not representing Mercy College, or a Mercy College student organization, if the students mention in their postings that they are enrolled at the College.
- Students are legally liable for what they post on their own sites and on the sites of others. For example, individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts). Additionally, employers are increasingly conducting web searches on job candidates before extending offers. Therefore, students should be sure that what they post today will not cause concerns in the future.
- Do not use the logo, name or any College marks or images on a personal or club site. The College logo and name are copyrighted and for official use only.
- Students should use photos only of people who have given them permission to do so. Do not post photos from course materials, campus-based presentations, or any photographs of a medical or personal nature even if they appear to be de-identified. Students should use good judgment when posting photos of themselves on sites that prospective employers may be able to view.
- Never post copyrighted material of any sort.

## Tutoring

Tutoring is an academic support service available to all Mercy College students at no charge. The Student Success Center employs peer tutors and professional tutors to assist students by reviewing course material, answering questions, and reviewing for exams. Tutor-led study tables are provided for a variety of courses, and individual tutoring may be arranged upon request each semester based on tutor and course availability. For the current tutoring schedule, visit <https://www.mchs.edu/tutoring>. The Student Success Center also offers a 24/7 online tutoring platform that is available to Mercy College students free of charge for 5 hours per term called *Smarthinking*. *Smarthinking* can be accessed by logging into Canvas and going to the icon at the top of the page labeled *online tutoring*. For assistance with utilizing *Smarthinking*, students can contact the Student Success Center by emailing [Studentsuccess@mchs.edu](mailto:Studentsuccess@mchs.edu).

## Library Information

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 Mercy College Library's physical space is an 8,000 sq ft facility located on the entry level of the Sullivan Center. Planned and constructed in 2005, it underwent space analysis, a reduction in the footprint of archival collections, and a reconfiguration of group meeting space in 2018.

The [library website](#), which provides a portal to resources and services for students and faculty on campus or remote, is built on the Springshare Libguides platform, and hosts or links out to locally produced instructional videos, video, article, image and ebook database content, handouts and guides, and other linked resources.

Reference questions: 515-643-6613

Text (515) 303-4275 (515-303-4ASK)

[library@mchs.edu](mailto:library@mchs.edu)

## Library Hours

### Regular Hours

Monday–Thursday	7:30 am – 9:00 pm
Friday	7:30 am – 5:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Sunday	5:00 pm – 9:00 pm

### Break Hours

Monday–Friday	8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Saturday & Sunday	Closed

Online resources are available 24/7 at <https://www.mchs.edu/Students/Library>.

### Holidays and Breaks

The library and the computer labs are closed over holiday weekends, and hours are limited during semester breaks.

### Circulation Policy

A Mercy College identification badge or other photo ID is needed to check out physical items.

### Circulation Periods

#### *Material Checkout Period for Students*

Books.....	14 days
Journal Issues.....	7 days
DVDs.....	7 days

**Maximum number of items checked out concurrently per student**

Books.....	5
Journal Issues.....	10
DVDs.....	2

If hold requests have not been placed for items, materials may be renewed up to two times by calling the library circulation desk. This does not apply to special collections or reserves.

**Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery**

Students may request an Interlibrary Loan (ILL) of any book or article the library does not own. There is no charge for this service. Additional information regarding interlibrary loans is available at <https://www.mchs.edu/Students/Library>.

**Library Study Rooms**

The library offers four study rooms and room sizes vary to accommodate eight to 12 people. Each room is equipped with a whiteboard and a VCR/DVD player. Study rooms SC116 and SC120 (west side) are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Students can reserve study rooms SC121 and SC122 (east side) by signing up in-person at the reference desk in the Library.

**Online Library Services**

Most of the library's online databases of articles and books can be accessed off campus. Students, faculty, and staff log in to access the databases with their O365 login. It is a violation of the College's license agreements to publish passwords or provide them to non-authorized users. Students must not make these passwords public. Students have access to electronic books, a virtual reference collection, and full text journal article resources.

**Open Access Program**

Mercy College students may go to more than 600 participating libraries in Iowa and borrow from those libraries with their Mercy College identification badge. The student may return borrowed items to the College Library and College library staff will see that the owning library gets them back at no charge to the student. Local libraries participating include the Des Moines Public Library, Des Moines Area Community College, Grand View University, Simpson College, the State Library of Iowa, West Des Moines Public Library, and the Urbandale Public Library.

**Procedure for Overdue Items**

The first overdue notice is sent by email one day after the due date. Students are asked to return the materials. The second overdue notice is sent seven days after the first notice is sent. The third notice is sent seven days after the second notice. If the materials are not returned a "library hold" will be placed on the student's academic record. The student will not be able to enroll, re-enroll, graduate, or have transcripts released until the library hold is cleared.

Library staff will notify the Registrar to release the library hold when materials are returned, or charges paid. See below for details regarding how charges are determined.

### **Reference Assistance**

Students can email the library at the general library email listed above, or use the reference question form linked <https://www.mchs.edu/Students/Library/Email-a-Reference-Question>. Students can expect a response within 24 hours of receipt.

### **Replacement of Lost Items**

Books: Cost of replacement plus \$5 processing fee for each book lost. If replacement is not an option a \$50 fee will be charged.

### **Restricted Borrowing**

The Mercy College Library may limit both circulation periods and the number and types of items checked out by a student with overdue or lost materials to assure equitable access for all patrons. Patrons with a record of not returning items after receiving multiple notices will be placed on blocked status.

### **Use of Library Computers**

Computing and networking facilities in the Mercy College Library are provided to support the educational and curriculum-related research needs of students and staff. The Library supports free access to research materials and the use of computing technologies to identify, locate and use scholarly resources.

The number of computer workstations in the Library is limited. The Library reserves the right to claim workstations being used for personal or recreational purposes, and to reassign them to patrons who need to locate or access research materials or complete coursework assignments. The Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy applies to all student use of library computers.

### **Wireless Laptop Loans**

Wireless laptops are available for groups using the study rooms in the Library. Please keep the following in mind:

- Laptop use is on a first-come, first-served basis. They cannot be reserved.
- The laptop must be checked out by an individual who will take responsibility for its use and safe return to the desk.
- The laptop must stay in the library and should not be left unattended.
- Wireless access provides an Internet connection but does not provide share drive or student drive access or printing.

## Information Resources

Ninety-eight percent of the library's information resources are [online resources](#), many best accessible via app. Selected resources most appropriate to patient care are provided by [CommonSpirit Health](#), of which the college is a part. Those databases most pertinent to the proposed program are ClinicalKey, ClinicalKey Nursing, CINAHL Complete, Proquest Nursing and Allied Health, UptoDate, and Cochrane Library.

## Resource Sharing Networks

The Mercy College Library participates in several resource purchasing consortia and reciprocal resource sharing groups. As a member of both the [Iowa Private Academic Library](#) (IPAL) consortium and Iowa Academic Library Alliance (IALA), the Mercy College Library also benefits from group purchases, networking, and training opportunities, including a statewide membership in the [Open Education Network](#). The Library Director is on the IALA coordinating committee.

## Office of the Registrar

The Office of the Registrar maintains the academic records of all students. This office is Mercy College of Health Sciences' official agent for such matters as enrollment certification, course registration, academic transcripts, and veteran benefits.

### Registration

Registration dates are listed in the Academic Calendar at:

<https://www.mchs.edu/Academics/Academic-Calendar> and students should register during the assigned registration period. Students need to meet with their academic advisor prior to registration to plan their course of study. The academic advisor will provide students with their assigned online registration date and time.

Review the program and graduation requirements as specified in the College Catalog.

- Use the Degree Audit and Search for Sections functions in MyMercy to determine what courses remain to be completed and available course sections with days and times. A link to a pdf copy of the course schedule can be found at <https://www.mchs.edu/Academics/Course-and-Schedule-Information>.
- Refer to the Course Descriptions in the *College Catalog* to make sure all course prerequisites are met.
- Meet with your advisor (name and contact information are listed in MyMercy) to determine appropriate course load and course sequencing.
- Be sure to check your schedule in MyMercy prior to the start of classes since classroom assignments may have changed since registration.

### **Adding/Dropping Courses**

- Schedule changes following initial submission are not official until a completed Schedule Change Form is received by the Registrar's Office. The Schedule Change Form can be found at: [https://www.mchs.edu/Portals/0/Schedule-Change-Form\\_MercyCollege.pdf](https://www.mchs.edu/Portals/0/Schedule-Change-Form_MercyCollege.pdf). Guidelines for schedule changes are as follows:
- Students may not register for a course after the first week of the term without instructor permission.
- Enrollment in a course will not appear on a student's transcript if the student drops the course before the end of the first week (or the equivalent of the first week for shorter sessions or terms).
- All changes in course schedules after the first week of classes should be signed off by both the student and the student's advisor.
- Students who drop a course after the first week and before the stated last day to drop as specified in the academic calendar 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 6.7% of the course is completed and before 60% of the course is completed. Refer to the Academic Calendar for specific term dates.
- Students receiving financial assistance should consult with the Financial Aid Office regarding financial consequences before changing schedules.

### **Change of Name/Address**

Students are responsible for notifying the Registrar's Office of changes in their name, address, email, and/or telephone number(s). Name changes can be made by completing the Name Change Form and submitting it along with the required documentation to the Registrar's Office: [https://www.mchs.edu/Portals/0/Name%20Change%20Form\\_3.25.20.pdf?ver=2020-04-17-104616-740](https://www.mchs.edu/Portals/0/Name%20Change%20Form_3.25.20.pdf?ver=2020-04-17-104616-740). Students can submit changes to address, email, and/or telephone number at <https://www.mchs.edu/Students/Change-of-Address>. The College will not assume responsibility when student correspondence is undeliverable.

### **College Withdrawal**

A student officially withdraws from the College when the student completes a College Exit Form and submits it to the Registrar's Office and drops all classes without any credit being awarded for the semester. Tuition charges paid by a student withdrawing will be refunded according to the College Tuition Refund Policies. The College Exit form is available from the Registrar's Office or at <https://www.mchs.edu/CollegeExitForm.pdf>. Students who are not enrolled at Mercy College for a period of more than three consecutive semesters must reapply for admission to Mercy College.

Students who withdraw from the College after the first week and before the stated last day to drop as specified in the academic calendar 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 6.7% of the course is completed and before 60% of the course is completed. Refer to the Academic Calendar for specific term dates.

Students receiving financial assistance should consult with the Financial Aid Office regarding financial consequences before withdrawing.

### **Commencement Ceremony**

The commencement ceremony is held in the spring of each year. Candidates for graduation will receive information regarding graduation events from the Registrar’s Office. Other graduation details will be posted to the College website and emailed to students throughout the semester. All graduates are encouraged to attend the commencement ceremony. A graduation fee is required to be paid whether or not students participate in the ceremony commencement.

### **Compassionate Leave**

Students should contact the Dean of Student Affairs or designee to request a compassionate leave and may be granted up to three calendar days due to death of the following: biological/adopted or step mother or father, spouse, child, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, mother-in-law or father-in-law. Students may be required to provide verification (obituary, funeral bulletin) to Student Affairs. These absences may require clinical makeup.

### **Emergency Contact Updates**

During orientation and registration students have the option to provide the College with information for an emergency contact person to reach if someone is needed to act on behalf of the student. Students may also update this information at any time by contacting the Registrar’s Office.

### **Grades**

Grades are recorded at the conclusion of each term and posted in MyMercy. Grades cannot be given by telephone. Faculty may post unofficial grades within the College learning management system (Canvas), but official grades are posted in MyMercy.

Faculty post midterm grades of C or lower in MyMercy within four days after the midterm date stated in the academic calendar. A student who receives a midterm grade is responsible for arranging meetings with instructors and/or an advisor to discuss the grades and what actions the student should take to improve his or her success. The student is encouraged to contact the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center to utilize resources that are available.

## **Graduation**

Students must complete an Application for Graduation Form the semester prior to the semester of their intended graduation. Verification of eligibility will be determined by the Registrar's Office. The Application for Graduation Form can be found on [MyMercy](#).

Students must complete the graduation requirements listed in the *College Catalog* in effect at the time of initial enrollment after admission to the college. They may, however, choose to follow requirements in the catalog in effect at the time of graduation. Students who are readmitted to the College follow the graduation requirements in effect upon enrollment after readmission or they may choose to follow the requirements in the catalog in effect at the time of graduation.

## **Jury Duty**

Students should contact the Dean of Student Affairs or designee if they receive a jury summons. These absences, if during a clinical course, may require clinical makeup expenses.

## **Medical Withdrawal Policy**

A medical withdrawal request may be made in extraordinary cases in which serious illness or injury prevents a student from continuing his or her classes. Medical withdrawal pertains to all courses the student is enrolled in for the remainder of the semester. All documentation must be submitted to the Student Health Services Office by the Friday before the last week of the term.

Students seeking a medical withdrawal must present a Request for Medical Withdrawal to the Dean of Student Affairs along with a Request for Medical Information from a physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner or licensed mental health care provider setting forth with specificity the medical diagnosis which the student believes necessitates the request for a medical withdrawal because of serious physical or psychological illness. The College may, at its own expense, require a second opinion from a different healthcare provider chosen by the College. If there is a conflict of opinion, the College, at its own expense, may require a third opinion from a provider jointly designated by the College and the student. All medical information will be kept confidential. The Student Health Nurse will communicate the approval or non-approval of a medical withdrawal to the student. If approved, the Dean of Student Affairs, Academic Dean, Registrar, Financial Aid, Business Office, and the student's course professors will be notified.

## **Medical Withdrawal Procedure**

1. Contact the Dean of Student Affairs to initiate and discuss a request for medical withdrawal and appropriate forms.
2. Contact the Student Services Department to determine the impact of the medical withdrawal on financial aid and academic performance.

3. Contact the Business Office to determine the impact of the medical withdrawal on existing financial obligations.
4. Submit a completed Request for Medical Withdrawal and a completed Request for Medical Information form to the Dean of Student Affairs. These forms must be submitted in a timely manner.
5. The Student Health Nurse will evaluate the completed documents, determine the approval or non-approval of the medical withdrawal, and inform the student of the determination. The Student Health Nurse will communicate the approval via email and send a Medical Withdrawal Determination Form to the Dean of Student Affairs, Academic Dean, Registrar, Financial Aid, Business Office, and the student's professors. If approved, the effective date is determined by the Student Health Nurse based on the documentation provided by the student and the healthcare provider.
6. Prior to returning to Mercy College, the student must submit a medical release from the health care provider to the Dean of Student Affairs in order to register for courses. The Student Health Nurse will review the documentation and remove the student's registration medical hold, if appropriate. All guidelines and deadlines for readmission to MCHS as stated in the College Catalog must be followed.

### **Military Leave Policy**

The following policies and procedures apply to students called to active duty in the United States armed services.

### **Military Leave Procedure**

Within seven calendar days of receipt of orders, the student will:

1. Complete a Request for Military Leave form and submit to the Registrar's Office and provide a copy of the military orders for the student's file.
2. Contact the appropriate program chair for academic program guidelines related to future program start dates to assist with program reentry planning.
3. Contact the Business Office to complete appropriate documents regarding tuition assistance.
4. Contact the College's Financial Aid Office.

### **Returning from Military Leave Procedure**

Veterans returning after military leave to perform military service will be readmitted at the same academic status achieved when last in attendance at Mercy College, provided the absence does not exceed five years.

1. Apply for Readmission when appropriate as outlined in the Readmission to the College Policy after Voluntary Leave of the *Mercy College Catalog*.
2. The student's re-entry point is dependent on the program course placement examinations they pass, and that point cannot be beyond the program course semester completed at the time of their withdrawal. Students must pass in sequence all program course placement examinations for any one semester before progressing on to the

- program course placement examination for the next program course level.
3. Should a student pass some but not all program course placement examinations for one semester, the student will be required to repeat all program courses for that semester and all subsequent semesters.
  4. Students needing to repeat program courses in which they have earned a “C” or better to regain knowledge and clinical skills are not subject to tuition charges for repeated program courses if students have:
    - a. applied for readmission within one year after return from active duty; and,
    - b. began the program courses they need to repeat the first semester they are offered after readmission.
  5. Students will not be subject to tuition charges for repeated program courses but will be subject to tuition charges for other courses they may take during these semesters.
  6. Students needing to repeat program courses to regain knowledge and clinical skills and who do not apply for readmission within the allowable time period (one year after return from active duty) will be assessed tuition charges for all courses they take including repeated program courses.
  7. Students holding scholarship awards through Mercy College will retain their scholarship awards provided they apply for readmission within one year following return from active duty and use the scholarship immediately following readmission. Students who delay readmission will need to reapply for scholarships.

### **Priority Registration for Student Veterans**

Mercy College offers priority registration to students receiving veteran’s educational benefits and to veterans and military members who submit appropriate documentation. This allows veterans to be among the first students to register each semester.

Veterans and dependents using veteran’s educational benefits will automatically be assigned priority registration.

Students not using veteran’s educational benefits can receive priority registration by submitting proof of veteran status (i.e. DD-214, US Armed Forces Active Duty Orders, Military I.D. Card) to the Registrar’s Office.

Once a student’s military status is verified, the eligibility for priority registration continues.

## Graduate Nursing Program Information

Following in the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy, graduate education at Mercy College of Health Sciences will serve the citizens of Iowa, the nation, and the world by providing comprehensive programs through resident and web-based instruction, research and field experience, evidence-based practice, and leadership development in health sciences and related fields. Graduate education will support lifelong learning and self-efficacy through personal growth by building and applying advanced skills to immerging theories and challenges, establishing opportunities and access to careers and career advancement, providing experiential education and inquiry through research, and magnify professions and the community through continuing education.

MCHS graduate education will provide advanced programs of study with an academic focus integrated through professional practice with increased expectations of quality (proficiency in advanced reasoning and application) and quantity (exceptional capacity) of academic work through enhanced study, immersion experience, and scholarship.

### Masters of Nursing: Organizational and Systems Leadership Program

#### Program Outcomes

Graduates from the Mercy College of Health Sciences Masters of Science in Nursing: Organizational and Systems Leadership will 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
<b>Specialization Courses</b>	
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
<b>MSN Clinical Immersion</b>	
NUR 650 Organizational and Systems Leadership Immersion	2 (120 hours clinical)
<b>Total</b>	<b>37 Credit Hours</b>

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

## MSN Course Descriptions

### 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.

3 Credits

Pre-requisites: Undergraduate Statistics Course

### 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.

3 Credits

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: Graduate Statistics or Statistical Methods

**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.

3 Credits

Prerequisite: Admission to program

**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.

3 Credits (2 didactic, 1 lab)

1 lab = 60 contact hours

Prerequisite: Admission to program

**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.

2 Credits

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: NUR 504

**\* 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.

3 Credits\*

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: NUR 504

**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. Evaluation of information sources is examined.

2 Credits

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: NUR 504

**\* NUR 661 Evidence-Based Management & Quality Improvement (Concentration)**

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.

3 Credits\*

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: NUR 522

**NUR 516 Advanced Pathophysiology (Core)**

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.

3 Credits

Prerequisites/Co-requisites: Admission to Program

**\* NUR 524 Quality Improvement and Patient Safety (Core)**

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.

2 Credits\*

Prerequisites/Co-requisites: NUR 504

**\* NUR 626 Finance, Policy, and Economics of Healthcare (Concentration)**

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 healthcare. This course will also address the impact of policy in health care, particularly access, delivery, financing and regulation.

3 Credits\*

Prerequisites/Co-requisites: NUR 504

**\* 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.

3 Credits\*

Prerequisites/Co-requisites: NUR 522

**\* 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.

2 Credits\*

Pre-requisites/ Co-requisites: NUR 522

**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.

2 Credits (120 clinical hours)

Pre - requisite: NUR 681

**\*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.

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

## MSN OSL Part Time Program of Study

Sample Part Time Cohort Program of Study by year and semester to follow for MSN OSL Program. Table includes credit hours and practice or laboratory hours.

Course Name	Credits/ Practice hours	Semester
MAT 500 Statistical Methods (Core)	3	1
NUR 504 Translating Research into Evidence Based Practice (Core)	3	1
NUR 516 Advanced Pathophysiology (Core)	3	2
* NUR 524 Quality Improvement and Patient Safety (Core)	2*	2
NUR 514 Advanced Physical Assessment (Core)	3 (2,1) 60 Hours Lab	3
* NUR 522 Health Systems Leadership and Interprofessional Practice (Concentration)	3*	3
NUR 512 Advanced Pharmacology (Core)	3	4
NUR 506 Informatics for Health Care Practice (Concentration)	2	4
NUR 644 Clinical Prevention and Population Health (Core)	2	5
* NUR 661 Evidence-Based Management & Quality Improvement (Concentration)	3*	5
* NUR 626 Finance, Policy, and Economics of Healthcare (Concentration)	3*	6
* NUR 681 Organizational & Systems Leadership (Concentration)	3*	7
* NUR 683 Planning, Management & Evaluation of Programs (Concentration)	2*	8
NUR 687 Organizational and Systems Leadership Immersion (Immersion)	2 (120 Hours Clinical)	8