



**MSN Nursing Leadership Student Handbook
2025-2026**

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to provide information for the Online MSN in Nursing Leadership (MSN-NL) program at the Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science (HSON) at the University of San Diego. Students are responsible for the information contained in this handbook, the *Archways Student Handbook* and the *University of San Diego Graduate Bulletin*. Refer to the *Graduate Bulletin* and this handbook to ascertain important dates and information.

It is the individual responsibility of the student to keep abreast of any and all changes made in the aforementioned catalogs and handbooks. This includes any and all penalties that may be incurred due to failure to adhere to an established policy or procedure. (Additional information can be found online in the *Archways Student Handbook* under *Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities*). The hope is that the information provided in this handbook contributes to an enjoyable and successful personal and academic journey for you at USD.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCE

The faculty of the HSON views individuals as unique holistic beings in dynamic interaction with an ever-changing environment. Each person has the potential for self-direction and self-actualization. The faculty believes clients have the right to engage actively in decisions relative to their health and health care. An individual's potential is achieved through interaction with larger systems such as the family, community, and society.

Health is a dynamic state of being which is self-perceived and delineated by certain empirical parameters. This state of being is positively or negatively influenced by interactions with the environment, including the health care system. The faculty believes the health needs of clients are best served by a delivery system that is innovative and responsive to the needs of all people.

The faculty believes that learning is a continuing process that involves changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Consistent with this belief, the faculty provides learning experiences that foster critical thinking and believe that students are accountable for their own learning. The faculty believes that they have a responsibility to assist students to advance in the community of health care professionals.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science is a community of progressive scholars in an intellectually rigorous, research-intensive environment. We educate graduate level nurses and healthcare informaticists to optimize health, promote healing, and alleviate suffering through reflective practice, knowledge generation, service to the community, and leadership at local and global levels. We seek to deepen our commitment to social justice by influencing health policy and by promoting an ethical approach to nursing characterized by compassion and respect for the dignity of the individual.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The MSN-NL program supports the University's mission and philosophy by preparing students to work with diverse groups through its emphasis on health care for vulnerable populations. Faculty are committed to teaching excellence and a values-based curriculum, continuing to emphasize the value and dignity of each individual. The intent of all programs is to graduate masters-prepared informaticists who are individuals that display excellence, a multicultural perspective, and appreciation of the needs of vulnerable populations.

Core Values of the HSON

- Cultural respect and sensitivity for self and others
- Ethical, moral, behaviors
- Commitment and loyalty
- Compassion, empathy, advocacy, support
- Honesty and integrity
- Flexibility and creativity
- Professionalism
- Leadership
- Excellence
- Self-directed learning
- Teaching/learning/praxis
- Critical thinking
- Scholarship

PROGRAM GOALS FOR STUDENTS IN THE ONLINE MSN-NL PROGRAM

The goals of the MSN-NL program are to:

1. Apply knowledge from nursing, other disciplines, sciences, and liberal arts to advance the practice of professional nursing and promote health equity.
2. Deliver person-centered care to individuals and significant others based on scientific knowledge to promote positive outcomes and health care equity.
3. Promote population health that spans the healthcare continuum.
4. Engage in scholarship for the nursing discipline to improve health outcomes and transform healthcare.
5. Provide safe, quality care using safety science principles to enhance quality and minimize harm to patients and providers.
6. Engage in interprofessional partnerships through Intentional collaboration to optimize care, enhance the healthcare experience, and strengthen outcomes.
7. Coordinate resources within a complex health system to provide diverse populations with safe, quality, and equitable care.
8. Use informatics and communication technologies to provide care, gather data, drive decision-making, and support professional practice.
9. Cultivate a sustainable, ethical, professional identity that reflects nursing's attributes and values and self-awareness of implicit bias.
10. Foster participation in activities and self-reflection to nurture personal, professional, and leadership development.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE MSN-NL PROGRAM

1. Apply knowledge from nursing, other disciplines, sciences, and liberal arts to advance the practice of professional nursing and promote health equity.
2. Deliver person-centered care to individuals and significant others based on scientific knowledge to promote positive outcomes and health care equity.

3. Promote population health that spans the healthcare continuum.
4. Engage in scholarship for the nursing discipline to improve health outcomes and transform health care.
5. Provide safe, quality care using safety science principles to enhance quality and minimize harm to patients and providers.
6. Engage in interprofessional partnerships through intentional collaboration to optimize care, enhance the healthcare experience, and strengthen outcomes.
7. Coordinate resources within a complex health system to provide diverse populations with safe, quality, and equitable care.
8. Use informatics and communication technologies to provide care, gather data, drive decision-making, and support professional practice.
9. Cultivate a sustainable, ethical, professional identity that reflects nursing's attributes and values and self-awareness of implicit bias.
10. Foster participation in activities and self-reflection to nurture personal, professional, and leadership development.

ACCREDITATION/APPROVAL

The HSON is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

MSN-NL PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The program of study includes the twelve-course prescribed curriculum with the option to pursue a specialized track in Nursing Educator, Informatics, or Informatics for Duty under Instruction. Each track requires additional courses and degree requirements. Courses range from 2-4 units each and students can expect to enroll in 6-10 units each semester depending on their schedule for their track. Courses will be offered year-round with three semesters every year; spring, summer, and fall. Each semester is 14 weeks in length. Theory (non-practicum) courses will run for seven weeks each with a one or two week break in between semesters. Practicum courses will run for fourteen weeks each. You can expect to graduate in five-seven semesters after successfully completing all required coursework. **You can expect to spend 15-18 hours per week in each course in order to be successful.**

STUDENT ADVISING AND REGISTRATION

The MSN-NL Program Coordinator will serve as your advisor during your program. Your advisor will ensure that you meet all academic requirements for the program, help resolve issues and problems, and assist in exploring future professional goals and educational options. Students will be manually enrolled for each semester (including Spring, Summer, and Fall terms) by your Program Coordinator. Once registered for a semester, students will receive an email confirmation of the registration. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Program Coordinator if they do not wish to be enrolled in a semester. In that case, a Leave of Absence would be required. For drop and withdrawal policy and deadlines, view the academic calendars found on the MSN-NL Student Success Center webpage: <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/studentsuccess/msnnl/>

MSN-NL Program Administration

- ❖ Jannise T. Baclig, PhD, RN – MSN-NL Program Co-Director

- ❖ Nadine Kassity-Krich, MBA, BSN, RN, PHN, CNL – MSN-NL Program Co-Director
- ❖ Grace Nelson, Online Program Coordinator

MSN-NL CURRICULUM

The MSN-NL degree is a 36-unit program offered for nursing leaders of all levels who seek to take on greater influence and responsibility in the field. Graduates can apply the skills gained in this program across healthcare systems, hospitals, community agencies, and healthcare-related organizations.

The course of study includes four clinical practicums, where students set SMART goals and receive mentorship from preceptors in various nursing leadership roles across clinical settings. In their final semester, students complete a capstone clinical practicum as part of a systems-based practice course, integrating all competency-based learning from the program.

CAPSTONE PREPARATIONS: SAVE YOUR WORK*

Students must save their work from every course in the program. You will need this coursework for the Capstone which is taken in the student's final semester. It is recommended to save on a cloud-based application like Google Drive, DropBox, etc. You will not have access to your coursework once the course is over.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS MSN IN NURSING LEADERSHIP ONLINE PROGRAM:

MSNC 610 Advanced Nursing Practice: Foundations and Specialty Roles (3 units):

This course provides foundational knowledge and skills in health information management, informatics, and U.S. healthcare delivery, focusing on computer hardware, network architecture, electronic health records (EHRs), and healthcare software applications. It covers regulatory compliance, patient privacy, information security, and healthcare reimbursement while exploring current healthcare delivery trends, EHRs, interoperability, precision medicine, and healthcare database management and data analysis skills.

MSNC 611 Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing (3 units)

This course focuses on the generation, translation, synthesis, application, and dissemination of nursing knowledge. The theoretical foundations of nursing and other sciences are discussed including how theory has influenced the practice of nursing and clinical decision-making. The concepts of clinical judgment, ethics, and evidence-based practice are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNC 612 Population Health (3 units)

This course focuses on population health from disease prevention to disease management. Collaborative partnerships, advocacy strategies, and health policies for improved population health outcomes are also discussed. Emergency preparedness for public health emergencies is explored. The concepts of health policy, social determinants of health, and diversity, equity, and inclusion, are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNC 612P Population Health Practicum (2 units)

In collaboration with community partners, this practicum focuses on analyzing health data to identify trends, disparities, and risk factors. It uses evidence-based strategies to inform public health interventions. The design, implementation, and evaluation of public health programs in collaboration

with interdisciplinary teams and community stakeholders to improve health outcomes for diverse populations is examined. The concepts of communication, social determinants of health, and diversity, equity, and inclusion are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNC 613 Transformational Leadership (3 units)

This course focuses on leadership and the acquisition of leadership skills. The theoretical and practical perspectives of the role are discussed. An introduction to interprofessional partnerships and systems-based practice is presented. A more detailed discussion of the nurse leader's role with population health is examined. The concepts of ethics, communication, health policy, and diversity, equity and inclusion are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNC 615 Advanced Pathophysiology, Physical Assessment, and Pharmacology in Patients and Populations (4 units)

This course applies an evidence-based approach to understanding common pathophysiological processes across the lifespan, employing physical examination techniques to distinguish abnormal and normal disease presentation, and applying pharmacotherapeutics for monitoring treatment plans in patients and populations. Emphasis is on an integrated approach to mastery of advanced scientific knowledge, vital to clinical judgment and practicing in an advanced specialty role. Concepts of compassionate care, clinical judgment, and ethics of health are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNC 615P Advanced Nurse Clinician Practicum (2 units)

In collaboration with community partners, this practicum focuses on acquiring advanced patient assessment and management skills, integrating advanced scientific knowledge with context-driven reasoning to manage patients with complex health problems effectively. Emphasis is on the proficient use of information and communication technologies to support patient care, facilitate seamless interprofessional communication, and optimize healthcare workflows. Through this practicum, students will also cultivate socially responsible leadership skills and uphold ethical standards in clinical practice and scholarly activities, ensuring adherence to relevant laws, policies, and regulations. The concepts of clinical judgment, compassionate care, and evidence-based practice are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNC 640 Health Care Information and Communication Management (3 units)

This course focuses on using information and communication technologies to improve patient care, enhance healthcare outcomes, and optimize healthcare processes. The technologies, the users interacting with the technologies, and the work product are discussed, along with the impact of the data collected, information formed, decisions made, and the knowledge generated. It also addresses regulatory, patient privacy, information security, and reimbursement issues. The concepts of clinical judgment, communication, social determinants of health, and ethics are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNC 640P Health Care Information and Communication Management Practicum (1 unit)

In collaboration with community partners, this practicum focuses on using information and communication technologies to improve patient care, healthcare outcomes, and healthcare processes. It examines the use of electronic health records to enhance care delivery, reduce errors, and meet regulatory requirements. It also explores the application of human factors in selecting clinical documentation tools, the importance of safeguarding health information systems, and strategies for successful EHR implementation and workflow optimization. The concepts of communication, ethics, and clinical judgment are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNC 655 Systems-Based Practice (3 units)

This course focuses on managing complex healthcare systems to optimize system effectiveness. The theoretical underpinnings of systems theory and its application to healthcare are explored. Strategic planning, healthcare policy, and healthcare economics are discussed. Interprofessional partnerships and professional development are examined. The concepts of evidence-based practice, ethics, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and health policy are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNC 655P Systems-Based Practice Practicum (2, 3, or 4 units)

In collaboration with community partners, this practicum focuses on managing complex healthcare systems to optimize system effectiveness. The practical aspects of leading an interprofessional team, implementing and evaluating a system-wide initiative, and developing a policy are experienced. Leadership and advocacy skills in a complex environment are mastered. The concepts of evidence-based practice, ethics, and health policy are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNC 656 Management of Quality and Safety (2 or 3 units)

This course focuses on the evaluation and management of quality and safety issues from individual and systems perspectives. The theoretical and methodological foundations for understanding, identifying, and managing quality and safety concerns are explored. The application of quality improvement initiatives and the development of a culture of safety for patients and healthcare personnel are discussed. The concepts of communication, evidence-based practice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion are emphasized.

MSNC 656P Management of Quality and Safety Practicum (3 units)

In collaboration with community partners, this practicum focuses on the evaluation and management of quality and safety issues from an individual and systems perspective. The practical aspects of identifying and managing quality and safety concerns in the clinical setting are experienced. The application of quality improvement initiatives and the development of a culture of safety for patients and healthcare personnel are mastered. The concepts of communication, evidence-based practice, and ethics are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNE 632 Theory of Nursing Education (3 units)

This course focuses on the theories and implementation of higher education, nursing education, and the faculty role. The impact of social, technological, economic, political, ethical, and institutional factors on the instructional process is presented. Analysis of program and curriculum design, outcome assessment and evaluation strategies are examined. The concepts of the nurse educator as a change agent and leader, diversity, equity, and inclusion in education, and interprofessional collaboration are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNE 633 Curriculum Development (3 units)

This course focuses on evidence-based curriculum development and revision strategies that support diverse learners, promote professional development, and foster a culture of scholarly inquiry. Analysis of the use of assessment and evaluation strategies in the curriculum design process and the evaluation of program outcomes are examined. The impact of social, technological, economic, political, ethical, and institutional factors on curriculum development is emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNE 634 Assessment and Evaluation Strategies for Nursing Education (3 units)

This course focuses on the development of evidence-based assessment and evaluation strategies in nursing education across the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. Varied data analysis

techniques that facilitate learner development and review of program plans will be covered. The impact of social, technological, economic, political, ethical, and institutional factors on learners, assessment, and evaluation are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

MSNE 635P Nurse Educator Practicum (2 units)

In collaboration with community partners, this practicum focuses on the development of learning outcomes, curriculum design, learning activities, and assessment and evaluation strategies in nursing education across the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. Practical application of analysis of data, both assessment and evaluation, that facilitate learner development and support review of program plans are experienced. The impact of social, technological, economic, political, ethical, and institutional factors on learners, assessment, and evaluation are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

HCIN 543 Database Design and Knowledge Management (3 units)

This course offers opportunities for students to acquire advanced database skills. Applied skills, emphasizing database design, data structuring, modeling and the development of database management systems are examined. Fundamental competencies in knowledge management, change management, and system engineering as they pertain to the healthcare environment and related fields are explored. Students will design and manipulate databases using software applications, such as Structured Query Language (SQL), to resolve selected operational problems. Prerequisites: HCIN 540.

HCIN 547 Health Care Analytics (3 units)

The course emphasizes the practical application of data analytics in addressing specific clinical queries, crafting clinical decision support rules, and employing precision medicine concepts. Students will develop the practical skills necessary to use various types of clinical data in addressing clinical inquiries using an evidenced-based approach. A range of clinical data sets will be examined including those at the population level. Through clinical case studies students will develop their data analytics expertise. Prerequisites: HCIN 543

HCIN 552 Clinical Documentation: Electronic Medical Record Systems (3 units)

Students will engage in a comprehensive exploration of clinical documentation systems. This course offers a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical application, with a strong focus on experiential learning using an academic electronic health record system. Students will trace the historical trajectory of clinical documentation systems, gaining insight into their development and evolution over time. Students will examine the intricate hardware and software requirements essential for Electronic Health Records (EHRs). A problem-based learning approach is employed to cultivate students' proficiency in developing clinical rules and alert systems for clinical information systems. These skills will be applied for purposes such as quality assessment, risk analysis, billing processes, bioinformatics, genomics, and research applications. Emphasis is placed on understanding the regulatory landscape surrounding EHRs, including compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), requirements from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and information security regulations.

HCIN 647P Nurse Informatics Practicum (2 units)

In collaboration with community partners, this practicum focuses on integrating clinical knowledge with informatics to improve patient care, enhance clinical workflows, and support data-driven decision-making. It involves collaborating with interprofessional teams to design, implement, and evaluate informatics solutions, critically assessing emerging technologies, and leading projects that align with organizational and patient care goals. Emphasis is placed on the ethical use of health information

systems, ensuring data privacy, security, and compliance with legal and regulatory standards. The practicum aims to prepare students for leadership roles in nursing informatics, equipping them with the skills to drive innovation and improve healthcare outcomes through technology and data management. The concepts of clinical judgment, evidence-based practice, and communication are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

HCIN 655P Systems-Based Practice Informatics Practicum (2 units)

In collaboration with community partners, this practicum focuses on managing complex healthcare systems to optimize system effectiveness. The practical aspects of leading an interprofessional team, implementing and evaluating a system-wide initiative, and developing a policy are experienced. Leadership and advocacy skills in a complex environment are mastered. The concepts of evidence-based practice, ethics, and health policy are emphasized. Prerequisites: None

CLINICAL PRACTICUMS

Clinical practicums are a pivotal component of the program, providing students with opportunities to apply theory to practice, build collaborative relationships with interdisciplinary team members, engage in high level decision making, and develop the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful role as a nurse leader.

All clinical placements are coordinated by the Clinical Placement Team, who work closely with clinical site partners and preceptors to secure customized, high-quality placement opportunities for each student.

The program utilizes a range of qualified clinical preceptors to support student learning. These preceptors are academically and clinically prepared role models who maintain a one-to-one preceptor-student relationship throughout the practicum. They are selected based on their interest in serving as a preceptor, their availability to mentor a student for the designated time period, and their ability to provide relevant and enriching learning experiences that align with the program's clinical practicum goals.

Throughout the semester, the clinical faculty maintain regular contact with both the student and preceptor to support the learning experience. At the end of the placement, evaluations will be completed of the student, preceptor and clinical site. These evaluations are reviewed by the clinical faculty and the program directors to assess the quality of the experience and to support ongoing improvement of clinical placements.

CERTIFICATION

Upon graduation, students may qualify for the following certification opportunities based on their professional experience. Be sure to check the eligibility requirements for detailed information.

- [NLN Certified Nurse Educator \(CNE®\)](#) — National League for Nursing (NLN)
- [Certified Academic Clinical Nurse Educator \(CNEcl®\)](#) — National League for Nursing (NLN)
- [Clinical Nurse Leader \(CNL\) Certification](#) — American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)
- [Certified Nurse Manager and Leader Certification \(CNML\)](#) — American Organization for Nursing Leadership™ (AONL)
- [Nurse Executive Certification \(NE-BC®\)](#) — American Nurses Association (ANA)
- [Certified in Executive Nursing Practice \(CENP®\) Certification](#) — (AONL)
- [Informatics Nursing Certification \(NI-BC™\)](#) — American Nurses Credential Center- American

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Computer laptop

You must own or have unrestricted access to a computer for this program. A fast Internet connection is also mandatory. Computers should be Windows- or Mac-based and have a minimum of 512 GB SSD storage, 16-32 GB memory (RAM), and a processor of Intel Core i5 13th Gen or above.

Courses will utilize a variety of technologies and multimedia. To complete course activities and to access course content, please verify that you have the following technologies and plug-ins available:

- Browser Plug-ins – Windows Media Player, QuickTime, Shockwave, Adobe Reader, and Java.
- Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome are the recommended browsers.
- Microsoft Office or the Google Suite is recommended. If you are using Office 2003 or earlier, download and install the Microsoft Office Compatibility pack. Students may log in using USDOne credentials and install applications directly on the Microsoft Portal.
- Speakers or headset – to listen to multimedia.
- Webcam – for recording video.
- Email – To contact your faculty.
- High-speed internet connection strongly encouraged (100mbps or better)

Electronic Mail

All USD graduate students are required to have a USD email account (@sandiego.edu). The University may conduct official business by sending notices or other information to the student's USD email address. It is the student's responsibility to regularly check his or her USD account and to respond to any notices or information in a timely manner. Failure to check the USD email account will not be considered a legitimate reason for a policy exception. Students should notify the HSON as soon as they receive their email address so the student's name can be placed on the HSON student email distribution list.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Grading Policy

Students admitted to the graduate nursing programs must adhere to the general policies and procedures established for all graduate students at the University and the Hahn School of Nursing. Specific program exceptions are noted below. All courses must be pre-approved by the Program Directors to be counted toward degree requirements.

A minimum GPA of 3.0 must be maintained throughout the program. In theory courses, students must achieve an average of 80% or higher on all graded course work to pass. A minimum final grade of B- is required for theory courses, and a designation of Pass is required for the associated clinical practicum courses. To successfully pass a clinical course, students must earn at least a B- in the theory component and a Pass in the clinical component.

Students must pass both the theory and clinical components of all clinical courses to progress to the next clinical course. If a student fails to achieve a B- in the theory portion or a Pass in the clinical portion, the

student must repeat the entire course. A course may be repeated only once, and a minimum of B- must be earned upon repeating. Failure to pass the repeated course will result in dismissal from the program.

HSOON Grading Scale

93 – 100%	= A
90 – 92.99%	= A-
87 – 89.99%	= B+
83 – 86.99%	= B
80 – 82.99%	= B-
77 – 79.99%	= C+
73 – 76.99%	= C
70 – 72.99%	= C-
60 – 69.99%	= D
59.99% and below	= F

Dropping & Withdrawing Courses

Students will register for two to four prescribed courses each semester. All courses must be dropped prior to the first day of the semester to receive a 100% tuition refund* and within the first three days of the start date of the semester to receive a 95% tuition refund.* No refund will be provided after the third day of the semester for either class. *During the first semester of enrollment, any tuition refund amounts will not include the non-refundable enrollment deposit amount (5% of tuition). After the first three days of the start of the semester and before the start of the fifth week/module, students have the option to withdraw from their courses with a 0% refund and a grade of “W” on their transcript (not included in GPA). Once the fifth week of the course starts, students are no longer able to withdraw from their course and will receive the grade earned. Students who discontinue class attendance and neglect to withdraw officially from the course are subject to failing the class.

USD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic Integrity

The University is an academic institution, an instrument of learning. As such, the University is predicated on the principles of scholastic honesty. It is an academic community, all of whose members are expected to abide by ethical standards both in their conduct and in their exercise of responsibility toward other members of the community. Academic dishonesty is an affront to the integrity of scholarship at USD and a threat to the quality of learning.

An act of academic dishonesty may be either a serious violation or an infraction. The instructor or supervisor of the academic exercise will have responsibility for determining that an act is an infraction or may be a serious violation.

Serious violations are the following acts:

- a. Examination Behavior. Any intentional giving or use of external assistance during an examination shall be considered a serious violation if knowingly done without express permission of the instructor giving the examination.
- b. Fabrication. Any intentional falsification or invention of data, citation, or other authority in an academic exercise shall be considered a serious violation; unless the fact of falsification or invention is disclosed at the time and place it is made.
- c. Unauthorized Collaboration. If the supervisor of an academic exercise has stated that collaboration is not permitted, intentional collaboration between one engaged in the exercise and another shall be considered a serious violation by the one engaged in the exercise and by the other if the other knows of the rule against collaboration.
- d. Plagiarism. Any intentional passing off of another's ideas, words, or work as one's own shall be considered a serious violation. Refer to the APA writing manual regarding how to cite. All students will be required to submit their papers through a plagiarism checker such as Turnitin or other means of checking for plagiarism.
- e. Misappropriation of Resource Materials. Any intentional and unauthorized taking or concealment of course or library materials shall be considered a serious violation if the purpose of the taking or concealment is to obtain exclusive use, or to deprive others of use, of such materials.
- f. Unauthorized Access. Any unauthorized access of an instructor's files or computer account shall be considered a serious violation.
- g. Serious Violations Defined by Instructor. Any other intentional violation of rules or policies established in writing by a course instructor or supervisor of an academic exercise is a serious violation in that course or exercise.

Infractions are the following acts:

- a. Any unintentional act is an infraction that, if it were intentional, would be a serious violation.
- b. Any violation of the rules or policies established for a course or academic exercise by the course instructor or supervisor of the academic exercise is an infraction in that course or exercise if such a violation would not constitute a serious violation.

Academic dishonesty, and allegations of academic dishonesty, are matters of university-wide concern in the same way that academic integrity is a matter of university-wide concern. Students bear the responsibility not only for their own academic integrity but also for bringing instances of suspected academic dishonesty to the attention of the proper authorities. Members of the faculty are obligated, not only to the University but also to the students they supervise, to deal fully and fairly with instances and allegations of academic dishonesty. The University administration bears the responsibility of dealing fairly and impartially with instances and allegations of academic dishonesty. For further information about this policy contact Associated Students at (619) 260-4715 or sandiego.edu/associatedstudents/.

The University of San Diego is committed to upholding standards that promote respect and human dignity in an environment that fosters academic excellence and professionalism. It is the policy of the university to maintain an educational and work environment free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment. To that end, the university prohibits and does not tolerate unlawful discrimination against or harassment of its employees, students or applicants for employment or admission on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, age, physical disability, mental disability, or other characteristic protected by federal or state law, unless a particular characteristic is a bona fide requirement of the position.

Non-Discrimination

All members of the university community are expected to uphold this policy. Engaging in unlawful discrimination or harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the university. Unlawful discrimination may occur when an individual is treated less favorably with respect to the terms and conditions of employment or education, or with respect to the individual's receipt of employment or educational benefits, because of his or her membership in a protected class. Accordingly, all employment-related decisions, including but not limited to decisions relating to recruitment, hiring, promotion, transfers, benefits and any other terms and conditions of employment, will be made without regard to the employee's or applicant's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, covered veteran status, genetic information, or other characteristic protected by federal or state law. Similarly, all education-related programs and activities, including but not limited to admissions, financial aid, academic programs, research, housing, athletics, and other extracurricular activities, will be administered without regard to the student's or applicant's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, age, physical disability, mental disability, or other characteristic protected by federal or state law.

The university does not by this non-discrimination statement disclaim any right it might otherwise lawfully have to maintain its commitment to its Catholic identity or the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Harassment

Harassment includes verbal, physical or visual conduct when the conduct creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile working or educational environment, or unreasonably interferes with individual job or academic performance. Verbal harassment may include but is not limited to epithets, derogatory comments or slurs based upon one of the individual's characteristics noted above. Physical harassment may include but is not limited to assault, impeding or blocking movement, or any physical interference with normal work or movement, when directed at an individual because of the individual's protected characteristic. Visual forms of harassment may include but are not limited to derogatory posters, cartoons or drawings based on an individual's protected characteristic.

In addition, prohibited sex discrimination covers sexual harassment, including sexual violence. Sexual harassment includes any request or demand for sexual favors that is implicitly or expressly a condition of employment, continued employment, receipt of an employment benefit, admission to the university, participation in educational programs or activities, or evaluation of academic performance. Examples of conduct that could give rise to sexual harassment, include but are not limited to: sexual advances or suggestions; unwelcome sexually-oriented remarks; dirty jokes; the display or distribution of offensive photographs, e-mails, posters or cartoons; any unwelcome, intentional touching of the intimate areas of another person's body; or physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is unable to give consent.

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities operated by recipients of federal financial aid assistance. Sex harassment, including sexual violence, is a form of prohibited sex discrimination. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, including the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, requires colleges and universities to have procedures in place to respond to incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

The University of San Diego has a title IX office located in Maher Hall, room 101. You can refer the Title IX and Equal Employment Opportunity Programs website at: TitleIX@sandiego.edu.

In order to address its responsibilities under these laws, the university has implemented standards, reporting procedures, and response protocols that apply to incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation. For more information, please see the university's [Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Reporting and Response Standards and Protocols](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND GUIDANCE FOR ONLINE STUDENTS

The Honor Code of the University of San Diego (USD) is the product of an extensive history of dedication by the USD Honor Council and its predecessor organizations. The Honor Code is built upon the ideals of the USD Academic Integrity Policy and reflects research of established Honor Codes and knowledge gained from the Center for Academic Integrity national conferences. The development of the Honor Code also reflects significant contributions by the appointed Faculty Committee and Board of Trustees have also helped shape this document. The culmination of these influences has resulted in a document that is intended to initiate and maintain a campus-wide culture of integrity. The Honor Code serves as a model of integrity applying to both undergraduate and graduate students; however, it remains separate from the established Honor Code of the USD Law School.

The Honor Council expresses its gratitude to all those who contributed to our deliberations, but especially faculty, administrators, and trustees who have so long been supportive.

Online Students.

As an online student, you are encouraged to reach out to your fellow students in the online classroom to build community, to discuss topics, and to ask each other questions, but there are limits to this collaboration. As a student at University of San Diego you are bound by the [Honor Code](#) established by the University.

In accordance with the University of San Diego's Mission Statement, the Honor Code establishes a standard of integrity which is aligned with the University's Core Values: *Academic Excellence, Knowledge, Community, Ethical Conduct, and Compassionate Service*. The promotion of academic integrity should take place in the context of a commitment to creating a culture of integrity that encompasses all constituencies of the university including students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni and trustees. Only through campus-wide engagement will the University achieve its goal of "developing ethical and responsible leaders committed to the common good."

Standards of Conduct

Adherence to standards of honesty and integrity precludes engaging in, causing, or knowingly benefiting from any violation of academic integrity. Without regard to purpose, the following violations are prohibited.

Cheating

Cheating is the use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, and study aids, as well as unauthorized collaboration on examinations and other academic exercises. It is the responsibility of students to consult with their professors concerning what constitutes permissible collaboration.

Cheating or helping others cheat is academic fraud. Check your course syllabus for more guidance about your assignments and assessments, such as quizzes, projects, papers, and exams. You may see rules such as these:

OK: Listening to lectures with another student.

Not OK: Working simultaneously with another student when doing an assignment.

OK: Studying together online or offline for the midterm.

Not OK: Taking the midterm with another student and discussing the answers to the questions.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of presenting, as one's own the ideas or writings of another; plagiarism, in any of its forms, violates academic integrity. While different academic disciplines have different norms of attribution, all strive to recognize and value individuals' contributions to the larger body of knowledge. It is the responsibility of students to consult with their professors in order to understand the norms of attribution in each discipline and area of study. Check your course syllabus for more guidance about your research assignments. You may see rules such as these:

OK: Researching the web or "Google-ing" a topic for a written assignment or discussion question.

Not OK: Copying or paraphrasing text from a website without citing the source.

False Citations

False citation is attribution to an incorrect or fabricated source; false citation is academic fraud. False citation seriously undermines the integrity of the academic enterprise.

Submitting the Same Work for Multiple Assignments

Students may not submit work (in identical or similar form) for multiple assignments without the prior, explicit approval of all faculty to whom the work will be submitted. This includes work first produced at USD or at another institution attended by the student.

Submitting False Data

False data is information that has been fabricated, altered, or contrived in such a way as to be misleading; the submission of false data is academic fraud.

OK: Discussing online or offline the discussion question topic.

Not OK: Writing an answer together and submitting the same or slightly paraphrased text.

Falsifying Academic Documentation

Forging or altering academic documentation (including transcripts, signatures, letters of recommendation, certificates of enrollment or standing, registration forms, and medical certifications) concerning oneself or others is academic fraud.

Abuse of Library Privileges

Depriving others of equal access to library materials constitutes a violation of academic integrity. This includes sequestering library materials for the use of an individual or group, refusal to respond to recall

notices, and the removal or attempt to remove library materials from any University library without authorization.

Abuse of Shared Electronic Media

Depriving others of equal access to shared electronic media used for academic purposes constitutes a violation of academic integrity. This includes actions that result in the damage or sabotage of computer systems.

Reference

University of San Diego Honor Code (2019, May). As found at:
sandiego.edu/conduct/documents/Honor-Code.pdf

Generative AI Guidelines:

Generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Autopilot, and Google Gemini are powerful tools that can assist in the creation of new academic content as well as quickly revise existing content. The University of San Diego, Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science (SON) is committed to educating students on how the emerging field of generative artificial intelligence (A.I.) could potentially enhance healthcare delivery and improve patient outcomes. To this end, the SON permits the responsible use of A.I. resources. Students are expected to draft graduate level written responses to course assignments through the use of publications, textbook references, in-class lectures or guest speakers, and experiential experience. The SON stresses the importance of students' observing the University's academic plagiarism policy to avoid potential plagiarism issues. The use of A.I. to generate course assignments, articles for publication, research activities, or other scholarly activities without proper citation constitutes a breach of academic integrity. If students choose to utilize generative AI platforms as part of their academic program, they must clearly cite their original work and separately cite what content is A.I.-generated to uphold academic integrity and avoid plagiarism.

- **Transparency:** If you are using ChatGPT and similar programs you must be transparent about your use and disclose any generated content as being produced by an AI program. This includes, but is not limited to, written assignments, research papers, and other forms of communication through citations and documentation.
- **Responsibility:** You are responsible for critically evaluating the accuracy, reliability, and quality of any information generated by ChatGPT and similar programs and verifying it through additional sources if necessary.
- **Critical Thinking:** You are encouraged to use ChatGPT and similar programs as a tool to support your own learning and critical thinking, but not as a replacement for independent research and analysis. The use of ChatGPT and similar programs must be accompanied by the development of your critical thinking skills and an understanding of their limitations.

Note: Responses generated by ChatGPT, an AI language model developed by OpenAI, were used as a source of information for these guidelines.

ACADEMIC PROBATION AND DISQUALIFICATION (RETENTION AND DISMISSAL)

To be in good academic standing and to be eligible to graduate, students must maintain in their program courses the minimum semester and Grade Point Average (GPA) that is required by their program. See "Grading Policy" regarding the minimum acceptable grade for courses and the minimum overall grade

point average required in the program. The minimum GPA requirement for the MSN-NL is 3.0 calculated on a 4.0 scale. Any student who has completed at least 6 units of course work and whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. At the end of the term in which the probationary student has registered for his/her next 6 units, a review will be conducted. Students who have not raised the cumulative USD GPA for graduate program courses to the acceptable level at that time will be disqualified from the program.

In addition, to dismissal for academic reasons (see Retention/Academic Probation and Disqualification above), students can be dismissed from the University for violating any of the following university policies:

- Rules of Conduct
- Academic Integrity Policy

These policies and other Procedural Guidelines for the Disciplinary Process and Disciplinary Sanctions are outlined and available to students at sandiego.edu/conduct/resources/index.php. Dismissal from the program is the most extreme form of sanction for violation of these policies, but less extreme sanctions may be employed if warranted. Students who wish to appeal their disqualification must do so in writing to the Dean of the School of Nursing within 10 calendar days of receiving such notice.

The HSON faculty realizes that students encounter life circumstances that may make it difficult to continue with educational pursuits. When such circumstances occur, every effort is made to retain students in their program of study. Retention rates for all HSON programs are above 90%. Similar efforts will be made to retain students in the MSN-NL program. Students who are unable to maintain continuous enrollment need to complete a Petition for Leave of Absence form. The Academic Director must approve the leave of absence. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment may result in suspension from the program. Students who have been dropped from the program must apply for readmission unless a Petition for Leave of Absence form is on file and current. A leave of absence may be granted for up to one year, and only under extreme circumstances will a student be granted a second leave of absence. Students on academic probation are not typically eligible for a leave of absence.

Financial aid is usually suspended for students on leave of absence. In addition, the leave of absence may trigger the beginning of the loan repayment period for students with loan deferments. Students should petition for leave prior to the requested leave period. Students who find it necessary to discontinue enrollment during a term may also petition for a leave, however, they must be in good standing and officially withdraw from their courses by submitting a Notice of Withdrawal form within the approved deadline.

GRIEVANCE POLICIES

The university has policies regarding both grievances related to hate crimes and harassment and grievances regarding grades. These policies are available in the *Graduate Catalog*. In keeping with the university policies, hate crimes or harassment within the HSON are reported to the Dean. Grade grievances are first addressed with the faculty member involved. If not resolved at that level, they may be brought to the Dean. Failing resolution at that level, the student grievant may submit a written request for a grievance hearing by the Student Affairs Committee of the HSON. In the case of such a grievance, faculty and/or student representatives who could be in a conflict of interest position regarding the grievance will be asked to excuse themselves from the proceedings. Faculty content experts may be

necessary to help review the grade grievance. If such members are not on the committee, all efforts will be made to invite an expert to serve on the grievance committee for that hearing. To obtain a copy of the Graduate Student Affairs Committee by-laws, go to:

sandiego.edu/grad-life/documents/GSG%20By-laws%202023-2024.pdf

INCOMPLETE GRADES

The grade of “Incomplete” (“I”) may be recorded to indicate that at least 75% of the requirements of a course has been completed, but, for a legitimate reason, 25% or less of the work remains to be completed; and that the record of the student in the course justifies the expectation that he or she will complete the work and obtain a passing grade by the deadline. It is the student's responsibility to explain to the instructor the reasons for non-completion of the work and to request an “incomplete” grade **prior** to the posting of final grades. The instructor should discuss with the student the conditions and deadline for completion, whenever possible, and should document the conditions and deadline using the Petition for Grade of Incomplete. The “incomplete” grade is not counted in the computation of the grade point average, nor is credit earned for the semester/session for which the grade was authorized.

Students who receive a grade of “incomplete” must submit all missing work at maximum two weeks after the course end date otherwise; the “I” grade will become an “F”. A faculty member assigning a grade of “incomplete” will complete a Petition for Grade of Incomplete, indicating the reason for the “incomplete”, and attach a copy of the form to the grade roster when turning in grades. A copy of this form will be placed in the student’s file.

Students receiving financial aid should be aware that taking an “incomplete” grade might affect their eligibility for financial aid by their failure to earn the appropriate amount of credit within a year. When the work is completed, a Removal of Incomplete or Change of Grade form will be completed by the instructor and signed by the associate dean. One copy is then placed in the student’s file and the original is sent to the registrar.

GRADUATION/COMPLETION OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

In order to be cleared for degree completion, students, in consultation with the Program Coordinator must file a Petition for Graduation form. Students who meet the deadline for May graduation will receive their degree at that time and students who fulfill all requisites for their degree in the summer will have their degree recorded in their transcript effective August 31st. Students who fail to meet the stipulated deadlines will not be permitted to graduate, even if all other graduation requirements have been met. In order to receive permission to attend commencement, eligible students must register and pay in full for their remaining units at USD no later than May 1st. The University of San Diego holds only one graduation ceremony each year. All graduates during the relevant academic year are welcome to participate in this May graduation ceremony.

Graduate students scheduled to receive their degree the following August who have nine (9) units or fewer of remaining work may participate if their work falls in the category of coursework, portfolio, practicum/fieldwork/student teaching, or internship. Such August graduates must take the remaining summer work at USD and they must register and pay for their remaining units by May 1st. If a candidate does not graduate at the expected time, the registrar will automatically roll the Petition for Graduation over to the next graduation period if it is in the same calendar year. If the graduation period extends

beyond the calendar year for which the petition was filed, a new petition must be completed.

Student Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the Online MSN-NL program for:

1. Failure to maintain established grade point average of 3.00 for all coursework.
2. Failure to make satisfactory academic progress toward their degree.
3. Failure to complete the program within the time limits for degree.
4. Failure to make satisfactory progress in the development of academic and practitioner skills.
5. Violations of ethics code(s) as established by applicable field of study and program area.
6. Violations of USD policies and the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities, including academic dishonesty and plagiarism.
7. Failure to maintain cooperative relationships with other students and/or faculty or failure to maintain satisfactory delivery of services to clients during fieldwork, including, but not limited to: internships, student teaching, practicum or service learning.

When any of the above concerns are raised, the student will meet with her or his Academic Coordinator to discuss the concern. The Academic Coordinator or her or his faculty designee(s) will provide the student with a written plan for improvement that specifies the nature of the concern(s) along with required steps for remediation for successful completion of the program. The Academic Coordinator or her or his faculty designee(s) will, on an ongoing basis evaluate the student's progress and written evaluation of progress will be sent to the student and placed in the student's file. In the event that satisfactory progress is not made within the time limits set by the plan, a written notification of dismissal will be sent to the student.

Students who are terminated for any reason may appeal for reinstatement in writing to Dean Hahn School of Nursing within ten calendar days of receiving notice of termination

Student Reinstatement

Students who fail to make satisfactory progress toward the required deadlines, who have dropped out of the program for any reason, or who have failed to return from an official Leave of Absence will be dismissed from the program. Students may apply for readmission. Depending upon the time and circumstances, the procedure for readmission may require a new personal statement of interest in the program, three (3) new letters of recommendation and a complete set of current transcripts. In considering the readmission request, faculty will evaluate previous coursework and other activities both in and out of the program. If the student is readmitted, the faculty may recommend redoing any or all of the student's coursework and work depending on the length of the time away from the program and the circumstances for leaving the program. There is no guarantee of readmission.

Transfer of Graduate Credit

Eligibility of transfer credit will be determined by the Academic Program Coordinator. It is recommended that students petition **prior** to their first semester in order to plan their academic program accurately. Transfer petitions for previous work will not be accepted in the student's final semester unless the transfer course is being taken in the final semester.

Petition for Transfer of Graduate Credit.

The student must also request that an official transcript of the course be sent to the Graduate Records Office if the transcript was not included among the admissions documents. When both the petition and transcript are on file they will be reviewed in the Graduate Records Office for conformity to USD policies. Grade(s) awarded by the issuing institution will not be calculated in the student's overall grade point average or taken into account during probationary review.

Students may petition to transfer up to six (6) credits from another university under the following conditions:

1. Credit must be from an accredited, USD-approved university.
2. Credit must be at the graduate-level at the university of origin. The student is responsible for submitting acceptable supporting documentation.
3. Credit must be relevant to the USD degree program and be approved by the Program Coordinator.
4. Transfer courses cannot repeat essentially the same content of work taken at USD.
5. Credit may not be used (or have been used) toward any other degree.
6. Credit earned more than five (5) years prior to matriculation at USD will not be accepted.
7. A grade of "B" or higher must have been earned (grade of "pass" or "satisfactory" ordinarily is not acceptable).
8. Students must supply satisfactory documentation regarding course content for independent study or self-directed courses.
9. The number of credit hours transferred will be based on USD's semester credit system rounded down to the nearest full or half unit (multiply the number of quarter hours by .67 and round down). For example, four (4) quarter-hours $\times .67 = 2.68$ which will be recorded as 2.5 USD semester-hour units). It is the student's responsibility to make up the difference if the total number of degree credits falls short of the requirement for the degree. The amount of USD credit awarded may not exceed the equivalent amount on the originating transcript.
10. Although transfer credit from other universities will be posted on the USD transcript, grades will not be posted or computed in the USD grade point average for probation/disqualification review.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **How should I keep track of the financial aid documents and additional forms?** It is suggested that students constantly monitor their student portal (mysandiego.edu) to receive the most up-to-date information regarding their financial aid.
2. **How many units do I need to take to be eligible for financial aid?** If a student drops below 4.5 semester units, they are no longer eligible to receive financial aid.
3. **What additional financial aid forms do I need to complete besides the FAFSA?** Every student's file is unique so in addition to completing an MPN and Entrance Loan Counseling they may have to complete: Verification paperwork, prove that they are actually the student (in front of a notary rep), C-Codes (Selective Service, Defaulted loans). FAFSA will contact student directly if these documents are necessary via their student portal.
4. **What are the interest rates for student loans available for graduate students?** Students are eligible for unsubsidized loans and GRAD Plus loans.
5. **What other forms do you suggest I complete?** It is advised that the student fill out the FERPA release form if they plan to allow someone else to access their personal information.
6. **How do I receive my financial aid award letter?** The award letter is sent via email. You will need to Accept or Deny the award electronically.
7. **Can financial aid be used to pay for books, course materials, computer software and hardware? If so what is the process?** Yes, financial aid can be used for any school related purpose. If students receive excess funding after their tuition and fees have been deducted, they can use those funds to assist with these expenses. However, you are advised to take out only what you need for the program
8. **Is financial aid awarded year-round?** There are specific deadlines in order to be awarded financial aid for all three (3) semesters. For the summer semester, there is an additional summer form to be completed in addition to FAFSA.
9. **Is there additional financial aid available for military personnel?** Yellow Ribbon is automatically awarded to inactive military and they can be 100% eligible depending on their service time. Tuition assistance is also accepted, but military students must be active duty to receive it. G.I. Bill requires students to provide a Certificate of Eligibility.
10. **What services does Student Accounts provide?** Student Accounts provides service to our online students with billing and payment of tuition, fees, financial aid updates, and registration access. You are encouraged to check your student portal regularly for updates.
11. **Is there payment plan option?** Yes. Online MSN-NL students have the option to pay in 2-5 equal installments dependent upon the semester and timing of sign-up; Student Accounts provide this option for a processing fee of \$50 per semester.

12. **What is your drop policy?** Both courses must be dropped prior to the first day of the semester to receive a 100% tuition refund* and within the first three days of the start date of the semester to receive a 95% tuition refund.* No refund will be provided after the third day of the semester for either class. *During the first semester of enrollment, any tuition refund amounts will not include the non-refundable enrollment deposit amount (5% of tuition).
13. **How do I know when to register for classes?** You will receive an email from your Program Coordinator once you have been registered for an upcoming semester. The email will include information such as - course titles, CRNs, financial aid considerations, and textbook information.
14. **What happens if I relocate during the MSN-NL program?** Students must notify the university if they relocate to another state at any time during the program. If a student relocates, either temporarily or permanently, to a state not authorized as listed on the [State Authorization website](#), they will become ineligible to continue in the MSN-NL program due to state authorization regulations. Please review the unauthorized states before making any relocation plans.

PROGRAM CONTACTS AND IMPORTANT WEBSITES AND EMAILS

Academic Program Co-Director Jannise T. Baclig, PhD, RN jbaclig@sandiego.edu	Academic Co-Director Nadine Kassity-Krich, MBA, BSN, RN, PHN, CNL nkkrich@sandiego.edu	Online Program Coordinator Grace Nelson gracenelson@sandiego.edu (619) 260-5982
Student Portal my.sandiego.edu	Canvas canvas.sandiego.edu	Technical Support (619) 260-7900 sandiego.edu/its/help@sandiego.edu
Copley Library (619) 260-4799 sandiego.edu/library copley@sandiego.edu	Torero Bookstore usdtorerostores.com	Campus Card Services (619) 260-5999 sandiego.edu/campuscard
Financial Aid Office 619-260-2700 sandiego.edu/torero-hub/financial-aid/	Registrar (619) 260-4600 x2888 registrar@sandiego.edu	Student Financial Services (619) 260-2700 (Option 3) studentaccounts@sandiego.edu sandiego.edu/finance/student-financial-services