Faculty of Health Sciences
Master of Nursing Graduate Supervision Manual
A guide for faculty and students
University of Lethbridge Mission: The University of Lethbridge is Alberta’s Destination University. Founded in 1967 on traditional Blackfoot land, we are a community that fosters an atmosphere of discovery, a welcoming place where students and faculty have the freedom to think, create, and explore together. People are the essential resource of our institution; they define our university and are our greatest strength.

School Of Graduate Studies Vision and Mission:

To our students, we make a promise:

- To do our best, so they can be their best.
- To foster exploration, to share ideas and information, to teach but also to learn.
- To build the buildings, acquire the technology, cultivate the partnerships, and welcome the people essential to advancing an environment that excites and ignites learning.
- To create an environment where professors and students are colleagues and everyone grows together.
- To create an environment that recognizes the power of every student’s dream and helps that dream come true.

Faculty of Health Sciences Master of Nursing Program Mission: To prepare master of nursing graduates for advancement in professional roles in multiple domains.

Faculty of Health Sciences Master of Nursing Program Vision: Our graduates will take leading roles in nursing practice, education and research and will be well prepared to move on to PhD studies.
Introduction

This document is guided by the vision of University of Lethbridge; the vision, mission, and goals of the Faculty of Health Sciences Master of Nursing program, and the policies of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS). The purpose of this document is to highlight procedures that will assist students’ timely progress through the Master of Nursing program.

Guiding Principles

There are several basic principles that underlie Master of Nursing graduate supervision:

- All graduate student supervision in the Faculty of Health Sciences is carried out within the context of the vision and mission of the University of Lethbridge, SGS, and the Faculty of Health Sciences itself.
- The University Calendar is the official source of information regarding program information. Any discrepancy found between this handbook and the calendar will be resolved according to the University Calendar.
- The SGS provides leadership and policy around areas pertaining to graduate studies including student supervision. (Some sections of this document are taken directly from the SGS Master of Nursing Policy & Procedure document).
- Faculty and students maintain open and ongoing communication.

Role & Responsibilities of the MN Program Committee

The MN Program Committee, MN Academic Advisor, MN Program Specialist, and SGS work collaboratively with the nursing faculty and graduate students to provide accurate and timely information to ensure progression through the graduate program. To set the foundation for high quality communication processes, students are provided with an orientation to the Master of Nursing Program and to graduate studies. The MN Academic Advisor (and when necessary MN Program Chair) will provide support to students and faculty by meeting with students to review course availability, course selection, etc. on an as-needed basis. Much of the communication occurs through the University of Lethbridge email. Important documents are housed on the Moodle site, M.N. Program Support and updated as needed.

Overall, the responsibilities of the MN Program Committee include the following:

- Managing the day-to-day operations of the program.
- Reporting to Graduate Council on all matters related to its operation, at least annually.
- Recommending to Graduate Council policy and program changes.
- Recommending to the appropriate bodies on graduate scholarships, assistantships or awards.
On delegated authority from Graduate Council, providing for the admission of students to the SGS, subject to the admission standards and policies determined by the General Faculties Council (GFC).

- Awarding credit for any previous courses and/or graduate work.
- Recommending to the SGS Dean on student admissibility.
- On delegated authority from Graduate Council, providing for the appointment of examiners for examinations in the SGS, the conduct of examinations and the determination of the results of them.
- Reviewing and recommending where necessary to the SGS Dean on students’ progress and standing.
- Approving, reviewing and, where necessary, changing individual student programs.
- Reviewing and approving the composition of and/or changes to the composition of students’ Thesis Supervisory Committees.
- On delegated authority from Graduate Council, determining the conditions under which a student must withdraw from or may continue his or her program of studies in the SGS.
- Recommending graduands to the Executive Committee of Graduate Council for Graduate Council approval.
- Hearing student appeals of an academic nature, with the exception of grade appeals; appeals heard by the MN Program Committee include appeals related to: the outcome of a Thesis Oral Defense or student progress and standing.

**Role & Responsibilities of the MN Program Committee Chair**

- Encourages the student to be aware of all program requirements and regulations;
- Assists with the selection of courses which meet program requirements and interests and needs of the student;
- Assists with any concern which may arise during the program of studies;
- Provides preliminary guidance as required in the selection of a thesis/project area of investigation;
- Assists in the selection of a Thesis Supervisor. Once the MN Program Committee Chair has confirmed a faculty member’s agreement to serve as a student’s Thesis Supervisor, the MN Program Committee Chair contacts the faculty member to sign the Approval of Thesis Supervisor form and sends this form to the SGS. Once the form has been approved by the SGS, the SGS sends letters to the student and the Thesis Supervisor informing them of the approval.
- Serves as a liaison to connect with the potential Thesis Supervisor.
**Role & Responsibilities of the Graduate Student**

Students’ rights and responsibilities are legislated from time to time by the University of Lethbridge and outlined in the *Graduate Studies Calendar* and *University policies and procedures*.

The responsibilities of MN students at the University of Lethbridge include the following:

**Regulations & Requirements**

- Meet all degree requirements in a timely manner;
- Meet all deadlines and regulations associated with registration, award applications, and degree requirements;
- Conform to all University, departmental, and program requirements, legislation, and policies;
- Meet the performance standards and deadlines of funding organizations;
- Meet the terms and conditions of fellowships, teaching assistantships, and research assistantships.

**Knowledge & Skills**

- Develop the knowledge and skills needed to successfully complete academic studies.

**Academic & Ethical Standards**

- Uphold ethical standards in studies, scholarship, clinical practice and research.
- Adhere to the Tri-council Policy Statement (2014): Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. If unsure whether a project or thesis requires ethical approval through the University of Lethbridge’s Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC), students are directed to consult Appendix 3: Determination for Ethical Review in the Master of Nursing Policies & Procedures, and consult with the HSRC as needed.
- Acknowledge the contributions of the course instructors and/or Thesis Supervisor, funding agencies, and others to presentations and publications, including joint authorship if appropriate;
- Uphold the academic and non-academic standards outlined in the *Graduate Studies Calendar*.

**Communication**

- Keep regular, open communication with and seek advice from appropriate MN program personnel, such as course instructors, MN Program Committee Chair, Thesis/Project Supervisor, et cetera.
• Inform course instructors, the MN Program Committee Chair, and/or the Thesis/Project Supervisor in the case of any extended absences, and to follow the policies and procedures for requesting a Leave of Absence (see Leave of Absence).

**Planning**

• In consultation with the course instructors, MN Program Committee Chair, MN Academic Advisor (when appropriate) and/or supervisor, develop a realistic work schedule for completion of the program, including specific timelines and milestones.

**Academic Environment**

• Help ensure an academic environment free from harassment, discrimination, and conflict.

**Ownership of Data, Information, & Equipment**

• Respect the University of Lethbridge’s policies regarding intellectual property and the ownership of data and information;
• If applicable, follow the contractual agreements with other agencies or individuals regarding the ownership of data, information, and equipment;

**Academic and Non-Academic Performance**

• For expected standards of academic and non-academic performance for MN students, refer to the [Graduate Studies Calendar: Academic Regulations, Policies and Program Requirements](#).

**For graduate students considering a Thesis Supervisor**

Consider the following questions when choosing a Thesis Supervisor

• Where am I in my studies & what topic am I interested in?
• What are various faculty members’ interests and perceived capacity?
• How many students does the faculty member currently supervise?
• Do other students report getting a timely response from their supervisor?
• Do other students report having papers reviewed and returned in a timely manner?
• Are student papers being published?
• Does the faculty member have research funding?

**Changing Thesis Supervisor**

A student may request a change of supervisor at any time by approaching the MN Program Committee Chair. It is expected that the student will first discuss this request with the
supervisor. Supervisors may also request that the MN Program Committee Chair reassign the student to another supervisor. It is expected that the supervisor will first discuss this request with the student. In exceptional circumstances, students may seek direction from the MN Program Committee Chair prior to speaking with the assigned supervisor.

Where a student feels the need to change his/her Thesis Supervisor, it is important to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Ensure that there has been attempted communication with the supervisor;
- Documentation of conversations and emails with the supervisor (date, content, agreements made, etc);
- Meet with the MN Program Committee Chair to discuss issues and concerns;
- If not satisfied with the result of the conversation with the Chair, meet with the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies or designate.

Roles & Responsibilities of Thesis and Project Supervisor, and Faculty Mentor

Other faculty members will also be involved in supervising students. All MN students will be assigned a Thesis or Project Supervisor taking into account the student’s selected program stream and area of study.

Role & Responsibilities of a Thesis Supervisor

In general, the role of the Thesis Supervisor is to act as both an academic mentor, and an evaluator of the student’s performance. The Thesis Supervisor must provide professional guidance and help the student acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to plan and conduct original research.

The Thesis Supervisor’s responsibilities include:

Commitment:
- Make a commitment to supervise the student throughout his or her thesis proposal and development.

Mentorship & Respect:
- Give the student ongoing guidance on expected academic standards and the nature of research;
- Be open and accessible to the student;
- Give the student advice and constructive criticism, in support of high academic standards;
- Respect the student as a junior colleague in research;
- Acknowledge the student’s contributions to presentations and publications, including joint authorship if appropriate;
• Respect the University of Lethbridge’s policies on intellectual property and the ownership of data and information;
• Assist the student with scholarship/grant applications.

Regulations & Requirements:
• Share with the student the expectations of the Thesis Supervisor, the program, and the SGS;
• Ensure all SGS and program regulations and requirements are met, including those related to coursework, funding, thesis examination, and thesis oral defense.

Communication:
• Keep in contact with the student and meet with the student and members of the Thesis Supervisory Committee according to the program requirements (at least once or twice a semester);
• Hold regular progress and standing meetings to evaluate student progress and report on progress to the SGS;
• Notify the student and Thesis Supervisory Committee members of any anticipated change and subsequent approved change of the structure of the MN Program Committee by the SGS.

Planning:
• Provide guidance as required in refining the topic of a thesis;
• Review the student’s planned research methodology and assist the student in determining the best available option for the required Nursing elective course related to research design.
• In consultation with the student, establish a realistic work schedule with specific milestones for thesis completion;
• Fulfill all duties related to completing the Statement of Progress and Standing;
• Help ensure there are sufficient financial and material resources to perform the research and support the student. Where required, write statements of commitment of financial support for the student;
• Ensure the student has adequate supervision at all times during the program.

Research Environment:
• Help ensure an environment conducive to research and intellectual growth;
• Help ensure a research environment free from harassment, discrimination, and conflict.

Role & Responsibilities of a Project Supervisor

One faculty member will coordinate and supervise all of the students registered in each section of NURS 6002–Final Project. This is a six credit course that occurs in the summer session. NURS 5150–Project Development Seminar precedes this course and the Project Proposal for the final project will be completed in this course.

• Provide ongoing feedback throughout the course and on course assignment(s);
• Co-ordinate the colloquium;
• Mark the final Project Paper;
• Complete the Project Completion form and submit it to the MN Program Committee Chair

**Role of a Faculty Mentor**

While not in a supervisory role, faculty members may assume the role of mentor. Mentoring is defined as a *process* whereby one guides, leads, supports, teaches, and challenges individuals to facilitate their personal, educational, and professional growth and development through mutual respect and trust (Cole & Wright-Harp, 2006).

Mentors establish both a professional and personal relationship with the mentee that helps facilitate their academic success. Thus, the mentor makes a commitment to see that the student successfully completes the graduate program.

This dynamic relationship requires the mentor to:

• Commit to the mentoring process (reserve adequate time to the process and engage in regular communication. It’s suggested that the mentor and mentee meet at least once a month).

• Establish mentoring venues including tele-meetings, emails, in-person and cyber meetings

• Serve as a role model

• Monitor the mentee’s progress by reviewing the following areas
  – Coursework
  – Professional development
  – Thesis or project work
  – Concerns/challenges

**Problem solving and conflict resolution**

When conflicts arise in a student and supervisor relationship, the first step is to open a discussion to try and resolve the issue(s). If this is not successful, the next step is to consult university policies and procedures and MN Program Committee Chair.

**Publishing graduate research**

These guidelines are based on the policy statement of the ethics committee on the American Psychological Association. They are not meant to be ‘rules’ that have to be followed, but rather, they are meant to be points for students and supervisors to take into consideration.

While the wording of the guidelines refers primarily to publications arising from graduate thesis research, the intent is that the guidelines may also be applied to other situations such as research based on independent study courses or student involvement with faculty projects. It is also recognized that dual authorship is not always appropriate. In some cases, students may
have worked very independently on their research project and single authorship is appropriate. In other cases one or more faculty members or students may be included as authors because of the significance of their contribution to the research endeavor.

**Guidelines**

When student thesis research is published or presented only second authorship is acceptable for the thesis supervisor.

Second authorship would normally be expected if the supervisor makes a major intellectual contribution to the research study through the designation of concepts, variables, or theoretical applications and/or through the interpretation of the research findings and/or through a substantial contribution to the write-up of the published manuscript or conference paper.

Second authorship is a courtesy if the supervisor designates the general area of concern and/or is involved in development of the research design and/or provides the data base and/or provides financial support.

Second authorship is not normally acceptable if the supervisor only provides encouragement, critiques or editorial contributions.

In all instances, agreement should be reviewed between student and supervisor before the writing for publication is undertaken and at the time of submission of manuscripts of conference abstracts. Manuscripts or abstracts should not be submitted without the approval of both authors.

Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct Including 2010 Amendments
http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/