



St. John's College of Nursing Master of Science in Nursing Graduate Student Handbook 2026-2027

This handbook is for informational purposes only and does not constitute a contract and these materials are subject to change, with written notification to students, at any time. The College makes every effort to ensure that this handbook contains complete and accurate information at the time of publishing. However, circumstances may arise that require the College to change existing policies, rules, or program information prior to the publishing of the next handbook. The College reserves the right to change, modify or alter information in this handbook. The student handbook is updated annually and published in August. Students are responsible to follow the policies of the current year's student handbook, the information contained within the online St. John's College Catalog, as well as all College and Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) policies.

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PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Graduate Student Handbook provides program-specific expectations, procedures, and guidance for students enrolled in the MSN program at St. John's College of Nursing.

This handbook supplements the **St. John's College of Nursing Graduate Catalog**, College policies published on the College website, course syllabi, and the **Graduate Evidence-Based Practice Project Guide**. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with all applicable College and program requirements.

The College reserves the right to revise policies, procedures, program requirements, and student expectations as necessary. Changes will be communicated to students through College-approved communication methods.

When requirements are addressed in more than one College document:

- The current Graduate Catalog establishes degree requirements and academic policies.
- Current College policies govern institution-wide requirements and student rights and responsibilities.
- This handbook establishes MSN-specific operational and professional expectations.
- Course syllabi establish course-specific requirements.
- The Graduate Evidence-Based Practice Project Guide establishes requirements and processes specific to the MSN evidence-based practice project.

Students should contact their faculty advisor or the Academic Dean or designee when clarification is needed.

COLLEGE OVERVIEW

St. John's College History

Founded in 1886 by the Hospital Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, St. John's College of Nursing has educated nurses for 140 years in a tradition grounded in care, competence, joy, and respect. From its beginnings as a hospital-based nursing school to its current role as a college offering baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral nursing education, St. John's has remained committed to preparing nurses to serve patients, communities, and health care systems with professional excellence and Franciscan values.

St. John's College Mission

St. John's College is a Catholic institution of higher education dedicated to providing quality nursing and professional health degrees and programs, consistent with the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis' tradition that fosters the learner's spiritual, ethical, and professional development.

St. John's College Vision

St. John's College educates nurses and health professionals for innovative practice excellence and values-based leadership.

St. John's College Values

St. John's College values are based on the values of Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) and are incorporated throughout the College:

Respect · Care · Competence · Joy

St. John's College Purpose

St. John's College is a single-purpose College educating baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral nursing students. The College prepares graduates to provide competent, caring, client-centered professional services for diverse populations and supports intellectual, social, moral, spiritual, and lifelong professional development.

College Approvals and Accreditation

St. John's College is approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR), and the State Agency for Veterans' Benefits for the Montgomery G.I. Bill®.

St. John's College is accredited by the [Higher Learning Commission](#), an institutional accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Master of Science in Nursing program at St. John's College of Nursing, 729 East Carpenter Street, Springfield, Illinois, is accredited by the [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing \(ACEN\)](#).

3390 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 1400
Atlanta, GA 30326
(404) 975-5000

The most recent accreditation decision made by the ACEN Board of Commissioners for the MSN program is continuing accreditation.

View public information regarding the MSN program on the ACEN website.

Distance Education (NC-SARA)

St. John's College is a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). NC-SARA is a voluntary agreement among its member states and U.S. territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of post-secondary distance education courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state. Current member states of SARA can be found on the [NC-SARA website](#).

Student Location and Relocation

Because the MSN program is delivered online and includes required practicum experiences, students must notify the College before changing their state of residence or arranging a practicum experience in a state other than the state currently on record with the College. State authorization, professional licensure, practicum placement, and other regulatory requirements may affect the College's ability to provide educational or practicum experiences in a particular state. A change in location may affect continued enrollment or practicum participation.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM

MSN Program Overview

The Master of Science in Nursing program prepares registered nurses for leadership across health care systems, nursing professional development, education, workforce development, evidence-based practice, and organizational improvement.

The MSN program is delivered online and is designed to integrate nursing science, leadership, education, evidence translation, population health, policy, and systems thinking.

The MSN degree requires completion of 36 graduate credits, including 8 practicum credits representing 480 practicum hours. One practicum credit represents 60 practicum hours.

End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the MSN program, graduates will:

1. **Critical Reasoning:** Lead practice and professional development initiatives using advanced critical reasoning and translational scholarship to improve health outcomes.
2. **Caring:** Lead interprofessional teams in the implementation of evidence-informed clinical, educational, and workforce development initiatives that improve population and system-level outcomes.
3. **Communication:** Lead interprofessional collaboration to achieve organizational learning, workforce development, and system-level improvement.
4. **Professionalism:** Lead the integration of nursing science, systems leadership, and policy to improve organizational health care outcomes and professional practice environments.

MSN Program Sequence

The MSN curriculum is designed as a four-semester sequence.

Term	Courses	Credits	Practicum Credits
Term 1 – Fall	NSG 502 Applied Evidence-Based Leadership and Educational Decision-Making; NSG 547 Evidence-Based Learning and Development in Nursing Practice; NSG 533 Practicum I: Leadership in Program and Learning Assessment	9	1
Term 2 – Spring	NSG 506 Leadership and Management in Health Care Systems; NSG 504 Theoretical Foundations for Evidence-Based Nursing Practice and Inquiry; NSG 553 Practicum II: Leadership and Program Design and Plan Implementation	9	2
Term 3 – Fall	NSG 510 Health Policy, Ethics, and Leadership in Nursing Organizations; NSG 535 Financial and Resource Management in Health Care Systems; NSG 555 Practicum III: Leadership and Educational Practice Implementation and Evaluation	9	3
Term 4 – Spring	NSG 539 Strategic Leadership in Health Care Systems; NSG 508 Population Health and Epidemiologic Principles for Nursing Systems Leadership; NSG 557 Practicum IV: Translating Evidence to Practice and Policy	9	2

Program Total: 36 credits / 8 practicum credits / 480 practicum hours.

Course descriptions and official prerequisites are published in the current Graduate Catalog.

PROGRAM COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

College Communication

College email is the official electronic communication method of St. John's College. Students are responsible for regularly monitoring their College email and D2L Brightspace for academic, administrative, practicum, and program communications.

Students are expected to:

1. Use their College email account for College-related communication.
2. Monitor College email and D2L Brightspace regularly throughout each semester or term.
3. Respond to faculty and College personnel within a reasonable timeframe when a response is requested.

4. Maintain current telephone, mailing, and other contact information with the College.
5. Communicate professionally in all written, verbal, electronic, and virtual interactions.

Failure to review College communications does not excuse a student from meeting published deadlines or requirements.

D2L Brightspace

D2L Brightspace is the College's learning management system and the primary location for online MSN course content.

Students are responsible for accessing course materials, announcements, assignments, discussions, grades, and other instructional resources through D2L Brightspace as directed by faculty.

Technology Requirements

Because the MSN program is delivered online, students must maintain reliable access to technology capable of supporting College instructional systems throughout enrollment.

Students are responsible for:

- Maintaining a reliable computer and high-speed internet connection.
- Accessing D2L Brightspace and other College-approved educational systems.
- Maintaining access to Microsoft 365 and other software required by courses.
- Maintaining a functioning webcam, microphone, and audio capability when required.
- Maintaining current software and security updates.
- Seeking technical assistance promptly when problems occur.

Technology failure does not automatically excuse missed coursework or deadlines. Students experiencing a significant technology problem should notify faculty promptly and contact the appropriate College technology support resource.

Only College-approved systems should be used for required coursework or transmission of protected, confidential, or College information.

ACADEMIC ADVISING AND REGISTRATION

Academic Advising

Students are assigned or provided access to academic advising throughout the MSN program. Academic advising supports progression, course planning, practicum preparation, and successful degree completion.

Students are expected to communicate promptly with their advisor when circumstances may affect progression.

Course Registration

Students work with their academic advisor regarding program progression. Registration is completed each semester or term through the Registrar in accordance with College procedures.

Students must be registered for a course before participating in that course.

The MSN curriculum is intentionally sequenced. Students should not alter the established program plan without consultation and approval from the appropriate academic administrator.

Course Cancellation

The College reserves the right to cancel a course when necessary. Course cancellation may occur through the first scheduled day of the course. Students affected by course cancellation will receive direction regarding academic progression.

COURSE PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Online Course Participation

Participation in graduate education is an academic and professional responsibility. Although MSN coursework is primarily online, students are expected to engage consistently and substantively in each course.

Required participation may include:

- Completion of assigned learning activities.
- Submission of assignments.
- Participation in discussions.
- Attendance at scheduled synchronous meetings when required.
- Communication with faculty.
- Completion of examinations or assessments.
- Participation in practicum and project activities.

Merely accessing or logging into D2L Brightspace does not necessarily constitute academic participation. Students who stop participating in a course may be administratively withdrawn in accordance with the College's **Last Date of Attendance Procedure** and applicable College policy.

Absence or Interruption in Participation

Students experiencing an illness, emergency, or other circumstance that significantly affects course participation should communicate with faculty as soon as possible.

Communication with faculty does not automatically excuse missed coursework, extend deadlines, or modify course requirements.

Longer interruptions in enrollment should be addressed through the Leave of Absence process or other applicable College policy.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSEWORK

Students are expected to submit all assignments by the date and time specified in the course syllabus and D2L Brightspace.

1. Assignments must be submitted through D2L Brightspace or another College-approved method designated by faculty.
2. Students should retain electronic copies of submitted work.
3. Graduate-level written work is expected to demonstrate professional communication, critical reasoning, synthesis of evidence, accuracy, and appropriate scholarly support.
4. When required, written work must follow the current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or other formatting requirements established by faculty.
5. Late assignments are accepted for credit only in accordance with the course syllabus or at the discretion of course faculty.
6. Students should communicate anticipated problems meeting a deadline before the assignment is due whenever reasonably possible.

7. Required coursework must be completed to satisfy course requirements even when an assignment is no longer eligible to receive credit.

The detailed scholarly writing requirements for the MSN evidence-based practice project are contained in the Graduate Evidence-Based Practice Project Guide.

ASSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

Graduate courses may use examinations, quizzes, written assignments, discussions, presentations, projects, demonstrations of competency, practicum evaluation, or other appropriate methods of assessment.

Students are expected to complete assessments at the date and time established by faculty. Course-specific requirements regarding examinations, late or missed assessments, testing procedures, and permitted resources will be stated in the course syllabus or communicated by faculty.

There is no institutional entitlement to retesting or additional attempts on a graded assessment unless required by an approved accommodation or specifically permitted by the course syllabus.

When computerized testing is used, students must comply with College and course testing-security requirements and use only authorized resources.

GRADES AND ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

Graduate Grading Scale

The following grading scale applies to MSN courses:

Grade	Percentage	Grade Points
A	90–100%	4
B	80–89%	3
C	70–79%	2
F	Below 70%	0

Students must earn a **B or higher in every MSN course** and maintain a **minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0** to progress in the program.

Continuous Progression

Students are expected to progress from semester to semester according to the established program plan.

A student who anticipates an interruption in enrollment should communicate with faculty and the Academic Dean or designee as soon as possible and request an approved Leave of Absence when appropriate.

Failure to continue enrollment according to the established program plan without an approved Leave of Absence or other approved exception will result in administrative dismissal from the MSN program.

Academic Probation

A student who earns **one grade of C** in an MSN course will be placed on academic probation.

1. A C does not meet the minimum course grade required for successful MSN progression.
2. The student must repeat the course the next time it is offered and earn a grade of B or higher.

3. A student may not enroll in a course for which the course receiving the C is a prerequisite until the prerequisite has been successfully completed.
4. A student who earns a **second C**, whether in the repeated course or in another MSN course, will be dismissed from the MSN program.
5. Academic probation will be removed after the student successfully repeats the course with a B or higher and maintains a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.

Course Failure

A student earning an **F in any MSN course will be dismissed from the MSN program.**

Course Withdrawal

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from an MSN course has interrupted the established program sequence and must receive an approved revised progression plan before continuing in the program. Because the MSN curriculum is sequential and courses may be offered only at designated times, withdrawal may delay program completion. Failure to resume enrollment according to the approved progression plan, absent an approved Leave of Absence or other approved exception, will result in administrative dismissal from the MSN program.

Students considering withdrawal should consult course faculty, their academic advisor, the Registrar, and Financial Aid, when applicable, before withdrawing.

Repeated Courses

Repeating a course does not remove the original grade from the student's academic record. All grades and withdrawals are recorded on the transcript in accordance with College policy.

Official Notification

Students placed on academic probation or dismissed from the MSN program will receive official notification through College email from the Academic Dean or designee.

APPEALING ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

A student academically dismissed from the MSN program may appeal the dismissal to the Chancellor.

1. **Appeal Submission:** The student must submit a written appeal to the Chancellor within five (5) business days of the date of the dismissal notification. The appeal should describe the circumstances supporting reconsideration and include relevant documentation.
2. **Review:** The Chancellor will review the appeal and may consult with appropriate College personnel or request additional information.
3. **Decision:** The student will receive the decision in writing. **The Chancellor's decision is final.**

Academic appeals involving individual assignments, grades, course requirements, or other matters that do not constitute dismissal will follow the applicable College academic appeal or complaint process.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Because the MSN curriculum follows an established progression sequence, a Leave of Absence (LOA) is intended for circumstances requiring a temporary interruption of enrollment.

1. A request for an LOA must be submitted in writing to the Chancellor.
2. Approval of an LOA is not guaranteed.
3. A student requesting an ordinary LOA must be in good academic standing. This requirement does not apply to leave required by applicable law or College policy.
4. An ordinary LOA may not exceed one academic year unless otherwise required by law or College policy.

5. The student is responsible for contacting the Financial Aid Office regarding financial aid implications.
6. A student returning within the terms of an approved LOA is not required to complete a new admission application.
7. The student must satisfy all conditions of the leave and all current requirements applicable to return.
8. Upon return, the student will enter the MSN sequence at the point determined by the College based on course availability, prerequisites, and the student's academic record.
9. Curriculum changes occurring during the LOA may affect the student's remaining program plan.
10. The student must notify the Chancellor or designee of the intent to return within the timeframe established in the LOA approval.

Failure to return at the conclusion of an approved LOA, absent an approved extension or other legally protected leave, may result in administrative dismissal from the MSN program.

Pregnancy and pregnancy-related leave are governed by applicable Title IX requirements and current College policy.

MILITARY SERVICE

Students called to active military service or otherwise affected by qualifying military obligations should notify the Registrar as soon as reasonably possible and provide appropriate documentation.

The College will work with the student to determine appropriate academic and enrollment arrangements in accordance with applicable federal and state law and College policy.

Military service-related interruption of enrollment will not be treated as a failure to maintain continuous progression when protected by applicable law or College policy.

Students should work with the Registrar and Financial Aid Office regarding enrollment, tuition, financial aid, veterans' education benefits, and return to the MSN program.

PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

Purpose of Practicum Experiences

Practicum experiences provide opportunities to apply graduate nursing knowledge and competencies within health care, educational, community, organizational, and other approved professional settings.

The MSN program includes **8 practicum credits totaling 480 practicum hours**. Practicum activities may include leadership, education, organizational assessment, quality improvement, evidence translation, project development, implementation, evaluation, population health, and related professional activities.

Practicum Site and Preceptor/Mentor Approval

Students generally identify potential practicum settings and preceptors or organizational mentors in collaboration with faculty.

1. All practicum sites must be approved by the College.
2. All preceptors or organizational mentors must meet College and course requirements and receive faculty approval.
3. A current affiliation agreement or other required institutional agreement must be in place before practicum activities begin.
4. Students may not begin practicum hours before all required approvals are complete.

5. Hours completed before required College approval will not be counted toward practicum requirements.
6. Practicum experiences may occur within a student's place of employment when approved by the College. Employment and practicum are distinct activities. Routine job responsibilities, paid work hours, or activities performed as part of the student's regular employment do not automatically qualify as practicum hours. Practicum hours must consist of planned educational activities aligned with course objectives and completed under the guidance of an approved preceptor or organizational mentor. The practicum experience must provide opportunities for learning and role development beyond, or substantively different from, the student's usual employment responsibilities. Faculty determine whether proposed activities meet practicum requirements and may be counted toward required practicum hours.
7. Approval of a proposed practicum site, preceptor/mentor, or geographic location is not guaranteed. Students may be required to travel to complete an appropriate practicum experience.
8. Students are responsible for informing faculty of any actual or anticipated change affecting an approved practicum site, preceptor/mentor, employment relationship, or other circumstance that may affect completion of the practicum.

The Graduate Evidence-Based Practice Project Guide and practicum course materials contain additional requirements regarding organizational mentors and project partnerships.

Student Practicum Compliance

Students are responsible for satisfying all College and practicum-site requirements before beginning and throughout each practicum.

Requirements may include:

- Current professional licensure.
- Immunization or health requirements.
- Background screening.
- Drug screening.
- Orientation or training.
- HIPAA/privacy training.
- Safety requirements.
- Professional liability or other insurance.
- Site-required education or documentation.
- Other requirements established by the College or practicum organization.

Requirements may vary by site.

Failure to maintain required compliance may result in the student being unable to begin or continue practicum experiences and may delay course or program progression.

Registered Nurse License

MSN students must maintain a current, active, and unencumbered Registered Nurse license throughout enrollment in the program.

Students must notify the College promptly of any change, restriction, investigation, encumbrance, suspension, expiration, or other action affecting their RN license or legal ability to practice nursing.

A change in licensure status may affect the student's eligibility to participate in practicum experiences or continue in the MSN program.

Practicum Scheduling

Students are expected to plan practicum experiences in collaboration with faculty, the approved site, and the approved preceptor or organizational mentor.

Students are responsible for:

1. Planning sufficiently in advance to complete required practicum hours within the academic term.
2. Following the schedule established with the practicum organization and preceptor/mentor.
3. Communicating schedule changes promptly.
4. Complying with applicable site policies.
5. Completing required practicum documentation by established deadlines.

Practicum hours may be completed only during the academic term in which the student is enrolled in the applicable practicum course unless specifically authorized in writing by course faculty. Practicum activities or professional activities completed before enrollment, before required approvals are obtained, or outside the authorized practicum period may not be applied retroactively toward practicum requirements.

Practicum placement, scheduling, and availability are affected by organizational capacity, preceptor availability, affiliation agreements, and other factors outside the College's direct control.

Practicum Attendance

Students are expected to attend and participate in practicum activities as scheduled.

When illness or an emergency prevents attendance, the student must notify the preceptor/mentor and course faculty before the scheduled practicum experience whenever reasonably possible. When advance notification is not possible because of the nature of the emergency, notification must occur as soon as possible.

Missed practicum hours must be completed as directed by course faculty. Students must complete all required practicum hours and practicum learning requirements to successfully complete the applicable course.

Documentation of Practicum Hours

Students are responsible for accurately recording practicum hours and activities using the College-designated system or method.

Practicum documentation must accurately reflect the date, duration, nature, and educational purpose of the activity.

Falsification, alteration, duplication, or misrepresentation of practicum hours or activities constitutes academic dishonesty and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the MSN program.

When practicum occurs within the student's place of employment, the student must clearly distinguish documented practicum activities and hours from routine employment responsibilities.

Practicum Hours Following Course Withdrawal, Failure, or Repetition

Practicum hours completed in a course from which a student withdraws, is administratively withdrawn, receives a failing grade, or is otherwise required to repeat do not automatically carry forward to a

subsequent course attempt. The applicability of previously completed practicum hours will be determined by course faculty based on the circumstances of the course outcome, documented hours and activities, achievement of course outcomes, currency of the experience, and applicable program requirements.

Students may be required to repeat some or all practicum hours when repeating a practicum course.

Practicum Evaluation

Course faculty retain responsibility for evaluation of student performance and assignment of course grades.

Preceptors and organizational mentors provide feedback regarding student performance, professional behavior, achievement of objectives, and practicum activities but do not independently assign the academic course grade.

Faculty may communicate with a practicum organization or preceptor/mentor at any time regarding student progress, attendance, hours, conduct, or achievement of course outcomes.

Removal from a Practicum Setting

A student may be removed immediately from a practicum setting when behavior or performance presents an actual or potential threat to safety, violates law or professional standards, breaches confidentiality, violates College or site requirements, or substantially disrupts the educational or professional environment.

Removal from a practicum setting does not itself determine the final academic or disciplinary outcome. The circumstances will be reviewed by faculty and the Academic Dean or designee.

An approved practicum arrangement may become unavailable because of preceptor availability, organizational changes, termination of an affiliation agreement, student circumstances, or other factors. The College will make reasonable efforts to assist the student in identifying an appropriate alternative when necessary; however, the College cannot guarantee that a replacement site or preceptor will be available within the same academic term. Loss or unavailability of a practicum placement may delay course or program progression.

MSN EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE PROJECT

The MSN evidence-based practice project is developed across the four-semester practicum sequence and represents the integration of graduate scholarship, leadership, evidence translation, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination.

Detailed project requirements are not reproduced in this handbook.

Students must follow the current **St. John's College of Nursing Graduate Evidence-Based Practice**

Project Guide, including requirements related to:

- Project development and scope.
- Evidence appraisal and synthesis.
- Project and organizational approvals.
- Ethical considerations and data governance.
- Practicum/project milestones.
- Project roles and responsibilities.

- Implementation and evaluation.
- Scholarly writing.
- Required deliverables.
- Dissemination.
- Project completion and repository requirements.

Students may not begin implementation of a graduate project until all required academic, organizational, regulatory, and other approvals have been obtained.

The Graduate Evidence-Based Practice Project Guide governs project-specific processes and requirements.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Students enrolled in the MSN program accept the ethical and professional responsibilities inherent in graduate nursing education and the nursing profession.

Students are expected to adhere to the current **American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses**, College policies, applicable laws and regulations, and professional standards applicable to their educational and practicum activities.

Behavior that violates academic or professional standards, compromises or has the potential to compromise safety or confidentiality, or is inconsistent with the responsibilities of a graduate nursing student may be addressed as an academic and/or conduct matter and may result in disciplinary action.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

1. Cheating or using unauthorized resources on an examination or assignment.
2. Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance.
3. Sharing protected examination or assessment information.
4. Plagiarism or submitting the work, ideas, language, data, or intellectual product of another without appropriate attribution.
5. Submitting an assignment written in whole or substantial part by another person.
6. Purchasing, selling, or distributing academic work.
7. Fabricating, falsifying, or manipulating academic, scholarly, practicum, project, or organizational data.
8. Misrepresenting practicum hours, participation, activities, approvals, findings, or other academic information.
9. Submitting the same work for multiple academic requirements without authorization.
10. Unauthorized use or disclosure of confidential academic materials.
11. Allowing another person to complete or participate in coursework, examinations, assessments, discussions, practicum documentation, or other required academic activities on the student's behalf, or completing such activities on behalf of another student.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence, generative AI, or other automated tools may be used only in accordance with faculty instructions, course requirements, and College policy.

Using AI or automated tools to complete, generate, revise, analyze, or substantially modify academic work when such use is not expressly permitted may constitute academic dishonesty.

Students remain responsible for:

- The accuracy and integrity of all submitted work.
- Appropriate attribution and disclosure when required.
- Protection of confidential, proprietary, patient, organizational, or personally identifiable information.
- Ensuring that use of AI does not violate HIPAA, FERPA, practicum-site requirements, intellectual property requirements, or other applicable policies.
- Demonstrating their own achievement of course and program outcomes.

Protected or confidential information must not be entered into a public or unapproved AI platform.

Professional Integrity

Examples of unacceptable professional conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Falsification or misrepresentation.
- Breach of confidentiality or privacy.
- Unauthorized access to records, systems, or information.
- Failure to report a known significant error or safety concern when professionally obligated to do so.
- Theft, fraud, or forgery.
- Threatening, harassing, discriminatory, intimidating, or violent behavior.
- Impairment by alcohol, illegal drugs, cannabis, or misuse of prescription or other substances during a College or practicum activity.
- Serious or repeated disrespectful or unprofessional communication.
- Violation of professional boundaries.
- Conduct inconsistent with applicable nursing law, ethics, or professional standards.
- Failure to comply with practicum-site or College requirements.

CONFIDENTIALITY, HIPAA, AND INFORMATION SECURITY

Students must protect confidential information encountered through coursework, practicum experiences, scholarly projects, employment-related educational activities, or other College-associated experiences.

Students must comply with HIPAA, FERPA when applicable, College policy, information-security requirements, and practicum-site requirements.

Students may access confidential information only when authorized and when access is necessary for an approved educational activity.

Students may not:

- Access patient, employee, student, organizational, or other records without authorization.
- Access records merely because technological access is available.
- Access records of themselves, family members, friends, coworkers, or others unless specifically authorized for the educational activity.
- Photograph, record, copy, transmit, post, or otherwise disclose confidential information without authorization.
- Store confidential information on personal or unapproved systems.
- Enter confidential or protected information into public or unapproved artificial-intelligence systems.

Information used for coursework or scholarly projects must be appropriately de-identified and handled in accordance with College, organizational, and project requirements.

Suspected privacy, security, or confidentiality violations must be reported promptly to faculty and the appropriate organizational representative.

Violation of confidentiality or information-security requirements may result in removal from a practicum setting and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the MSN program. The Graduate Catalog establishes the same core confidentiality expectations for graduate students.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Students are expected to use social media and electronic communication in a manner consistent with professional nursing standards, confidentiality requirements, College policy, and applicable law.

Students may not:

1. Post or disclose patient, client, employee, student, organizational, or practicum information that is confidential or protected.
2. Post photographs, recordings, screenshots, or identifying information obtained through a practicum or College activity without authorization.
3. Represent personal opinions as official statements of St. John's College or a practicum organization.
4. Use social media to harass, threaten, intimidate, discriminate against, or improperly disclose information about others.
5. Post proprietary course or examination materials without authorization.

Professional obligations regarding confidentiality apply regardless of whether a name or obvious identifier is used.

CONSEQUENCES OF ACADEMIC OR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Alleged violations will be reviewed in accordance with applicable College policy and due process requirements.

1. Faculty may take immediate action to remove a student from an educational or practicum environment when necessary to protect safety, confidentiality, or the integrity of the educational environment.
2. Faculty will report suspected academic or professional misconduct to the Academic Dean or designee.
3. Following review or investigation, the Academic Dean or designee will determine whether a violation occurred and any resulting academic or disciplinary action.
4. Consequences may include, as appropriate:
 - Educational intervention or warning.
 - Assignment or assessment consequences.
 - Course failure.
 - Academic or disciplinary probation.
 - Removal from a practicum experience.
 - Conditions for continued enrollment.
 - Dismissal from the MSN program or College.
5. A student may appeal disciplinary action in accordance with the applicable College appeal process. Appeals of dismissal are submitted to the Chancellor, whose decision is final.

Nothing in this section supersedes a specific College process applicable to Title IX, discrimination, student complaints, or other matters governed by separate institutional policy.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

St. John's College maintains institution-wide policies addressing student rights, responsibilities, safety, and equal access. Current policies and procedures are published through the College website and other official College resources.

Rather than reproduce policies that may be updated independently of the MSN program, students should consult the current College policy for matters including:

- Nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.
- Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504.
- Student disability accommodations.
- Title IX.
- Pregnancy and related conditions.
- Sexual misconduct and violence.
- FERPA.
- Student complaints and grievances.
- Drug and alcohol requirements.
- Campus safety and security.
- Financial aid and satisfactory academic progress.
- Consumer information and required institutional disclosures.

The Graduate Catalog identifies current College coordinators and provides additional information regarding these rights and responsibilities.

Disability Accommodations

Qualified students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the Dean of Students/ADA and Section 504 Coordinator.

Students should request accommodations as early as possible. Accommodations are determined individually through the College's established process.

Accommodations are not retroactive and may not fundamentally alter an essential academic, professional, or practicum requirement.

Technical and Professional Standards

Students must be able to meet essential academic, technological, professional, and practicum requirements of the MSN program, with or without reasonable accommodation. Students who believe an accommodation may be necessary should contact the Dean of Students.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Students are encouraged to address routine academic concerns directly with the faculty member or

College office most directly involved whenever appropriate.

Students who believe they have experienced unfair treatment, a violation of College policy, or an adverse effect on a right or privilege provided by the College may use the applicable **Student Complaint and Grievance Policy**.

The Dean of Students serves as the primary College contact for student complaints and grievances.

Academic dismissal appeals follow the academic appeal process described in this handbook. Complaints involving discrimination, disability, Title IX, sexual misconduct, or other matters subject to a specialized College process will be addressed under the applicable policy.

DEGREE COMPLETION AND GRADUATION

To be eligible for conferral of the Master of Science in Nursing degree, a student must:

1. Complete all 36 credits required for the MSN degree.
2. Successfully complete all required courses in the MSN program plan.
3. Complete all required practicum hours.
4. Complete all requirements of the MSN evidence-based practice project.
5. Meet all academic progression requirements.
6. Earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
7. Be free of applicable financial and institutional holds.
8. Complete all MSN degree requirements within **four (4) years of initial enrollment**.
9. Submit an application for graduation by the published deadline.

St. John's College holds commencement ceremonies in May and December. Students completing the program during the summer term or fall semester participate in the December ceremony. Students completing the program during the spring semester participate in the May ceremony.

Participation in commencement does not itself constitute degree conferral. The degree is conferred only after all academic and institutional requirements have been verified.

STUDENT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Graduate students have access to applicable College academic and student support services regardless of online program delivery.

Resources include academic advising, faculty support, student success resources, library and educational resources, technology support, financial aid services, disability accommodations, Title IX support, and other College services. The Graduate Catalog confirms that online graduate students retain access to applicable College facilities, academic support, and student services.

Students are encouraged to seek assistance early when academic, personal, financial, technological, or professional circumstances may interfere with progression.

WHO TO CONTACT

Course-related academic question

Course faculty

Program progression or academic concern

Faculty advisor / Academic Dean or designee

MSN evidence-based practice project

Practicum faculty and the current Graduate Evidence-Based Practice Project Guide

Registration, enrollment, withdrawal, transcript, graduation

Registrar

Financial aid

Financial Aid Office

Student support, accommodations, complaints, or grievances

Dean of Students

ADA/Section 504 accommodations

Dean of Students / ADA and Section 504 Coordinator

Title IX, pregnancy-related support, or sexual misconduct

Title IX Coordinator

Technology support

HSHS ITS Help Desk or current College-designated technology support

Academic dismissal appeal

Chancellor

Students should consult the current Graduate Catalog and College website for current names, telephone numbers, email addresses, and office locations rather than relying on contact information reproduced in this handbook.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Enrollment in the Master of Science in Nursing program signifies the student's responsibility to understand and comply with:

- The current Graduate Catalog.
- This MSN Graduate Student Handbook.
- Current College policies.
- Course syllabi.
- Faculty instructions.
- Practicum-site requirements.
- The Graduate Evidence-Based Practice Project Guide.
- Applicable professional, ethical, legal, and regulatory standards.

Questions regarding interpretation or application of MSN academic or program requirements should be directed to the appropriate faculty member, academic advisor, or Academic Dean or designee.

END OF 2026-2027 MSN GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK