

Boston College
William F. Connell School of Nursing
Graduate and Direct Entry Pre-Master's Licensure Policies

All CSON Graduate and Direct Entry Pre-Master's Licensure policies follow and are aligned with the university policies regarding graduate students. More information is available at https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/academics/sites/university-catalog/policies-procedures.html#graduate_academic_regulations

Graduate Admission Policy

All graduate nursing students are admitted through the CSON Graduate Office in accordance with the university admissions procedures. CSON admits students into a master of science degree program, which prepares students as advance practice registered nurses (APRNs).

The graduate admission process at Boston College is highly selective. A holistic review of applications for admission, ensuring that all aspects of candidates' applications are carefully considered is utilized. While academic preparation is the most important factor considered, admission decisions are made holistically. A wide range of criteria are considered including but not limited to: academic performance, the rigor of applicants' prior college transcripts, performance on standardized tests, leadership, recommendations, co-curricular involvement, work experience, potential for future success, and when appropriate, the ability to succeed despite facing significant obstacles or hardships.

Candidates are required to submit an application through the online admissions program (i.e., Slate), standardized test scores, official college transcripts, letters of recommendation, and two completed essays. Each applicant selects an advanced practice specialty (NP/CRNA) at the time of application to the Master's program. Traditional Master's NP programs admit candidates twice each year (fall and spring). CRNA applicants are required to have a minimum of one year of critical care nursing experience and current PALS and ACLS certifications. These candidates are admitted one time each year (spring). The master's entry program admits candidates one time each year (summer).

All candidates must comply with the immunization requirements specified by the [Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#). Official high/secondary school transcripts are required for admitted master's entry students prior to matriculation.

While there are no minimum cut-offs for graduate admission consideration, the typical enrolled student profile includes a mean undergraduate GPA of 3.43, mean standardized test results of 71st, 53rd, and 72nd percentiles in the verbal, quantitative, and analytical/writing sections of the GRE, respectively. For international students who do not speak English as their primary language, the recommended minimum English language proficiency scores are 100 on the TOEFL and 7.5 on the IELTS. Candidates must include translations and evaluations of non-English transcripts.

Boston College does not set its level of selectivity; the size and quality of the applicant pool does. Therefore, decisions are made after all applications have been fully evaluated. This ensures that decisions are equitable and consistent within the context of our highly competitive pool. Class size and specialty NP concentration numbers are carefully monitored to ensure adequate availability of clinical placements.

The faculty of CSON have developed technical standards competency domains that they believe to be necessary for participation and success in clinical education with or without reasonable accommodations.

The Assistant Dean of Graduate Enrollment and Data Analytics, the NP /CRNA program directors, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs work collaboratively and are in frequent communication during the admission cycles to ensure that the academic quality and preparation of incoming students meets the faculty's expectations and standards.

Candidates are notified of admission decisions by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs at the Connell School of Nursing.

GRADUATE ACADEMIC STANDINGS AND PROGRESSION POLICIES

The Graduate Academic Standards Committee, composed of professors responsible for the NURS courses in the MS (nursing) program, meets at the end of each semester to review the records of master's students with course failures, course deficiencies, low GPAs, or other academic concerns. This Committee makes recommendations about progression in the program in accordance with the policies described below and other relevant university policies. Final progression decisions are made and implemented by the Graduate Associate Dean. (MHB, p. 14)

Graduate students are expected to maintain good academic standing at all times and progress through their program of study. Those who are not in good academic standing or are not progressing are subject to review by the Graduate Academic Standards and Progression Committee.

All graduate students in the William F. Connell School of Nursing are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.0 in order to remain in good academic standing. The minimum acceptable passing grade for graduate courses is a B- (80). Students will undergo academic review if they have a GPA of less than 3.0 or earn a grade less than a B- (80) in a course.

If a student does not meet the minimum of a B- in any graduate NURS course, (s)he will be required to retake the course before advancing in the curriculum. Additionally, the student will be placed on academic probation and will be unable to progress until the deficit is remediated. Graduate students may repeat a nursing course only once after withdrawing from it or not achieving a B-.

Graduate students who are on probation are not eligible for teaching assistantships, research assistantships, fellowships and/or any type of merit-based tuition remission award. Students will be dismissed from the School of Nursing after 2 nursing (NURS) course failures and/or withdrawals to prevent failure in NURS courses.

Graduate students, who demonstrate unsafe clinical practice or unprofessional conduct in clinical, classroom settings, and/or interactions with BC faculty or staff, will undergo academic review and may be dismissed from the program. Unsafe clinical practice and/or unprofessional conduct are grounds for failure in any clinical course and may result in immediate removal from the clinical site.

The Graduate Associate Dean will notify the student of the outcome of academic review as soon as possible. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision, he / she may submit a formal appeal. See Graduate Students Rights & Grievances – Formal Appeals.

CSON CLASS and CLINICAL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Graduate students are expected to attend classes regularly, take tests, and submit assignments at the times specified by the professors on the course syllabi. For any absence, students must still meet all course requirements and learning objectives. Attendance in nursing class, clinical, simulation, and lab is expected for all students. Excused absences include student illness, bereavement for an immediate family member, military obligations, or religious observances. Students who anticipate military and religious absences should notify the faculty at the beginning of the semester so accommodations can be made to complete the learning objectives in a timely way. Students are required to communicate an unexpected absence no later than two hours before class or clinical in the method requested by the faculty. See (http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/univcat/undergrad_catalog/policies_procedures.htm#religious).

COURSE EXEMPTION POLICY

The Direct Master's Entry program is an accelerated and intensive curriculum that prepares graduates to practice as advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) in the nurse practitioner role. Due to the specific course work and sequencing required to complete the pre-licensure component of the program, course exemptions are not allowed in the pre-licensure component of the program (year 1). Students, who hold a graduate degree from another accredited university, may waive a course in the post-licensure component of the Direct Master's Entry program if they have previously completed an equivalent course. (See Transfer of Credits policy, MHB, pp 17)

ADVANCED PLACEMENT POLICY

Graduate students, including students enrolled in the Direct Master's Entry program, may not waive graduate course work based on previously completed Advanced Placement course work and/or examinations.

TRANSFER POLICY

Matriculated graduate students may request permission to transfer in up to 6 credits of graduate course work completed at another regionally accredited graduate university. Only courses completed within the past five years, that were not applied to a prior degree and in which the

student earned a grade 80 (B-) or better, can be considered for transfer. Matriculated students are not permitted to take courses outside of Boston College, other than through the Consortium. Core courses that were taken prior to matriculation may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Students will not be allowed to transfer in more than six (6) credits towards their degree.

To request to have an outside course considered for transfer, the student must provide a copy of the course description for electives and course syllabus for core courses to the graduate office. Core nursing courses that were taken prior to matriculation at Boston College must be reviewed for equivalency by the TOR for the core course at Boston College, and approved by the TOR and the graduate associate dean (forms in the appendix and on the CSON web site.) If approved, the student must submit a final official transcript documenting a grade of B or better to the graduate office for processing. The transfer course and credit, but not a grade, will be recorded on the student's transcript after the student has successfully completed one full semester at Boston College.

Electives / cognates may be approved by the faculty advisor.

EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY

The RN-MS program is designed for registered nurses without a BSN degree (with or without a baccalaureate degree in another field), who wish to earn a MS degree and become nurse practitioners in one of the clinical specialty programs offered (adult-gerontology primary care NP, family NP, family psychiatric-mental health NP, pediatric primary care NP, women's health NP).

RN-MS students undergo an educational portfolio review at the time of application and an individualized plan of study is developed. There is no set plan of study for the RN-MS program; students may choose to complete the program on a part-time or full-time basis, depending on clinical availability.

Prior to matriculation, RN-MS students must hold a valid RN license in Massachusetts, have completed required pre-requisite courses and have completed the equivalent of approximately 100 – 120 college credits. Completion of prerequisite nursing, science and liberal arts courses establishes baccalaureate level competencies as the basis for the study of advanced practice nursing.

Based upon the educational portfolio review and professional experience, students may be required to enroll in bridge courses prior to enrolling in MS courses. After fulfilling pre-requisite and bridge coursework, RN-MS students complete the master's degree in the same sequence and in the same courses as other master's students.

Completion of the RN-MS program results in the awarding of the MS degree in Nursing; graduates are eligible to sit for the NP certification examination in their clinical specialty.

Additional related information can be located in the Transfer and Course Exemption policies.

WITHDRAWAL

FROM A COURSE

Students who withdraw from a course after the registration period but before the last three weeks of class will have a grade of "W" recorded in their permanent record. The last date for withdrawal from a course is specified on the academic calendar each semester.

Students are not permitted to drop courses during the last three weeks of classes or during the exam period; students who are still registered at this point will receive a final grade.

Students may withdraw from a course or change from credit to audit up to three weeks prior to examinations and may receive a partial tuition refund on withdrawals submitted during the three weeks following registration. Students who change from credit to audit receive no refund.

Graduate students may only repeat a course once.

WITHDRAWAL

FROM BOSTON COLLEGE

Students in good standing who wish to withdraw from Boston College are required to file a withdrawal form in the graduate office. In the case of students who are dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons, the appropriate administrator will complete this form.

READMISSION POLICIES

Graduate student readmission will be granted in accordance with university policies.

Related policies

POLICY ON NOT REGISTERED (NR) STUDENTS

Matriculated students who are not registered must complete a leave of absence or withdrawal form and return it to the graduate programs office. Failure to do so may result in the university deactivating the student's enrollment and dismissing him/her.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA)

Graduate students enrolled in a degree program who do not register for course work, doctoral advisement, or doctoral continuation in any given semester must request a LOA for that semester. LOAs are granted for one semester at a time. Students may obtain a LOA form from the graduate program office or the CSON website and submit this form to that office for the Graduate Associate Dean's approval. Leave time will be considered a portion of the total time limit for the degree unless due to active military service.

Students must meet any conditions specified for return from a leave of absence. Students on leave of absence must still follow procedures and deadlines for initiating the placement process for clinical practica; clinical placements will be on a space available basis. Students must notify the graduate office by March 1 prior to the academic year they wish to return.

When a student takes a LOA from Boston College for mental health reasons, the student is expected to get the appropriate treatment to deal with the condition that led to the leave. Before the graduate associate dean can make a decision regarding readmission, it is required that the student's mental health treatment professional provide sufficient information to Boston College for the purpose of assessing the student's readiness to return and take on the rigors of his/her

academic program. For more information, please contact Thomas McGuinness, Director of University Counseling at 617-552-3310.

GRADUATION

The University awards degrees in May, August and December; commencement ceremonies are held only in May.

MAY GRADUATION

Graduate degrees are awarded at the annual May commencement. Students who plan to graduate in May should file a graduation form (online) by the deadline stated in the academic calendar (usually early in February). Students who sign up for graduation but do not graduate on the anticipated date are automatically moved to the next scheduled graduation period by the registrar's office.

Diplomas are distributed to individual students at the School of Nursing ceremony immediately following the completion of the university commencement exercises. Diplomas will be mailed to students unable to attend commencement. Diplomas or transcripts will not be awarded or issued until all degree credits have been recorded on the student's permanent record and all accounts and fees have been paid.

AUGUST AND DECEMBER GRADUATIONS

Graduate students who have completed all degree requirements by August 30 or December 31 are eligible to receive their degree as of those dates. The procedure is the same as for May graduation. Since there are no commencement exercises in December or August, the names of those receiving degrees will be included in the Boston College program for the following May commencement. Those students who would like to participate in the May ceremonies must notify the graduate office.

GRADUATE STUDENT RIGHTS and GRIEVANCES

This grievance procedure provides a process for constructively resolving serious academic, supervisory or administrative grievances that graduate students may have with faculty, preceptors, staff or administrators. Its purpose is to resolve in a fair manner any grievances arising from grading, other evaluation or supervisory practices, and appeals that students may want to initiate if they are dissatisfied with decisions made by the committees that direct their degree program or the Graduate Academic Standards Committee of the Connell School.

To that end, all concerned should display a cooperative manner. Resolutions should be attempted between the parties involved and mediated rather than directed. Outcomes should be sought at the lowest possible administrative level. Confidentiality of the student(s) and faculty members(s) involved should be maintained at all times. In the event that the student's Chairperson, advisor, preceptor, Dean or Associate Dean is a party to the grievance that person should recuse him/herself from considering the matter, and the appropriate administrator at the next highest administrative level will replace that person.

If a student believes that he or she has been evaluated unfairly or has another serious grievance, the student should discuss the matter with the faculty member or preceptor and course teacher of record (TOR) involved as soon as possible after the evaluation has been received or the grievance arises. This discussion should provide an opportunity for further

dialogue and clarification between faculty and student about how the matter was determined, what criteria were used, and any related issues. If such a discussion results in a mutually acceptable resolution, the matter will be considered closed. If either party wishes to have a written statement of the outcome, the parties will put the resolution in writing, sign it, and each retain a copy. This written statement must be completed no later than two weeks after the mutually acceptable resolution has been reached.

If, however, a mutually acceptable disposition cannot be achieved, the student may present the matter in writing to the CSON Chairperson. The student's written statement to the Chair must be submitted no later than two weeks from the date of the final meeting with the faculty member or preceptor and clearly specify the nature of the complaint and the remedy requested. The Chairperson will review the matter by meeting individually with each individual involved and reviewing any written materials related to the grievance. The Chairperson will meet again with the individuals involved, either separately or jointly or both, in an attempt to resolve the matter.

The Chairperson will provide a written response within two weeks of this meeting. If a settlement is reached, it is to be put in writing and signed by the Chairperson and each of the parties, with each to retain a copy. If no resolution is reached, the Chairperson will prepare a written summary of events relevant to the grievance and provide a copy of it to the student and the faculty member or other individuals involved. In the event that the grievance concerns treatment or evaluation in a practicum, the student should follow this same procedure, discussing the matter first with his or her preceptor and/or clinical instructor. If this discussion does not lead to resolution, the matter should be brought to the CSON Chairperson who will follow the guidelines described above.

FORMAL APPEAL PROCEDURES

If a graduate student is dissatisfied by the outcome of the discussions and process at the Chairperson level, the student may initiate a formal appeal. The student must initiate the appeal as early as possible, but not later than thirty (30) days after receiving the Chairperson's resolution.

A formal appeal consists of a written explanation of the grievance sent to the Associate Dean of Graduate Program, which should include the reasons the student believes the faculty member's or preceptor's evaluation was arbitrary, unethical, or based on extrinsic error, and the reasons why previous discussions were not satisfactory. The Associate Dean may request that the faculty member, the Chairperson and any other individual involved provide the Associate Dean with a written evaluation of the merit of the appeal and a summary of the attempts to resolve the grievance.

The Associate Dean will then convene an ad hoc committee composed of three members of the elected Grievance Committee. The ad hoc committee will conduct an independent review of the grievance, which will include discussing the grievance with the student, the Chairperson and other individuals involved. Within thirty (30) days of receiving the formal appeal, the ad hoc committee will provide a statement of the committee's resolution of the matter to the student, the Chairperson involved in the earlier level of the process, the person(s) against whom the grievance was brought, and the Associate Dean.

If the student is dissatisfied with the conclusions of the ad hoc committee, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean. The appeal must be submitted as soon as possible but no

later than thirty (30) days after the student has received the conclusions of the ad hoc committee.

A formal appeal to the Dean consists of a written explanation of the appeal, which should include the reasons the student believes the faculty member's or preceptor's evaluation was arbitrary, unethical, or based on extrinsic error, and the reasons why previous discussions were not satisfactory. Copies of decisions made by the Chairperson and the ad hoc committee will be forwarded to the Dean for the Dean's consideration in this review of the student's appeal. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the student's appeal, the Dean will render a decision. The decision of the Dean is final, and will be communicated to the student in writing, with copies to the person(s) against whom the grievance was brought, and the relevant CSON Chairperson and Associate Dean.

If a student's grievance relates to the student's legal rights under any law or regulation, the grievance will be addressed in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. In such cases, the faculty member or administrator responding to the grievance should consult with the Associate Dean of Finance and Administration who will facilitate communication with the Office of the General Counsel.