Philosophy

The central purpose of the University of Virginia is to enrich the mind by stimulating and sustaining the spirit of free inquiry directed to understanding the nature of the universe and human existence. The philosophy of the School of Nursing is consistent with that of the University as it prepares leaders in health care.

Nursing is both a profession and a discipline that is responsive to changing health needs. It is concerned with human experiences and responses to birth, health, illness, and death within the context of individuals, families, groups, and communities. Nurses, often in collaboration with other health care professionals, promote the optimal health care and comfort of individuals and groups through the systematic application of knowledge from nursing and related disciplines.

The faculty believes that education is based on humanistic approaches that foster critical thinking and promote awareness of social and cultural diversity among individuals. The faculty views each student as a unique person with special talents, abilities, needs, and goals. Cultural diversity, varying life experiences, and changing socioeconomic factors affect each student differently. To this end, faculty endeavor to provide an environment that assists students to realize their full potential. The acquisition of professional knowledge and the development of clinical competence occur through active involvement of the student in the learning process. Students assume primary responsibility for learning, while faculty provide educational opportunities for knowledge acquisition and professional role development. We believe that an atmosphere of shared growth and inquiry offers the maximum potential for development.

Baccalaureate education in nursing is the basic preparation necessary for the practice of professional nursing. This education provides the foundation for the development of professional knowledge, critical thinking, ethical decision-making, leadership skills, and the independent and interdisciplinary pursuit of high standards of health care. Master’s education prepares the nurse with strong critical thinking and decision-making skills for generalist practice as a clinical nurse leader, or advanced practice in acute and primary care and specialty practice in the areas of health systems management and public health leadership. A primary aim of master’s nursing education is to ensure that every student acquires the ability to analyze, synthesize, and utilize knowledge in a respective area of nursing practice. Doctoral education prepares the nurse scholar to influence health care through leadership in education, policy, practice, research, and knowledge development.

Implicit in the practice of professional nursing is accountability for professional growth and practice, demonstration of leadership, and commitment to the development and application of nursing theory and research. Life-long learning leads to the optimal development of both the individual practitioner and the discipline of nursing.
Student Services, Master's Program, School of Nursing. Forms to be used are in the application packet;
3. take the Graduate Record Examination. Applicants are urged to take this examination as early as possible. Address inquiries to Graduate Record Examinations, Educational Testing Service, Box 955, Princeton, N.J. 08540, or to Graduate Record Examinations, Educational Testing Service, Box 1502, Berkeley, CA 94701.

**Application Deadlines** The School utilizes a rolling admissions process. The completed application and the $60 application fee must be received by April 1 for the summer and fall admission or November 1 for spring admission. Applications received after the deadlines will be considered if space is available.

All correspondence concerning admission should be addressed to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Services, Office of Admissions and Student Services, School of Nursing, P.O. Box 800782, Charlottesville, VA 22908-0784.

**Matriculation** Once a student has been admitted into the Master of Science in Nursing Program he or she has one calendar year in which to matriculate. A student who fails to begin classes within one year must re-apply for admission.

**Special Student Status** Under special circumstances, students with baccalaureate degrees in nursing may complete a maximum of two graduate nursing courses without formally seeking admission to the degree program. Special student status is granted only when there are vacancies available in the courses requested. An application for special student status, obtained from the Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Services, must be submitted two weeks prior to the registration period for the semester in which the student desires to enroll. Admitted students receive enrollment priority. Completion of coursework as a special student does not guarantee admission to the program.

Students wishing to take University of Virginia off-Grounds courses at a University of Virginia School of Continuing and Professional Studies may take a maximum of six credits; these are accepted towards the master's degree if the courses meet program requirements. This is in lieu of taking two on-grounds courses as a special student in the School of Nursing. Decisions about the acceptability of a course are determined by the faculty advisor or course professor, depending on whether the course is a required course or an elective.

**Academic Regulations**

**Degree Requirements**

1. Satisfactory completion of a minimum of 71 credits of approved graduate courses for students in the clinical nurse leader track; 52 credits of students in the clinical specialist tracks; 58 credits for students in the primary care nurse practitioner tracks; 52 credits for course work for students in the acute care nurse practitioner track; and up to 70 credits of course work for students in the combined nurse practitioner/clinical nurse specialist tracks. The Health Systems Management track requires a minimum of 39 credits. The Community/Public Health Leadership track requires a minimum of 38 credits. Course requirements are specified under the Program Description section.
2. Satisfactory completion of all course work as specified in the policy on grades, with a final cumulative grade point average of at least 3.000 (B).
3. MSN students have a maximum of 10 semesters from the date of matriculation, in which to complete all graduation requirements, while Post Master students have 6. Exceptions must be approved by the advisor, department chair, and the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, and are granted only under
extenuating circumstances.

4. Enrollment and payment of tuition and fees for no fewer than two regular semesters or the equivalent.

**Grades** The standing of a master's student in each course is indicated by one of the following symbols: A+(97-100, exceptionally distinguished), A (93-96, very distinguished), A- (90-92, distinguished), B+ (87-89, very good), B (83-86, satisfactory), B- (80-82, acceptable), C (70-79, unsatisfactory), F (0-69, failure). A minimum grade of B- is required in all courses offered for any graduate degree. If a student receives a C grade in any School of Nursing course, the course must be repeated. If the grade for the repeated course is below a b- the student will be automatically dropped from the program. A grade of C in any other course requires repeating the course and earning a satisfactory grade or earning a minimum grade of B- in an alternate course. Students who receive more than one C grade are automatically dropped from the program. Any F grade results in the student being dropped from the program. Students in the School of Graduate Nursing are not permitted to take courses on a CR/NC basis.

**Incomplete Grades** A grade of incomplete is a non-grade designation given for a course. Incompletes in graduate nursing courses must be removed by the end of the following semester of enrollment or within one calendar year, whichever comes first. Graduate students with two or more outstanding incomplete designations (in the same semester or cumulatively) may not enroll in courses in subsequent terms. An incomplete designation which is not removed by the above deadline or prior to graduation is converted to a F.

**Grade Changes** No grade may be changed after it has been submitted to the University Registrar without the approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. The Associate Dean for Academic Programs is not authorized by the faculty to change a grade submitted to the University Registrar except when an instructor certifies that, because of errors in calculation or transcription, an incorrect grade has been submitted. Extra work to raise a grade, once submitted, is not permitted.

**Transfer of Credit** Students may receive a maximum of four graduate-level courses (up to 12 credits) completed at other institutions for transfer credit. In order to be considered for transfer, the courses must have been completed with a minimum grade of B.

Credit for transfer courses is determined following an evaluation of each student's course work and overall plan of study. The School of Nursing grants transfer credit based on an analysis of the content, level, and comparability of the courses taken, the applicability of the courses to the student's intended major and degree program, the quality of the student's performance in the courses, and the accreditation of the institution at which the work was completed. Evaluation of credits for transfer does not occur until after the student is admitted to the program. Information on the procedure for transfer of credit is available from the Office of the Associate Dean for Academic Programs.

**Application for Degrees** Applications for degrees may be obtained from the Office of the Admissions and Student Services. Students must submit a formal application for conferral of the master's degree to the Office of Admissions and Student Services no later than October 1 for fall, February 1 for spring, and June 1 for summer. A student who has been listed as a degree candidate and then fails to complete degree requirements must reapply. A student who has been registered for a degree and then fails to meet the requirements for the degree must pay a fee of $50 for the preparation of a new diploma.

**Acceptance of Degrees** Formal commencement exercises are held only once a year, in May. All those who have completed the program in August or December are invited to participate.
to attend the exercises the following May.

**Voluntary Withdrawal** An official application to withdraw must be approved by the dean of the School of Nursing or the dean’s designate. Withdrawal applications may be obtained from the Office of Admissions and Student Services. The application must then be endorsed by the associate dean. Student identification cards are collected at the time of withdrawal.

A student is not permitted to withdraw later than two weeks before the beginning of the examination period in any semester except for providential reasons.

A student who withdraws from the University for reasons of ill health must obtain permission from the Department of Student Health. Subsequent medical clearance from the Department of Student Health is required for readmission.

**Readmission After Voluntary Withdrawal** Readmission to the School of Nursing master’s program is not automatic. After absence of a semester or longer, a former student must apply for readmission to the School of Nursing Associate Dean for Academic Programs by December 1 for the spring semester or by April 1 for the fall semester. Readmission following a withdrawal or leave of absence is granted only if space is available.

**Leaves of Absence** The Associate Dean for Academic Programs may grant leaves of absence to students for either a semester or a session, upon written application stating the reason for temporarily leaving the University.