



The University of Utah

College of Nursing
Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program

MASTER OF SCIENCE

GERONTOLOGY INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK AND POLICY & PROGRESSION MANUAL 2016-2017

Please Note: Information contained herein is subject to change without notice.

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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program supports the mission and vision of the University of Utah and is an integral part of the University's Health Sciences Center.

VISION STATEMENT

The Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program's vision is to develop leaders in the field of gerontology whose actions, discoveries, and advocacy strengthen and positive transform the health and wellbeing of aging individuals in multiple contexts.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program is a dynamic and evolving academic where we prepare all levels of professionals and scholars for diverse leadership roles. We are committed to developing and disseminating knowledge that leads to improved health and quality of life among individuals, families, and communities throughout the life course. The University of Utah Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program's underlying purpose in research, teaching & service activities is to prepare the next generation of leaders in the field of aging.

CORE VALUES

Excellence
Innovation
Integrity

Students are expected to be familiar with the College's mission, vision, core values, and guiding principles, which can also be found on the College of Nursing website: <http://nursing.utah.edu/about/index.php>

GERONTOLOGY INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM

Gerontology is the interdisciplinary study of the aging process and issues related to an aging society. As a basic and applied science, it examines specific biological and physiological changes in individuals, as well as the broader psychological and social issues confronting them. Although much of the focus of gerontology is on older adults and later life, the field recognizes the value of understanding the full life course.

HISTORY OF THE GERONTOLOGY PROGRAM

In 1972, the Program began as an administrative unit of a five-college/university consortium known as the Rocky Mountain Gerontology Program (University of Utah, Utah State University, Weber State College, Southern Utah State College and Brigham Young University). Each participating school offered undergraduate certificates to students with the University of Utah site also providing graduate certificates. While the consortium dissolved in 1975, the certificate program at the University of Utah continued to attract more students and faculty to develop expertise in aging. The first certificates were awarded to students in 1975.

The Gerontology Program officially moved from the Division of Continuing Education to the College of Nursing in 1982. After receiving multi-year grants from the Administration on Aging (Intermountain West Long-Term Care Gerontology Center) and the Bureau of Health Professions (Intermountain West Geriatric Education Center) to serve as regional resource centers, the University of Utah awarded "Center" status to the program in 1986. Shortly thereafter the Center began receiving regular state funding to support the teaching, research and service mission of the Center. In 2006, the name was officially changed to the "Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program."

Over 500 students have earned graduate and undergraduate certificates from the University of Utah Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program and enrollments continue to grow. The introductory course (GERON 5001/6001) has some of the highest enrollments among graduate level courses on campus. In 2001, both undergraduate and graduate certificates became fully available online. Students represent about 25 different academic degree programs on campus including the behavioral, social, and health sciences, education, business, fine arts, and humanities. The Program faculty also has similar diversity in their academic backgrounds, including health promotion, human development, psychology, theology, social work, and nursing.

The Program's Master's Degree was approved to begin in the 1993-94 academic year, becoming the second graduate degree program in gerontology in the entire intermountain region. In 2014, the Master's Degree program became fully available through a distance learning format. Graduate students also have the opportunity to develop their program of study in a manner which meets their interests and future career goals with the approval of their Supervisory Committees and the Program Director. Graduates of the MS program are prepared to generate and disseminate knowledge, provide leadership and quality services in the field of gerontology, and apply knowledge in academic, clinical, and public and private service settings in response to the growing demands of an aging society.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

The Program admits a new cohort of students each fall semester. Information about applying to the program is found on the Program's website at the following link.

<http://nursing.utah.edu/programs/masters-science-gerontology/index.php>

GERONTOLOGY MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM OF STUDY

The Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program of Study requires completion of the Master's Degree core curriculum including a 150 hour practicum, elective courses, and a Master's Project or Thesis.

CUSTOMIZED PROGRAM OF STUDY

REQUIRED CORE COURSES (21 Credits)

- GERON 6001: Introduction to Aging (3)
- GERON 6002: Service Agencies and Programs for Older Adults (3)
- GERON 6003: Research Methods and Aging (3)
- GERON 6370: Health and Optimal Aging (3)
- GERON 6500: Social and Public Policy and Aging (3)
- GERON 6604: Physiology and Psychology of Aging (3)
- GERON 6990: Gerontology Practicum (3)

ELECTIVE COURSES

Master's Thesis students select a minimum of 6 credit hours of elective courses.

Master's Project students select a minimum of 9 credit hours of elective courses.

NOTE: Availability of courses will depend on the semester offered and faculty resources. Elective courses from other University of Utah departments will be considered with Supervisory Committee or Program Director approval.

- GERON 5005: Diversity in Aging (3)
- GERON 5220: Caregiving and Aging Families (3)
- GERON 6050: Best Practices in Geriatric Care (3)
- GERON 6100: Applications of Research in Aging (3)
- GERON 6235: Successful Cognitive and Emotional Aging (3)
- GERON 6240: Aging and the Arts (3)
- GERON 6280: International Dimensions of Lifelong Learning (3)
- GERON 6320: Death, Dying and Bereavement (3)
- GERON 6390: Geriatric Care Management: Clinical Issues (3)
- GERON 6392: Geriatric Care Management: Legal, Financial, and Business Issues (3)
- GERON 6400: Gerontology Research (1-3)
- GERON 6960: Special Topics (1-3)
- GERON 6970: Thesis Research – Master's (6)
- GERON 6975: Master's Project (4)

MASTER'S THESIS

[GERON 6970 Thesis Research – Master's](#) (6)

MASTER'S PROJECT

[GERON 6975 Master's Project](#) (4)

SUMMARY

Master's Thesis Option

Gerontology Core Curriculum	21 credits
Approved Electives	6 credits
Thesis	6 credits
Total:	33 credits

Master's Project Option

Gerontology Core Curriculum	21 credits
Approved Electives	9 credits
Project	4 credits
Total:	34 credits

GERONTOLOGY PRACTICUM

The practicum experience is considered to be an essential requirement of the Master's Degree program because it provides opportunities to work directly with others in service to older adults, facilitates networking with professionals in the field of aging, and enhances career decisions and opportunities. It is part of the student's overall professional development in aging.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Students must have completed at least one gerontology core course before commencing practicum (GERON 6990).
- Three credit hours of practicum are required for the Master's Degree. This equates to 150 clock hours (or 50 clock hours per credit hour).
- Current or previous but recent aging-related employment can waive the student for one of the required credit hours (or 50 clock hours). In this case, the student only needs to register for two credit hours and work 100 clock hours of practicum. This waiver needs to be approved by the Practicum Coordinator or the Program Director.
- Practicum can be service, teaching (GERON 6990), research (GERON 6400), or a combination experience, up to three credit hours. More than one site can be used to complete the required practicum experience; but no more than 2 are recommended. Voluntary or paid teaching assistantships may also count as a practicum experience.
- Students must register for the practicum course in order to earn practicum credit. The grade will be assigned once the work is complete. If the work is not completed within the semester in which the student registered, a "T" grade will be assigned until the requirements for the practicum are met.
- Students must complete the following with each site preceptor:
 - A form stating goals and job description prior to starting the practicum experience (practicum plan).
 - Weekly worksheets signed by the preceptor documenting the hours worked toward the required total.
 - At the conclusion of the practicum, the preceptor completes an evaluation form that is submitted to the practicum coordinator. A grade cannot be reported unless this form is completed.
- A list describing current practicum sites (updated periodically) is available through the Virtual Advisor on the student's CIS homepage and Canvas. Other possible practicum sites can be proposed by the student and must be approved by the Practicum Coordinator.

Any questions regarding the practicum requirements should be addressed to the Practicum Coordinator, Dr. Michael Caserta, (801) 581-3572, michael.caserta@nurs.utah.edu.

EXEMPTION FROM PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

The practicum is considered an essential component of the student's professional development in gerontology. However, it is understood that in some cases, there are students who are currently employed full time in an aging setting. Assuming their current paid position is one where the skill level, experience and responsibility are equivalent to what one would normally receive through a practicum experience, the student may apply for a "Practicum Requirement Exemption."

In order to apply for this exemption, the student must provide an official letter from their immediate supervisor or cognizant administrator indicating the student's job title, responsibilities or duties, evidence of at least 75% FTE, and the length of time they have been employed in that position. The Practicum Requirement Exemption potentially also could apply to a student's previous work experience (within the prior 36 months) provided that experience meets the aforementioned criteria and is similarly documented.

All exemptions are subject to the approval of the student's Supervisory Committee or the Practicum Coordinator. If it is approved, the student is then required to take an additional 3 credit hours of coursework that is consistent with his or her program of study and professional goals.

If a student is considering applying for the exemption they are strongly encouraged to discuss their intentions with their Supervisory Committee or the Practicum Coordinator in order to determine if they would be eligible and if the exemption would be in the best interest of the student's professional or career goals.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The Gerontology Interdisciplinary graduate program of study includes all the didactic and practicum requirements necessary for the awarding of the graduate degree and eligibility for certification and licensing (where applicable).

PROGRESSION IN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

The decision-making process in forming a supervisory committee can be considered one of the most important steps toward a rewarding and successful academic experience in the Masters of Science Degree (M.S.) Program in Gerontology (College of Nursing). In the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program (GIP), the graduate student is typically expected to work closely with their assigned *Supervisory Committee Chair*, the *Program Director*, and Gerontology *staff* (student services) early in fall semester for accelerated and non-accelerated full-time students and in the fall of the second year for part-time students in the selection of their (2) committee members to supervise their progress toward the completion of classes (program of study), the development and completion of both the colloquium, and the final oral presentation for either the project or thesis. Incoming students are matched, based on interests, with a Supervisory Chair for their committee.

Because the Gerontology Program is invested in the successful completion of the graduate student's academic goals, the choice of *who* will serve on the committee is critical. *The graduate student should choose wisely.* It is expected that the Program Director and the Supervisory Chair can help assist in guiding the graduate student toward the "best team" that would support and mentor the graduate student toward a successful final oral presentation. The graduate student takes the initiative to invite committee members to serve in the supervisory role. The process of selecting (2) additional committee members should be based on matching the student's goals and project/thesis topic with the strengths of each faculty committee member (see next page for selection guidelines). The Chair will serve to support and mentor the graduate student toward the completion of the project or thesis topic. The other committee members work with the Chair and the graduate student to provide guidance and professional advice on decisions that impact the project/thesis topic and structure. It is expected that the Supervisory Chair will serve as the primary communication "point-of-contact" with the graduate student so that progress can be monitored and supported, but the entire committee has an active role in decisions along the pathway toward the final oral presentation. The Supervisory Committee will mentor and cooperate with the graduate student to assure that quality and content of the project/thesis meets the expectations of the Gerontology Program. The Supervisory Committee will help to establish the colloquium structure and calendar presentation date and work with the graduate student to set the final oral presentation date with a reasonable timeframe to complete the goals and aims of the project or thesis.

Graduate School Guidelines for Committee Membership and Process

(source: Graduate School (2013) and edited to match Gerontology MS degree Program requirements).

The Supervisory Committee (SVC) is responsible for approving the student's academic program, preparing and judging approving the thesis/project subject, reading and approving the thesis or project, and administering and judging the final oral examination (thesis or project oral presentation). The chair of the supervisory committee directs the student's research and writing of the thesis or project. The final oral examination (thesis or project oral presentation) may be chaired by any member of the supervisory committee consistent with departmental policy. If a graduate student's preliminary work is deficient, the supervisory committee may require supplementary undergraduate courses for which no graduate credit is granted. Decisions concerning program requirements, examinations, and the thesis are made by majority vote of the supervisory committee. *All University of Utah faculty members including regular (tenured or tenure track) research, clinical, emeritus, visiting, auxiliary, and adjunct are eligible to serve as supervisory committee members.* The faculty member must hold an academic or professional doctorate, the terminal degree in the relevant field, and/or must have demonstrated competence to do research and scholarly or artistic work in the student's general field. Persons not from the University of Utah may also serve as committee members upon approval of the dean of The Graduate School (a vita for the proposed committee members should accompany the request). **Committee chairs must be selected from regular faculty.** Immediate family members are not eligible to serve on a student's supervisory committee.

It is the responsibility of the student to approach prospective committee members with a view to their willingness and availability to serve in such a capacity. Faculty members have the right, however, for justifiable academic reasons, to refuse to serve on a student's supervisory committee. The process of forming a supervisory committee is completed by filing a Request for Supervisory Committee form with the major department.

Master's supervisory committees consist of **three** faculty members, the **majority** of whom must be regular (tenured or tenure track) faculty in the student's major department. Departments or programs can petition for exceptions to this rule but within specific procedures and steps (see below). Exceptions to these guidelines must be recommended and justified by the Director of Graduate Studies of the department or the department chair, depending on departmental policies, and approved by the dean of The Graduate School. Unless otherwise approved by the dean of The Graduate School, a supervisory committee consisting of three faculty members, the majority of whom must be regular (tenured or tenure track) faculty in the student's major department, is appointed no later than the second semester of graduate work. If a graduate student's preliminary work is deficient, the supervisory committee may require supplementary undergraduate courses for which no graduate credit is granted.

To summarize: **The two policies in place for Supervisory Committees (SVC)*: 1) The chair of the SVC must be a regular faculty member (tenured/tenure track) from the student's department. 2) The majority of the SVC must be regular faculty members (tenured/tenure track) within the student's department.** *The Graduate School will approve blanket exceptions to only one policy listed above but not both criteria simultaneously. Once the department's blanket exception has been approved, the student's supervisory committee is simply entered into the graduate tracking system. The approved date of the blanket exception must be noted in the "committee comments" section.* The process for applying for blanket exceptions is as follows: A letter with an explanation of the request on department letterhead signed by the Director of Graduate Studies or Chair and sent by the originating department. A template letter with an approval line for the Director or Chair to sign may be kept on file for the required annual renewal. The following information must be included in the request for the blanket exception: A) A list of the faculty members, who do not hold a tenure/tenure track status, with their full name and title. B) Explanation of why the department is requesting an exception to policy to consider the faculty member(s). C) If the faculty member(s) are not in FAR an updated CV/resume will need to be sent with the request. The letter may be sent by scanning and email or campus mail to: Darci.Berg@gradschool.utah.edu or 302 Park Building. The Dean of The Graduate School reviews the request and confirms that the faculty members are research-active and publishing. A copy of the Dean's decision will be sent back to the department.

COURSE WORK

Course work includes core courses and electives offered in the Gerontology Program. Electives must be graduate-level courses or equivalent, and must be approved by the Program Director and/or Supervisory Committee.

Elective courses may include independent study. Students who wish to register for independent study must identify a faculty member to supervise and provide the earned grade for the independent study. The student and faculty must develop a list of objectives and outcomes for the project. A request form for independent study can be obtained from your graduate academic advisor in student services.

Students may use elective credits to obtain certification in a sub-specialty area relevant to their practice; such requests must be approved by the student's Supervisory Committee.

ADVISEMENT

Students are assigned a **Supervisory Committee Chair** in addition to the Program Director. The Chair, in addition to working with the student on their project or thesis will meet with the student at regular intervals to review progress; tailor the program of study, if necessary; and assist in selection of electives.

Students also have a designated **graduate academic advisor** in the College of Nursing Student Services and Academic Programs Office. This office will help you to navigate the University of Utah policies and procedures, connect you to College of Nursing and University of Utah resources, and keep you informed of important information related to progression and graduation. The graduate academic advisor for the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program is Arminka Zeljkovic, who can be reached at 801-581-8198 or a.zeljkovic@nurs.utah.edu.

You will be enrolled in a Virtual Advising Classroom by academic degree (Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program). This classroom is found through your CIS homepage. Virtual Advising is an information resource hub for timely announcements, forms, and deadlines.

Contact information for the Student Services and Academic Programs Office can be found at: <http://nursing.utah.edu/contact-us.php>

ABSENCES

Students should not plan vacations during the semester. If you must miss class or practicum, please notify the respective instructors and supervisors. If there are extenuating circumstances that require a prolonged absence (a week or more) please make arrangements with faculty instructors, supervisors, the Program Director and practicum site supervisors. Advanced notification for planned absences are necessary to prepare clients and to arrange any backup coverage. It is at the discretion of the course faculty whether or not make-up work will be permitted.

ASSESSMENT

Regular formative assessment is the responsibility of the graduate student, Program Director and faculty. The Program Director will ensure that each student in the program has a formative evaluation at least once per academic year. The Program Director, or faculty designee, will meet with the student for this evaluation. The student is responsible for bringing a copy of the most current grade transcript or DARS report to the meeting for review. Program Directors, or designees, will review the transcript and summaries of the student's practicum performance (if appropriate), and a written assessment will be completed.

A copy of the written assessment will be placed in the student's file in the College of Nursing Student Services and Academic Programs Office, and the student may request a copy from their graduate academic advisor.

ACADEMIC RECORDS

Students may have access to their academic records maintained in the College of Nursing Student Services and Academic Programs Office. Students may request access to their file by making an appointment with their Program Director or their graduate academic advisor.

COLLOQUIUM: THESIS/PROJECT PROPOSAL APPROVAL

In lieu of a comprehensive exam, graduate students for both thesis and non-thesis projects will formally present their thesis/project proposal (colloquium) to their Supervisory Committee. The Supervisory Committee must approve the proposal before the student may begin work on the thesis/project. Graduate students must have completed all core courses and a minimum of 21 hours of course work in order to present their thesis/project proposal to the Committee.

Students must submit to members of their Supervisory Committee a final draft of their thesis or project proposal at least two weeks in advance of their scheduled colloquium presentation date. The Supervisory Committee will review the proposal to determine if the student is ready to present their thesis/project proposal. Following the proposal presentation, the Supervisory Committee will meet with the student to address any issues raised during the presentation.

THESIS or PROJECT

Graduate students are expected to complete and orally present a final project or thesis that demonstrates a synthesis of learning and achievement of the objectives of graduate education. Candidates for the Master of Science degree in the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Master's Program have the option of a Thesis or a Project.

At least three weeks prior to the scheduled oral presentation date, the student must submit an acceptable draft of the thesis or project to the chairperson of the committee. At least two weeks prior to the oral presentation date, the student must submit a complete copy of the thesis or project to each committee member. The oral presentation consists of a formal presentation of the student's project/thesis followed by a session for questions and comments. Thesis and project oral presentations are open to all students, faculty, and public. Upon the successful completion of the oral presentation, further changes in the project/thesis document may be required by the committee before it is formally accepted as completed.

Thesis Option

The purpose of the thesis is the generation of new knowledge or replication of previous knowledge. Students who select the thesis option (GERON6970) should discuss the requirements with their Supervisory Committee and graduate academic advisor, as there are specific University Graduate School requirements for this option. Information about these requirements and the formation of a thesis Supervisory Committee can be found at: <https://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-catalog/thesis-and-dissertation-regulations/>

All research involving human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board of the Health Science Center before they are implemented. More information can be found at: <http://irb.utah.edu>

Project Option

Selection of the Master's Project option requires students to complete a specific course (GERON 6975) and may require specific elective courses to complement their career goals. Students should work with their Supervisory Committee to select appropriate courses for their area of study. The final paper for the course is considered the final examination that covers breadth and integration of (scholarly) material in the field.

While theses are typically data-based, projects can either be non-empirical or empirical works. If a student plans on completing an empirically-based thesis or project that involves quantitative data analyses, the student may be required by his or her supervisory committee to complete a graduate level statistics course or otherwise demonstrate an adequate competency level in statistical analysis necessary to complete the thesis or project. Likewise, students doing projects or theses that involve qualitative

analysis techniques may be required to take graduate level coursework in qualitative methods or be able to otherwise demonstrate a competency level needed to complete the project successfully.

GRADUATION

Students who successfully complete their program of study and culminating scholarly projects are eligible for graduation. Students should discuss graduation deadlines and the necessary forms with the graduate academic advisor in the College of Nursing Student Services and Academic Programs Office.

To officially graduate from the University of Utah in May of the academic year, all work must be completed according to the deadlines in the calendar on the University of Utah Graduate School website, which can be found at www.gradschool.utah.edu. However, because the University of Utah holds only one graduation exercise per year, students may participate in the convocation exercise if the scholarly project has been successfully defended and all required course work has been completed. There may be specific exceptions in which a course will be completed by the end of summer following the convocation exercise. Exceptions must be approved by the appropriate Program Director or the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Student Services.

All graduation forms can be found in your virtual advising classroom in Canvas.

THE LIMIT

All work for the master's degree must be completed within 5 consecutive calendar years. On recommendation of the student's supervisory committee, the Dean of the Graduate School can modify or waive this requirement in meritorious cases.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

These Policy and Progression guidelines are specific to the MS graduate programs in the College of Nursing, including the MS in Gerontology. The information has been prepared to assist you while pursuing your graduate degree at the University of Utah. In addition to becoming familiar with this manual, you should also consult additional sources of information and resources available to graduate students at the University of Utah to help make your experience successful.

Other Useful Sources Include:
General Catalog
Graduate School Handbook
Academic Calendar
Student Code
Specialty Program Handbook

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The College of Nursing and Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program believe that:

- Faculty and students are individually and mutually responsible for maintaining academic integrity to support a foundation of professional integrity.
- A professional code of conduct is an inherent component of academic integrity.
- Faculty members have a responsibility to model professional teaching and mentoring behaviors.
- Faculty and students are mutually accountable and responsible for maintaining a positive learning environment.
- Faculty and students have a reciprocal commitment and responsibility to identify and report behavior that is not consistent with academic integrity. Examples of reportable behaviors include, but are not limited to plagiarism, unprofessional behavior, cheating, unethical conduct of research, and disruptive behavior.
- These beliefs about academic integrity apply in each and every learning environment, encompassing clinical, didactic, scholarly and research activities.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Professional behavior is an integral part of each student's education. Student integrity, trustworthiness and honesty are important factors in the field of Gerontology. A faculty member may refuse to have a student continue in their course, and the college may dismiss a student from the program, if the student's character does not uphold the professionalism required. This is a serious matter for both the College and the student.

Students in the College of Nursing are expected to maintain professional behavior in both the course and practicum settings. This professional behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Attending orientations, classes and practicum placements;
- Taking exams as scheduled;
- Arriving and leaving practicum placements as scheduled and on time;
- Accepting responsibility for your own actions;
- Giving prior notification in writing or in a meeting to the faculty when you are unable to meet commitments and detailing how and when you will make up requirements;
- Dealing with others (peers, faculty, staff, patients and clients) in a respectful, sensitive and nonjudgmental manner.

The College of Nursing identifies unprofessional behavior as cause for an academic dismissal. An academic action may be overturned on appeal only if the academic action was arbitrary or capricious. (See the section on the Student Code in this manual.)

The faculty acknowledges that emergencies do exist and will work with students in these situations. Emergencies do NOT include:

- Scheduling work during class, clinical, or final exam, i.e. missing class in order to work or go on vacation is not an excused absence;
- Non-emergency doctor or dental appointments;
- Being fatigued due to your own actions;
- Planning "special" events that interfere with class or practicum time.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

The following are professional standards and expectations for classroom and practicum behaviors for students, faculty and staff:

- Respecting others' space and quiet time, i.e., do not use pagers or cell phones in practicum placements unless related to specific practicum task;
- Professional appearance and image (e.g., no jeans), including adhering to the approved practicum site dress code;
- Accountability for preparation for class and practicum;
- Constructive verbal and non-verbal behavior;
- Care for others in an empathetic manner;
- Honest, open, assertive communication;
- Confidentiality of all patient information;
- Teamwork and helping behavior for colleagues;
- Honesty and integrity;
- Personal and professional ethics;
- Respecting all individuals' differences (i.e., culture, ethnicity, religion, work experience, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc.).

CONSEQUENCES OF UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

When problem behaviors are identified, the involved faculty or staff member will:

1. Counsel the student on the unacceptable behavior and indicate what type of behavioral change is expected and within what time frame. The student's unacceptable behavior and the specific counseling will be documented by the faculty or staff member in the student's file. In addition, the faculty or staff member will notify the appropriate academic directors and committees. For graduate students, the Executive Director for Graduate Programs and the relevant Specialty Program Directors and the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program Committee will be informed. In all cases the Director of Graduate Student Services and Academic Programs will be informed. The student will be given a copy of the documentation submitted to his/her file.

If the behavior is a major infraction, the student will be counseled, referred to the Director of Graduate Student Services and Academic Programs and the appropriate Program Directors and committees (see above); documentation will be placed in the student's file. The appropriate committee will ultimately evaluate the student's situation. Dismissal is a possibility.

If the student violates the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Student Code), he/she will be counseled and documentation will be placed in the student's file. The appropriate academic directors and committees (see above) and the Director of Graduate Student Services and Academic Programs will be notified. (See the section on the Student Code in this manual.)

2. If the behavior from the minor infraction does not change within the given time frame, the faculty member will document the incidents and the attempted interventions. The documentation will be reviewed with the appropriate academic directors and committees as noted above and the Director of Graduate Student Services and Academic Programs. The documentation will be placed in the student's permanent file in the College of Nursing.
3. If the behavior occurs a third time, the faculty has the right to fail the student with further documentation being completed and placed in the student's file. The appropriate committee will ultimately evaluate the student's situation. Dismissal is also a possibility.

Students are held responsible for content presented in class or practicum settings. Students whose behavior is unprofessional will receive sanctions, which may include: class or practicum grade being lowered, failing a course, probation, suspension or dismissal from the class or program.

Any violation of academic or professional conduct may be entered into a secure database kept by the College, as a means of identifying repeated infractions. This database is in addition to any University policies regarding academic or professional misconduct. Serious violations of the Student Code and University policies on Academic and Professional Misconduct may result in dismissal.

If the student believes that the action taken against him/her was arbitrary or capricious, the student may appeal following the policies and procedures set forth in the Student Code. (See the section on the Student Code in this manual.)

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Use of social media is prevalent among students. Students should be aware that unwise or inappropriate use of social media can negatively impact educational and career opportunities. To avoid these negative impacts, students should consider the following:

Post content that reflects positively on you and the University. Be aware not only of the content that you post, but of any content that you host (e.g., comments posted by others on your site). Content you host can have the same effect as content you post.

Though you may only intend a small group to see what you post, a much larger group may actually see your post. Be aware that your statements may be offensive to others, including classmates or faculty members who may read what you post.

Employers and others may use social media to evaluate applicants. Choosing to post distasteful, immature, or offensive content may eliminate job or other opportunities.

Once you have posted something via social media, it is out of your control. Others may see it, repost it, save it, forward it to others, etc. Retracting content after you have posted it is practically impossible.

If you post content concerning the University, make it clear that you do not represent the University and that the content you are posting does not represent the views of the University.

Make sure the content you post is in harmony with the ethical or other codes of your program and field. In certain circumstances, your program may have made these codes binding on you, and violations may result in action against you. If you are in a program that involves confidential information, do not disclose this information. The University may take action against you for disclosures of confidential information. Realize that you may be subject to action by the University for posting or promoting content that substantially disrupts or materially interferes with University activities or that might lead University authorities to reasonably foresee substantial disruption or material interference with University activities. This action may be taken based on behavioral misconduct, academic performance, academic misconduct, or professional misconduct, and may range from a reprimand or failing grade to dismissal from a program of the University.

STUDENT CODE

The Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Student Code) has seven parts: General Provisions and Definitions, Student Bill of Rights, Student Behavior, Student Academic Performance, Student Academic Conduct, Student Professional and Ethical Conduct, and Student Records.

The purposes of the Student Code are to set forth the specific authority and responsibility of the University to maintain social discipline, establish guidelines that facilitate a just and civil campus community, and outline the educational process for determining student and student organization responsibility for alleged violations of University regulations. University policies have been designed to protect individuals and the campus community and create an environment conducive to achieving the academic mission of the institution.

The Student Code can be found at: <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/guides/students/studentRights.html>

INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY

Under normal circumstances students will not keep private health information on their personal computers or USB thumb drives. However, if it becomes necessary to do so, students must abide by the University of Utah's Information Technology Resource Security Policy and only keep Private Health Information on encrypted laptops or USB thumb drives (Policy 4-004 <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/it/4-004.html>).

Violation of the policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with University policies. If you have any questions or concerns, you should contact the Office of Information Technology, IT_policy@utah.edu.

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATION (UMAIL)

The University email system will be the official communication venue for the University, College of Nursing and Specialty Programs. Faculty, staff, and students have an email account (UNID@utah.edu) on the University's centralized mail server. Web access to e-mail is available. Email sent to our central server can also be redirected to any other existing email accounts on or off campus. To get connected with step-by-step instructions go online to: www.it.utah.edu and follow the appropriate links.

The University email system is the University & College's official form of communication, make sure your account is active and check it frequently.

CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO PROGRESS

PROBATION

To remain in good standing in the graduate program, students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 or better in all courses applied to the degree. In addition, the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program requirement is a **B minimum** for all core courses that are required to complete the approved program of study. Up to two courses that have had a grade below a B may be repeated.

Students will automatically be placed on probation if their CGPA falls below 3.0 or if they have two core course grades that fall below a B. In the event of probation, an individualized plan of progression may be developed, or at the discretion of the program director (after meeting with the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program Committee), the student may be recommended for dismissal.

If a student receives a B-or lower in two of the core courses, the student is automatically dropped from the program.

More information about probation and dismissal can be found in the Student Code: <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/guides/students/studentRights.html>

DISMISSAL

Reasons for dismissal from the program include but are not limited to: failure to meet grade requirements or progress in the program of study and academic or professional misconduct.

APPEALS

The Academic Misconduct and Appeals Committee of the University of Utah, College of Nursing provides students and faculty with a vehicle for the making of decisions relative to student-contested academic actions, academic sanctions for misconduct, and dismissals from participating in class. The committee functions in accordance with the directives outlined in the Student Code found at: <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html>

CREDIT, GRADING AND REGISTRATION POLICIES

CREDIT HOURS

Credit per Semester

Candidates for a graduate degree will not be permitted to register for more than sixteen (16) credit hours in any one semester. A minimum of nine (9) credit hours per semester is needed for full-time standing, except during the summer semester. Refer to the University of Utah General Catalog for more details.

All graduate students must be registered for at least one course from the time of formal admission through completion of all requirements for the degree they are seeking, unless granted an official leave of absence (see “Leaves of Absence” section, below). Students must, however, be registered during summer term if they are taking examinations or defending theses/dissertations. If students do not comply with this continuous registration policy and do not obtain an official leave of absence, they will be automatically discontinued from graduate study. In this case, students will be required to reapply for admission to the University through Graduate Admissions upon approval of the home department. Students should be registered for graduate level courses (5000-6000 level for masters; 6000-7000 level for doctoral) until they have completed all requirements for the degree including, the oral presentation of the project, thesis, or dissertation.”

Transfer of Credit

Per University of Utah policy, no more than six (6) semester hours may be transferred from other institutions for graduate credit. Transfer credit must be approved by the Program Director. Credit may be approved toward fulfillment of graduate degree requirements provided the transferred courses are passed with a B or higher grade and are graduate level courses taken within the past five (5) years. Courses taken for credit/no credit are not transferable.

Required courses may be waived with the approval of the appropriate Program Director and the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program Curriculum Committee. Waiver for a course will only be considered if the student can provide evidence that the course objectives have been met. The request and supporting evidence are submitted to the current faculty of record in the required course, who must support the request. Students may be required to replace the waived course credits with an approved elective. Courses taken to fulfill the requirements for another graduate degree cannot be counted or transferred to fulfill requirements.

The Supervisory Committee may advise the student to pursue studies for a period of time at another institution, related to availability of special facilities or learning experiences. This study may be considered work in residence, provided that arrangement has been approved in advance by the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Student Services and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Credit Limitations

University of Utah regulations specify that a student may not apply more than nine (9) credit hours of non-matriculated credit toward any graduate degree unless specifically approved in advance by the Dean of the Graduate School. Specific courses may be considered based upon relevancy to their graduate program. Courses taken via distance education are considered in-residence courses, provided they are a part of the student’s approved program of study. Courses taken by correspondence or home study are not eligible for graduate credit. Online courses from accredited universities may be eligible for graduate credit.

GRADING

Credit/No Credit

Some courses are graded as credit/no credit, and other courses have options for credit/no credit grading. In considering the option of credit/no credit, graduate students are reminded that it is often important to receive letter grades to build their GPA. This is especially important if the student applies for fellowships or traineeships on a competitive basis or transfers to another institution. See the University of Utah General Catalog for more information on credit/no credit courses.

Incomplete Grades

A grade of Incomplete (I) may be given for work not completed because of circumstances beyond the student’s control, providing the student is passing the course and has completed at least 80% of the work required for the course. Arrangements must be made between the student and the faculty concerning completion of the work. If incomplete work has not been finished and a grade has not been reported within the calendar year after the incomplete (I) grade was given, the incomplete (I) grade is

changed to a failing (E) grade by the Registrar's Office. Students on a Leave of Absence still must adhere to this timeline. Project or thesis credit hours may receive grades of T (work-in-progress) until the final project is completed.

REGISTRATION

Minimum Continuous Registration

All graduate students must maintain continuous registration (3 credit minimum at the graduate level) from the time of formal admission through the completion of requirements for the degree they are seeking unless granted an official leave of absence. If students do not comply with this continuous registration policy and do not obtain an official leave of absence, their Supervisory Committee is terminated and their records are inactivated. For more information refer to the University of Utah General Catalog under Minimum Continuing Registration. The regulations do not apply to summer term.

Withdrawal from the University

If a student finds it necessary to withdraw from the University during any semester, an application to withdraw from school should be filed with the Registrar's Office. Failure to do so may jeopardize eligibility for readmission to the University.

Leave of Absence

A student wishing to discontinue study for one or more semesters must file a Request for Leave of Absence form available from the College of Nursing Student Services and Academic Programs Office. Leaves of Absence (LOA) are only granted for extenuating and unusual circumstances and must be approved by the appropriate Program Director or faculty designee or the Supervisory Committee chair (if different); and the Dean of the Graduate School. Leaves are granted for a maximum of one academic year at a time. In making a decision to grant a LOA to a student, the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program will take into consideration if faculty resources will be available for students upon return to the College. The committee reserves the right to deny a LOA request. An LOA does NOT extend the time period for finishing an incomplete. The LOA is void if a student registers for classes in a semester for which a leave was granted.

Graduate school forms can be found in your virtual advising classroom.

OTHER COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

The College of Nursing reserves the right to require students to meet additional College or University requirements that are mandated.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Students are encouraged to become members of the following organizations.

GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA (GSA)

From the [GSA website](#):

The Mission of The Gerontological Society of America is:

- To promote the conduct of multi- and interdisciplinary research in aging by expanding the quantity of gerontological research and by increasing its funding resources;
- To disseminate gerontological research knowledge to researchers, to practitioners, and to decision and opinion makers; and
- To promote, support, and advocate for aging education, and education and training in higher education.

The major objectives of this mission are:

- To promote scientific study of aging in both the biomedical and behavioral/social sciences;
- To stimulate communications among scholarly disciplines, and among professionals including researchers, teachers, administrators, and others;
- To disseminate research findings by means of its publications;
- To expand education in aging, including the promotion of educational programs in gerontology;
- To foster application of research in the development of public policy;
- To develop the qualifications of gerontologists by setting high standards of professional ethics, conduct education, and achievement.

SIGMA PHI OMEGA (SPO)

From the [SPO website](#):

Sigma Phi Omega (SPO), the national academic honor and professional society in gerontology, was established in 1980 to recognize *excellence* of those who study gerontology and aging and the *outstanding service* of professionals who work with or on behalf of older persons. The formation of a society provides a much needed link between educators, practitioners, and administrators in various settings where older persons are served.

The **goals** of SPO are achieved primarily through activities of local chapters, and secondarily through efforts of the national office and officers. Local chapters serve as links within their respective communities to promote interaction between gerontology educators, students, alumni, and local professionals. The chapters provide opportunities for personal and professional interaction, sharing of concerns, discussion of issues, and service activities.

SPO seeks to promote scholarship, professionalism, friendship, and services to older persons, and to recognize exemplary attainment in gerontology/aging studies and related fields.

SPO welcomes you to meet our leaders, join a local chapter, recommend awards, and share news reflecting *excellence* and *outstanding service* within our gerontology profession.

[Learn the many benefits of SPO membership!](#)

AMERICAN SOCIETY ON AGING (ASA)

From the [ASA website](#):

Founded in 1954 as the Western Gerontological Society, the American Society on Aging is an association of diverse individuals bound by a common goal: to support the commitment and enhance the knowledge and skills of those who seek to improve the quality of life of older adults and their families. The membership of ASA is multidisciplinary and inclusive of professionals who are concerned with the physical, emotional, social, economic and spiritual aspects of aging.

UTAH GERIATRICS SOCIETY (UGS)

From the [UGS website](#):

The purpose of the Utah Geriatrics Society is to carry out the mission of AGS, to improve the health, independence and quality of life of all older people, in the State of Utah. There are currently [25 AGS affiliates](#) and other states are preparing to add to that number. The purpose of state affiliates as defined by AGS is threefold:

1. to recruit local leaders who can promote clinical geriatrics
2. to establish a local presence for AGS across the country
3. to identify future national leaders

We believe that Utah's affiliate of AGS will help meet our clinical, educational, and advocacy goals to help us improve the quality of life for the older adults we care for. Visit our [About Us](#) and [Why Join](#) pages for more information.

UTAH AGING ALLIANCE (UAA)

From the [UAA website](#):

The Mission of UAA

- To promote the exchange of ideas and information about aging;
- To facilitate collegial relationships among its members through formal and informal forums;
- To promote the knowledge of aging through research and its use in areas of practice and in the development of public policy;
- To promote a concern for ethics and a standard of excellence to guide the activities of professionals in the field of aging;
- To advance knowledge of aging among the general public and advocate on issues of interest to older adults; and
- To maintain a vital and viable membership organization.

INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

COLLEGE OF NURSING AND GERONTOLOGY INTERDISCIPLINARY COMMITTEES

When students are needed for College of Nursing and Gerontology Interdisciplinary committees, they will be selected in accordance with the *Student Selection Process for CoN Committee Service* as approved by College Council. In general, students may vote on policy and/or curricular issues. However, depending on the specific committee, certain restrictions may be imposed concerning the types of issues on which students may vote. Under no circumstances may students participate or vote on confidential issues regarding other students or potential students (e.g., admissions, re-admissions, scholarly integrity, etc.), except as stipulated when serving on the Academic Misconduct and Appeals Committee.

Terms of service on committees shall begin and end in August of each year, unless determined otherwise in the College of Nursing Charter and College Council Committee Structure. Information about opportunities to serve on a College of Nursing and/or Gerontology Interdisciplinary committee will be sent to students via Virtual Advisor in Canvas.

GERONTOLOGY MASTER OF SCIENCE CHECKLIST

It will be helpful to refer to this checklist periodically. While the items that follow are in the approximate order in which they should be completed, the order is not rigid and overlap exists.

- _____ Admission to pursue the MS in Gerontology (If admitted as a non-matriculated student, secure matriculated status before you take more than 6 credit hours)
- _____ Register for Master's core courses for first semester
- _____ Meet with your faculty advisor during your first semester to plan your Program of Study
- _____ Choose a Supervisory Committee in fall semester (first fall for full-time and second fall for part-time students)
- _____ Meet with Supervisory Committee discuss possible thesis/project topics
- _____ Successfully complete the master's core coursework
- _____ Successfully complete elective course requirements
- _____ Apply for graduation through the [Registrar's Office by the appropriate deadline](#)
- _____ Successfully present thesis/project proposal (colloquium)
- _____ Successfully defend thesis/project
- _____ Make revisions on the thesis/project that have been required by the Supervisory Committee
- _____ Provide copies of final thesis/project paper to the Program and to each Supervisory Committee member
- _____ Send an electronic copy of your thesis/project paper to the Gerontology Student Services representative

GERONTOLOGY PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental biological, psychological, and social dimensions of the aging process.
- Demonstrate an understanding of major concepts, theories, and approaches to research in the study of the aging process, including the understanding of an interdisciplinary approach and the use of multi-methods in the study of the aging process.
- Demonstrate an understanding of healthy aging as a life course process involving the interplay of hereditary, behavioral, environmental, social and economic influences in conjunction with the role of the biomedical/health care systems. Students are encouraged to view aging as a phenomenon fraught with variability, consisting of opportunities for continued developments and growth, as well as the challenges associated with chronic conditions, frailty, and potentially stressful life transitions faced by some aging individuals.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the micro (e.g., social-demographic) and meso (e.g., home and community), and macro (e.g., physiological/biological) influences on the aging process and the interaction among all levels through the use of the ecological conceptual model.
- Be able to identify, analyze, and assess information from a variety of sources and perspectives and indicate the ability to apply technological advancements (e.g., social media) in the various domains of educational gerontology.
- Be prepared to work directly with older adults in a variety of service program settings, long-term care facilities, government agencies, community-based non-profit organizations, lifelong learning programs, and in private care management practice.

APPENDIX

APPEAL OF GRADES AND OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIONS

If you wish to appeal a grade and believe that the faculty member was ‘arbitrary and capricious’ in his/her assignment of your grade, please refer to Appendix A: Process for Grade Appeal.

Appeal of Grades and Other Academic Actions University of Utah College of Nursing (CON)

The student who is appealing a grade or other academic actions should first review the Student Handbook, University of Utah (<http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/>)

A student who believes that an academic action is arbitrary or capricious should first discuss the action with the involved faculty member and attempt to resolve the disagreement. The student should notify the faculty within twenty (20) days of the occurrence.

The faculty has ten (10) business days to respond. If the student and faculty member are unable to resolve the disagreement, the student will take the appeal to the appropriate Assistant Dean (Undergraduate, Master’s & DNP Programs, or PhD) for resolution. Students in the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program (GIP) will take the appeal to GIP Program Director.

If the student and Assistant Dean / Program Director are unable to resolve the disagreement, the student shall appeal the academic action in writing to, and consult with, the CON Associate Dean of Academic Programs within forty (40) working days of notification of the academic action.

Within fifteen (15) working days of consultation with the student, the Associate Dean of Academic Programs shall notify the student and faculty member, in writing, of his/her determination whether the academic action was arbitrary or capricious and the basis for that decision. If the Associate Dean determines that the academic action was arbitrary or capricious, the Associate Dean will take appropriate action to implement his/her decision unless the faculty member appeals the decision.

If either party disagrees with the Associate Dean's decision, the party may appeal to the CON's Academic Appeals Committee within fifteen (15) working days of notification of the Associate Dean's decision. **When the Academic Appeals Committee is initiated, this constitutes a formal complaint.** If the Committee chair determines that a hearing is required, the chair shall schedule a hearing date and notify the parties in writing of the date of the hearing, the names of the Committee members, and the procedures as outlined in the University regulations (see "Student Code" - Policy 6-400 - Section IV) by at least fifteen (15) business days prior to the hearing. The chair of the Committee will work within a reasonable amount of time to organize the hearing such that the scheduling of a hearing is coordinated with all committee members (faculty and students, relevant staff, and committee advisors). Once the Chair of the Academic Appeals receives a written appeal by the student, the faculty member(s) involved can respond to the written appeal within five (5) business days after the written appeal is received.

To overturn the original academic action, the Academic Appeals Committee must find that the academic action was arbitrary or capricious. The committee chair shall prepare a written report of the committee's findings and recommendations and present it to the Dean of the CON within ten (10) business days after the conclusion of the hearing.



The Dean of the College considers the documentation submitted and will, within ten (10) business days, take one of the following actions: a) accept the committee's findings; b) return the report to the Committee chair, requesting the committee reconvene to reconsider or clarify; or c) reject all or parts of the committee's finding. The Dean's decision is final within the CON. The student has a final option to appeal the Dean's decision to the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences within ten (10) business days after receipt of the decision.

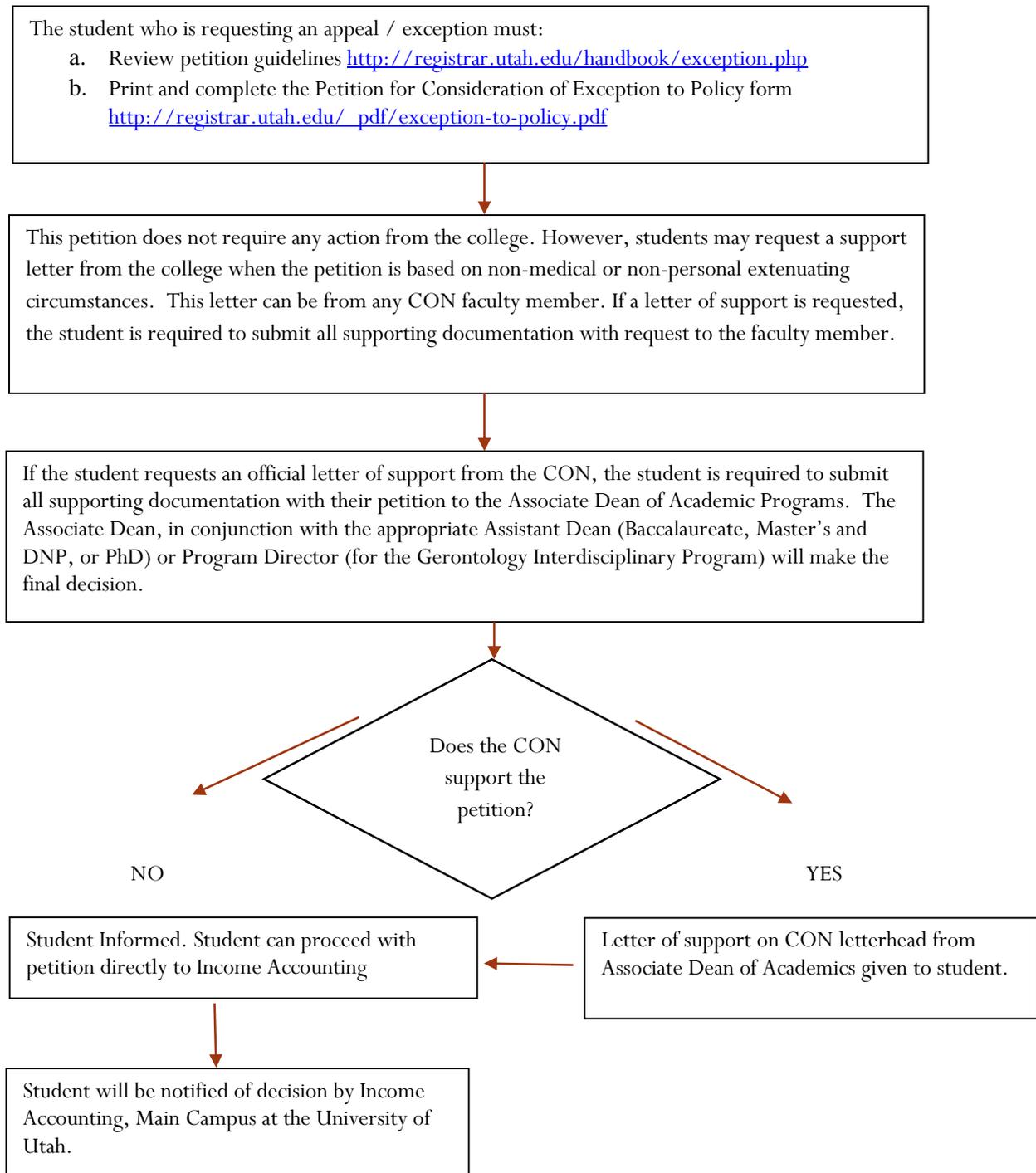


If the student wishes to appeal the decision, within ten (10) business days of receipt of the Dean's decision, the student must file a written notice of appeal with the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences.



The Vice President for Health Sciences will consider the appeal and response to the appeal, and will make a final determination. The decision of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences is final. The student will be notified of the decision.

Appeal Process: Income Accounting Petition to Exception Policy
University of Utah College of Nursing (CON)



Appeal Process: Registrar – Past Term Petitions or Deleting a Withdrawal
(Retroactive withdrawal, W delete (current or past term), Section change / Cross references courses)
University of Utah College of Nursing (CON)

The student who is requesting an appeal / exception must:

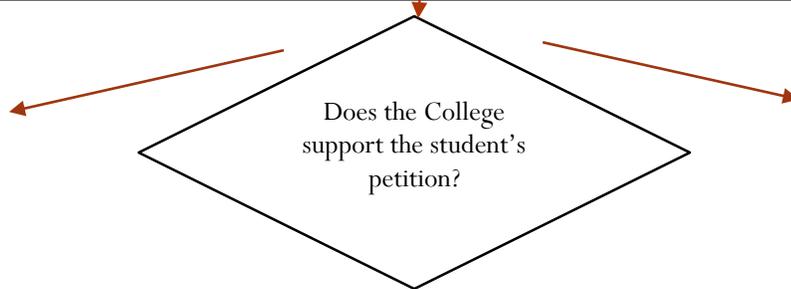
- c. Visit <http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/exception.php> to download a “Petition for Consideration of Exception to Policy” form.
- d. Print and complete the Petition for Consideration of Exception to Policy form
<http://registrar.utah.edu/pdf/exception-to-policy.pdf>



Deleting a Withdrawal (W) on a past term is not allowed unless student provides documentation that demonstrates administrative actions on the part of the university are the cause of the withdrawal. The student must prepare a typed or hand written statement describing how administrative actions on behalf of the university were the cause for the withdrawal; and attach all supporting letters or documents to the request. Students are encouraged to make copies for their personal files.



A student may obtain letters of support from whomever s/he wants; however letters from CON faculty, program directors, or instructors do not constitute support from the CON. Students are encouraged to make copies for their personal files. To obtain formal CON approval, undergraduate nursing students must obtain a letter of support from the Asst. Dean for the Baccalaureate Program. Master’s and DNP students must obtain a letter of support from the Asst. Dean for Master’s and DNP Programs; and PhD students must obtain a letter of support from the Asst. Dean for the PhD Program. Students in Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program (GIP) must obtain a letter of support from the Program Director. Students will provide all required and/or supporting documentation. The final decision will be made by the Associate Dean of Academic Programs and the Assist. Deans or Director of the perspective program.



NO



Student will be informed of decision via a letter from the Associate Dean of Academic Programs, with a copy to the CON Office of Student Services.

YES



1. Letter of support on CON letterhead received from the Associate Dean of Academic Programs and given to student.
2. Students on financial aid are advised to meet with CON financial aid counselor.
3. Students are expected to submit materials to Registration Division in Student Services Building, Main campus.
4. Student will be notified of decision by Registration Division, Main campus.