WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF NURSING & ALLIED HEALTH (SONAH)

DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (DNP) STUDENT HANDBOOK 2026-2027

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master's degree program in nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice program and post-graduate APRN certificate program at Western Kentucky University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791. (http://www.ccneaccreditation.org).

Note: Policies stated within this document relate to any student enrolled in the DNP program in the 2026-2027 academic year.

Revised July 6, 2026

GENERAL POLICIES

THE PROVISIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT DO NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE STUDENT AND THE SCHOOL OF NURSING & ALLIED HEALTH. THE FACULTY AT WKU SCHOOL OF NURSING & ALLIED HEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE REASONABLE CHANGES AS NECESSARY.

Students at Western Kentucky University are expected to review and abide by policies within the University Student Handbook. However, in addition to the University Student Handbook, there are specific policies related to nursing students. This section of the handbook contains policies that apply to students in the School of Nursing & Allied Health.

STUDENT POLICIES

The following sections cover general policies that apply to all students in programs within the School of Nursing & Allied Health.

Academic Policies

Academic Advisement

Students are assigned a faculty advisor who will assist in planning a program of study consistent with the student's interests and abilities. Each student assumes responsibility for initiating an advisement conference each semester, and any time there may be questions or concerns regarding the academic plan of study.

Computer Literacy

Students are expected to have adequate computer skills for writing papers, using electronic mail to communicate, and accessing information using the internet. If computer skills are not adequate, it is suggested the student investigate learning experiences to improve skills. Introductory computer courses are available here at WKU, local community colleges and/or technical schools, etc. Students are expected to use Microsoft Office and some specialty software (see class syllabi for details). Many courses are web-enhanced or web-based using the Blackboard Educational Package, which requires internet access and a current version of either Chrome, Internet Explorer or Fire Fox. Students are required to have a camera with microphone as well as speakers or audio for synchronous class meetings. Students without appropriate computer hardware and software will be expected to either upgrade their personal systems and/or make use of the student computer labs to complete computer-based assignments.

All students must use their **WKU EMAIL ADDRESS** and are responsible for checking their email on a regular basis for updates and instructions from their course and clinical faculty.

SON General Student Attendance and Illness Policy

Classroom, Lab, and Clinical Attendance

Attendance: Students are expected to be present, punctual, and attentive for class, lab and clinical experiences.

Tardiness: Students are expected to arrive prior to the start of class, to avoid disrupting the classroom. Students who arrive after class begins may be asked to wait until break to enter the classroom. Admittance to the clinical setting/laboratory in the event of tardiness for exceptional circumstances will be at the discretion of the instructor.

Extra Assignments: Faculty members may assign extra work for students who have missed any part of a class or clinical to help the student regain what was lost during their absence if the faculty member feels this is appropriate.

Extenuating Circumstances: *Unforeseen events* such as an auto accidents, deaths in the immediate family or personal illness which requires a student to be absent from class or clinical may be viewed as an extenuating circumstance. In the case of such events the student must notify faculty members as soon as possible. ***Vacations, weddings, doctor appointments, studying for an exam, childcare issues, job interviews, working, etc. are not considered extenuating circumstances as these are not unforeseen events.*** Students wishing to claim extenuating circumstances will be asked to provide documentation of the condition which led to excessive absenteeism. The presence of extenuating circumstances does not guarantee that a student will be exempted from this attendance policy.

Personal Illness and Emergency
Students may not attend class or clinical if they have a fever or other evidence of a contagious illness. Students are expected to be fever free for 24 hours after an acute illness before returning to the class or clinical setting. If students are unable to attend the regularly scheduled class, lab or clinical rotation due to illness or such an emergency, they are required to provide advance notice via telephone or email to the faculty member teaching the course. In an emergency where advance notice is impossible, the student is required to notify the faculty member teaching the course as soon as possible.

If an emergency situation occurs during a class, lab, or clinical session that requires immediate medical attention for a student, the nursing faculty is to contact 911 and provide directions to the student's location. The student is responsible for any transport and treatment costs. Students should contact their own health care provider for recommendations for follow-up treatment.
Approved Jan 2017 SON Faculty

Inclement Weather Policy
Students are expected to exercise sound personal judgment regarding travel to and from clinical experiences during severe weather conditions in their geographic area or their clinical site, even when the university remains open. Each student is responsible for assessing travel conditions within their area and determining whether it is safe to attend the clinical experience.

SON Core Performance Standards

DIVISION:	School of Nursing
TITLE:	School of Nursing Core Performance Standards
DATE:	May 2016
REVISED:	N/A
AUTHORIZED:	Mary Bennett, Director WKU School of Nursing

I. Purpose and Scope
To document the required Core Performance Standards for WKU School of Nursing Pre- Licensure Students. To document student's acknowledgement of their awareness of these standards and that they can meet these standards upon application to one of the WKU pre- licensure nursing programs.

II. Otherwise Qualified Person with a Disability
An otherwise qualified individual with a disability is a person with a recognized disability who is otherwise qualified (meets the academic requirements for placement within an admission cohort) but may not be able to meet the core performance standards without accommodations.

III. Students who require accommodation
(Academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aids or services) to meet the core performance standards must contact the WKU SARC Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC) and obtain evaluation of any necessary accommodations prior to entering the nursing program. Written documentation from the SARC must be presented to the nursing program prior to starting nursing courses, so that any necessary arrangements can be made to provide appropriate accommodations (more information below). *Please note that admission into the nursing program does not guarantee the student with a disability will be able to be placed at specific clinical agencies, or that every clinical agency will be able to provide the same level of accommodations for students with disabilities.*

IV. Testing Accommodations
Students requesting testing accommodations within WKU School of Nursing must meet the same rigorous standards as those required for nursing licensure and accreditation exams. See School of Nursing Testing Accommodations Policy for details. Students should work with SARC to obtain the needed documentation and make arrangements for extended testing prior to the first timed graded assignment or exam within a course, or within 4 weeks of starting the course, whichever comes first. Last minute requests for extended time on exams may not be able to be accommodated.

V. The Core Performance Standards
These are approved technical standards for students in nursing programs. Each institution must make explicit essential eligibility requirements for its nursing program by citing the core performance standards. The standards set forth cognitive, sensory, affective, and psychomotor performance requirements. Each core performance standard should be accompanied by examples of activities nursing students are required to perform.

VI. Core Performance Standards

To enter, remain and progress in the WKU pre-licensure nursing program, all students must be able to meet the following core performance standards, with or without reasonable accommodation. Examples of abilities listed below are not comprehensive.

- **Gross Motor:** Students must have sufficient physical mobility to travel independently to and within hospitals, homes, clinics, schools, and other health-related agencies. They must be able to quickly and safely move from room to room and maneuver in small places. They must have the gross and fine motor capability to provide safe care to clients independently. This requires the ability to sustain work requiring delivering services at the bedside, standing/walking for 8-12 hours, traveling independently, ability to reach above shoulders to manage IVs or monitors, ability to reach below waist to manage equipment, twist, bend, stoop, squat, push, pull, lift, support at least 50 pounds in order to position, transfer, and ambulate patients, ability to administer CPR to adults, children and infants, and perform physical movements quickly and efficiently to provide safe patient care.
- **Sensory and Fine Motor:** Students must have sufficient tactile and manual dexterity to (a) accurately manipulate equipment, (b) complete a physical assessment (palpation, percussion, auscultation, taking a pulse), (c) prepare and administer medications, (d) legibly print dates and times on medication vials, (e) perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation, (f) use a computer keyboard, (g) legibly and accurately document nursing care, and (h) perceive attributes of objects such as dimension, shape, color, temperature and texture.
- **Visual Acuity:** Students must have sufficient visual acuity to (a) observe subtle changes in clients' conditions, (b) accurately read medical records and orders, (c) accurately read computer monitor screens and other equipment indicators, and (d) legibly and accurately document nursing care. Detect changes in color of various alarm lights and laboratory assays which are color based.
- **Auditory Acuity:** Students must have the auditory acuity with and without background noise that enables them to communicate with others and to assess the physical status of a client (breath sounds, heart sounds, bowel sounds, auscultating blood pressure, etc.). Students must possess sufficient auditory acuity to respond to various alarm signals from different types of equipment, such as when the alarm is sounding from the patient's room and the student is in the hallway. Must be able to respond to normal volume speech in situations where unable to see lips move, as when the speaker is not facing the student or when the speaker is wearing a mask.
- **Communication Skills:** Students must have sufficient receptive, written and oral communication skills to accurately receive, read, interpret and comprehend the English language in written and verbal forms in order to (a) to communicate effectively and professionally with clients, faculty, staff, and peers from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds; (b) Give oral and written reports to faculty and other members of the health care team: (c) teach clients and families; (d) accurately document, interpret, and comprehend nursing interventions and actions and client responses; (e) communicate data about clients in a timely manner; and (f) demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback.
- **Emotional and Cognitive Skills:** Students must have sufficient emotional stability and cognitive skills to (a) process both verbal and written information in a reasonable amount of time; (b) demonstrate good judgement; (c) respect differences in patients, families and other students; (d) establish and maintain appropriate relationships and boundaries with clients, faculty, staff, and peers; (e) work closely with others, including touching and being touched by others during patient care and in training situations; (f) take responsibility for their own actions; (g) complete all responsibilities in the assessment and implementation of nursing care for patients in a timely, safe and effective manor; (h) adapt to changing and high paced environments without becoming overwhelmed; and (i) have adequate environmental awareness and emotional stability to remain calm and function effectively in multiple, complex settings that may be stressful, noisy and may be potentially harmful. This includes exposure to communicable diseases, personal injury, death of patients, and violence in the workplace.

Change in Ability to Meet the Core Performance Standards

Students who experience a change that affects their ability to meet any of the core performance standards must notify their assigned faculty. Students unable to function safely and effectively in the clinical setting may be required to drop out of the clinical courses during the time they are unable to meet the core performance standards. If the student experiences a change but feels that they can continue to perform safely in the clinical setting, the faculty member will require documentation from the student's health care provider indicating that the student can safely function in the clinical setting.

Requesting Reasonable Accommodations
Students diagnosed with disabilities covered by the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act may be granted special accommodation in the nursing classroom or laboratory setting. Details concerning the accommodations required in each setting must be documented. Accommodations granted in one setting may be different than those granted in another setting and are not automatic. For example, *an accommodation of double testing time for a learning disability in the classroom does not mean the student will automatically get double time to perform a procedure in a laboratory or clinical setting.* It should be noted that in the clinical setting the ability to perform skills safely and effectively is mandatory and students must be able to perform the assigned clinical skills within the allotted clinical time. For example, it is not reasonable for the student to take 12 hours to provide the assigned patient care instead of 6 hours. It is the responsibility of the student to follow the appropriate procedure for requesting an accommodation through the WKU Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC).
SARC, Downing Student Union (DSU) Room 1074, Monday-Friday, 8-4:30, 270-745-5004. sarc.testing@wku.edu.

Testing Accommodations Policy and Procedure

Policy & Procedure Document

NUMBER:	N.1003
DIVISION:	School of Nursing
TITLE:	School of Nursing Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
DATE:	1/27/2012
REVISED:	N/A
AUTHORIZED:	Mary Bennett, Director WKU School of Nursing

I. Purpose and Scope

In order to standardize application for testing accommodations within the school of nursing to those required for students taking nursing licensure and certification exams, the following policy will apply to nursing students who are requesting testing accommodations for School of Nursing courses.

II. Policy

Students requesting testing accommodations within WKU School of Nursing must meet the same rigorous standards as those required for nursing licensure and accreditation exams.

III. Procedure

1. All students seeking testing accommodations within the School of Nursing must work through student disabilities PRIOR to taking any exam for which they want accommodations. Retroactive accommodations will not be allowed under any circumstances.
2. Students must submit a written statement, on letterhead, from the disability coordinator at your high school or other former educational program, listing a detailed diagnosis, the date of your initial diagnosis, and the accommodations provided to you while attending the program. The disability coordinator may require you to sign a release of information form before the documentation can be released to WKU.
3. Documentation from a licensed health care provider (Physician, Psychologist or Nurse Practitioner) with expertise in evaluation of learning disabilities. Document must include all of the following:
    a. Recent (within the past two years) reports, test results, evaluations, and assessments of the need for accommodations due to a physical or mental disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities, and the applicable DMI code(s).
    b. A description of your substantial day-to-day functional limitations resulting from your stated disabilities.
    c. A history of the disability and any past accommodations granted to the candidate, as well as a description of the disabilities impact on the individual's functioning.
    d. Identification of the specific standardized and professionally recognized adult test/assessments given (such as Woodcock-Johnson, Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale,), the scores resulting from testing, interpretations of the scores and evaluations.
    e. Recommendations for testing accommodations with a stated rationale as to why the requested accommodations are necessary and appropriate for the diagnosed disability.
4. After all required documentation has been submitted to SARC the School of Nursing will be notified by SARC of the recommended testing accommodations.
5. The School of Nursing will work with testing services to provide any required testing accommodations for all candidates who provide the above required documentation for.

6. The Student Accessibility Resource Center will keep copies of all documentation supporting the need for testing accommodation for accreditation and KBN audit reports.

IV. Related Policies

SON Core Performance Standards

Testing Accommodations Procedure

This procedure applies to students who are taking proctored or monitored exams and/or quizzes and does not apply to quizzes or tests given online in a non-proctored setting. Any student who is admitted into the WKU Nursing Program and has a letter of accommodation form from the Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC) requesting testing accommodations will be required to take all exams requiring accommodations at the Student Accessibility Resource Center or other pre-approved testing center. This standardized procedure will provide the proper testing environment and promote student success.

What you need to know before taking a proctored exam in the SARC Testing Center

I. Appointments

Your instructor will tell you what dates s/he wants you to take your exams. It is your responsibility to work with your instructor to schedule your proctored exam with the SARC Testing Center.

II. Parking for the SARC Testing Center

- Parking at WKU is a challenge. If you do not have a student parking pass you will need to give yourself plenty of time to get a visitor parking pass and find a parking spot.
- To obtain detailed information about parking passes and parking locations, please visit the Parking and Transportation website at wku.edu/transportation.
- If you have any questions or concerns about parking on the WKU campus you may contact the Parking and Transportation Office at (270) 745-2361.
- Testers requiring parking accommodations due to accessibility issues, please contact Parking and Transportation or click here: http://www.wku.edu/transportation/disability/

SARC Downing Student Union (DSU) Room 1074, Monday-Friday 8-4:30, 270-745-5004, sarc.testing@wku.edu, www.wku.edu/sarc

SARC testing procedures can be found at the following link:
http://www.wku.edu/sarc/testing_guidelines_and_forms.php

III. Check-in

You will need to go through a check-in procedure so please plan to arrive five to ten minutes before your scheduled exam to complete the necessary paperwork. (During peak testing times plan on arriving 15 – 20 minutes prior to the exam).

IV. Identification

You must show a current photo ID before you will be allowed to take an exam at either testing location. Valid forms of ID are: WKU Student ID, state-issued driver's license, passport, or other government issued photo ID. (You will also be requested to provide your WKU 800#).

V. Testing Times

The time you reserve for your exam is the time that your exam starts. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late for your exam and testing center is full, you will not be allowed to take the test and will have to reschedule. You will not be given an extension of time if you start your test late.

VI. Personal Items

All personal items, purses, hats, cell phones, PDAs, books, papers, etc. must be stored in storage bins. Individual storage for personal items is available inside the SARC office. All cell phones must be turned off inside the testing center.

VII. Books, calculators, etc.

You may not use books, notes, calculators, or other aids when taking your exam unless your instructor has given permission to the Testing Pro-staff that such items are allowed during your exam. Instructors supply this information in advance of your testing dates.

VIII. Food and drink

No food or drink of any kind will be allowed inside the testing room.

IX. Cheating on Exams

Proctors in the testing centers will monitor you during your exam. Monitoring includes watching from a seated position in the room, walking through the room, and viewing a computer screen showing a video feed from the cameras that are in use inside the testing room.

If you are caught cheating on an exam, the proctor will report the incident to the Testing Pro- staff member on duty and will write an incident report which will be given to the faculty member for whose class you were taking the exam. The faculty member will then take appropriate action which may include a failing grade "F" on the exam or a failing grade "F" in the course.

Additional actions which may be taken involve probation, suspension or expulsion from the university as deemed by the Offices of Student Life and Judicial Affairs.

Approved May 8, 2015 WKU School of Nursing Faculty

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

NOTE: Students are responsible for all costs associated with meeting these requirements.

Health and Safety Records

All students will be required to submit the following documentation prior to starting the program:

- Consent for Medical Records Release form
- Medical History form
- WKU Physical Exam form completed
- Influenza (flu) immunization for the current season
- Td (tetanus/diphtheria) or Tdap vaccine within the last ten (10) years. If, you need to obtain a Td booster, it is recommended that you be immunized with a vaccine that also contains the pertussis vaccine.
- Titers showing immunity for each of the following: Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella. If a student is found to be non-immune, then the student must be re-immunized unless contraindicated by health care provider.
- Hepatitis B series completion or sign a declination statement. If by providing a titer, a student is found to be non-immune, then the student must be re-immunized unless contraindicated by health care provider or a signed declination statement must be provided.
- Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) health professionals – A copy of the roster or documentation on letterhead of your re-certification class; Employee Health Record, if your employer records your BLS training within this document; or your updated CPR card are acceptable documentation. If needed, you may enroll in a WKU CPR course by contacting AHEC at (270) 745-3762.
- Personal health insurance is required by some of our clinical agencies and is needed to defray the cost of hospital and medical care for any illness or injury that might be sustained while in this program and the substantial monetary liability that you, as a student, might incur as a result of failure to have such insurance. If you are not currently covered, you may want to consider affordable student policies. Information regarding WKU's student health insurance can be found at https://www.wku.edu/healthservices/top-menu/students-page.php but you are not required to purchase through WKU.
- Criminal background check
- Drug Screen – ten (10) panel urine drug screen; confirmatory analysis must be completed on any positive results from the initial analysis
- Documentation of a two-step TB skin test or T-Spot (if needed), or an annual TB Skin test or T-Spot result. Thereafter, an annual TB skin test is required. If the student has a positive skin test, they are required to follow the guidelines for follow-up and/or treatment as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.

All students will be required to submit the following prior to the start of clinical and practicum courses and to maintain these records on an annual basis:

- Current documentation for any expired document above
- **Liability Insurance:** All students in the School of Nursing must purchase the appropriate Individual Occurrence Based Nursing Student Professional Liability Insurance in the amount of $1,000,000/$3,000,000. The policy must be in effect the first day of class in a clinical nursing course and must be kept current throughout the program of study. Submission of the insurance policy face sheet which shows expiration date must be submitted prior to your first clinical course and then on an annual basis. We recommend you start your search for this coverage at least two (2) months before your first clinical course. Additionally, the cost of malpractice insurance for nurse practitioner students can be high.
- Students will also be responsible for providing any additional information, documentation of training or any further requirements that may be required by a health care agency in order to complete clinical rotations at that agency.

Bloodborne Pathogens Policy

Faculty and students of the School of Nursing at Western Kentucky University must seek appropriate treatment, follow-up and counseling after exposure to blood or body fluids.

An exposure is defined as:

- A needle or other puncture wound from a source contaminated with body fluids.
- Direct contact of non-intact skin (open lesion, chapped, or abraded skin) with large amounts of blood or prolonged contact with blood.
- Mucous membrane contact from a known source of blood or body fluids (a splash in the eye, mouth, or any other mucous membrane lining.)

1. In the event that a student or faculty member is exposed to a bloodborne pathogen during a scheduled clinical experience the agency's exposure policy should be followed. The student/faculty will:
    - Notify the appropriate agency representative.
    - Initiate immediate treatment by:
        - Cleaning the wound/skin area with soap and water.
        - Flushing mucous membranes with tap water or saline.
        - Serious injuries requiring suturing or physician intervention should be promptly evaluated according to agency's direction or according to insurance requirement of the faculty/student.
    - Faculty will report the exposure to the appropriate supervisors and assist the student in completing any required agency documentation.
    - **The exposed individual is responsible for any costs related to testing and treatment of self and testing of the source.**
2. In the event that a student or faculty member is exposed to a bloodborne pathogen during a scheduled clinical experience while **NOT** in a traditional clinical setting (i.e. community-based experiences such as school health or community screening) the following procedure should be followed:
    - Provide immediate first aid treatment as described above.
    - Proceed to the closest emergency facility to initiate post-exposure screening, treatment and counseling.
    - The faculty/student is encouraged to seek post-exposure treatment within 2 hours of the exposure. If travel distance does not allow, the follow-up should be completed as soon as possible.
    - The exposed individual is responsible for costs related to testing and treatment of self and testing of the source.
3. Following the exposure, the nursing faculty should complete the Exposure to Body Substance Form and submit it to the director for review or follow-up.
4. While it is an individual decision whether to comply with the recommended post-exposure screening, treatment, counseling, or follow-up, the student/faculty should be offered available resources such as the Barren River District Health Department.
5. The exposed student/faculty should obtain a copy of "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens" from the OSHA website.

Latex Sensitivity Policy

1. It is the student's responsibility to inform faculty if they have a known allergy to latex, or if they suspect symptoms of latex sensitivity. Symptoms may include but are not limited to the following: runny nose, itching eyes, asthma, eczema, contact dermatitis, and rarely shock.
2. In the event of a known latex allergy, continued enrollment in the program will be dependent upon the recommendations of an appropriate health care provider and the student's ability to meet core standard requirements.
3. If there is a known allergy to latex, the student should avoid contact with latex gloves and other products containing latex, avoid inhaling the powder from latex gloves worn by other students or workers in the clinical setting or laboratory, and carefully follow the student's health care provider's instructions for dealing with allergic reactions.
4. In campus laboratory experiences, the lab coordinator will make appropriate accommodations for students with latex allergy.
5. In order to decrease the chances of developing a latex sensitivity, students should use non-latex gloves when available, avoid oil-based hand cream or lotion under gloves, and wash hands with a mild soap and dry thoroughly after removing latex gloves.
6. If you suspect that you are having symptoms of latex sensitivity, immediately report those symptoms to faculty, avoid direct contact with all latex containing products, and see a health care provider experienced in treating a latex allergy.

Drug and Alcohol Use Policy

Purpose and Scope

In order to protect patient safety and to comply with clinical agency requirements and Kentucky Board of Nursing recommendations, the following policy will apply to all students who are accepted into any WKU School of Nursing Program.

In order to uphold the highest standards of the nursing profession, the WKU School of Nursing has adopted a drug-free environment. The Supreme Court policy also applies to use of prescription drugs in an illegal manner, and any use of marijuana or marijuana products, even when visiting parts of the US where such products may be legal. Students are required to submit to drug testing prior to the start of the program and at random intervals throughout the program. Students seeking an exception to the drug free policy must complete the Student Medication Exception Form at the time they START use of any controlled substance medication (form is available on the School of Nursing website, under Policies, Handbooks and Forms). This form must be completed by the health care provider who prescribes the medication. Students who test positive for controlled substances at any point in time who do not have a current exception form on file with the WKU School of Nursing verifying their approved use of the substance will be dismissed from the nursing program.

To avoid any possibility of a false positive drug screen, students will not ingest any product that is related to an illegal substance. This includes poppy seeds, hemp food products such as hemp seeds and hemp oils, or other products that may be developed from plants or chemicals that are related to illegal drugs. The student bears full responsibility for what they take into or apply to their bodies, so a positive drug test for any reason will be viewed as cause for dismissal.

Acting in any nursing student role, including attending class or clinical or acting as a nursing student in the community setting, or driving to and from these activities, including student organization activities, while under the influence of illegal drugs and/or while publicly intoxicated violates the drug free policy and will result in dismissal from the nursing program.

All students are required to have a negative drug screen prior to entering their first clinical experience and the results of the drug screen must be submitted to the program directly from WKU Health Services or an alternate venue (provider, walk-in clinic, etc.). As a further condition of admission and continuance in the program, random drug/alcohol screening will be required at the discretion of the nursing faculty and/or clinical facility, and the costs of such random screening will be covered using student fees. If a random drug/alcohol screen is positive, it will be confirmed by secondary testing. If confirmed it will result in the student being dismissed from the nursing program. Students attending class or clinical who smell of alcohol or engage in behavior indicating impairment or who have other signs of drug or alcohol use will undergo for cause screening and the student will be required to obtain transportation to the student health center for drug/alcohol screening. The student will be responsible for payment of all costs related to transportation and for cause drug screening. WKU faculty, staff and/or students will not be responsible for transportation of students who demonstrate signs of impairment.

Drug Screen Procedures - Admission to the Nursing Program

1. All students entering the nursing program will be required to have a negative drug screen prior to the start of the program.
2. This drug screen will be at the student's expense and must be completed at Western Kentucky University's Health Services or an alternate venue (provider, walk-in clinic, etc.).
3. Students taking legally prescribed medications which may show up on a drug screen are required to report this medication **at the time the medication is prescribed** using the School of Nursing Medication Exception Form, located on the School of Nursing Website, under Policies, Handbooks and Forms.
4. In the event of a positive test result, confirmatory testing using a gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) screening will be completed before the results are given to the student. This confirmation test will be performed at the student's expense.
5. The Medical Review Officer (MRO) at the WKU Health Services or her designee will review all positive drug screens. The MRO will contact all students with positive tests to determine if there is a valid reason for the results (e.g. OTC drugs, herb preparations, and/or prescription drugs currently being taken). The MRO will also consult with the School of Nursing to determine if a prior Medication Exemption form was filed.
6. The MRO makes the final decision on all drug test results and the decision of the MRO will be accepted by the School of Nursing as the final results. Any concerns about the validity of the test results or additional information concerning how a test might have registered as positive must be addressed through the MRO.
7. The MRO will notify the program administrator of all positive results. The program administrator may also notify other appropriate administrators or committee members who are involved in the decision-making process concerning student admissions or dismissals.
8. The School of Nursing and /or the University reserves the right to refer the student to the Dean of Student Life for university disciplinary investigation and/or action.

Drug Screen Procedures - Post-Admission to the Nursing Program

1. Random Screening: Random screening of students may be required at the discretion of the Director of the School of Nursing.
2. Screening for Cause: In the event a student is suspected of being under the influence of any substance that would impair judgment or performance while performing ANY activity which is related to your nursing student role (class, clinical or community settings, while driving to and from nursing activities and activities related to nursing student professional groups), the suspected individual will be asked to have a blood alcohol level and drug screen done immediately. The suspected individual will be instructed to call someone for transportation. The suspected individual will be suspended from all clinical nursing activities until the issue is resolved. The cost of the tests will be the responsibility of the student. Breathalyzer tests done by licensed police officers for suspected DUI or public intoxication which indicate impairment will also count as a positive screen. The Director of the School of Nursing or program coordinator must also be notified of any behavior which triggers for cause screening.
3. Students taking legally prescribed medications: If students test positive on drug screen or if it impairs student judgment and/or behavior are required to report this medication **at the time the medication is prescribed** using School of Nursing Medication Exception Form, located on the School of Nursing Website, under Policies, Handbooks and Forms. The prescribing health care provider must agree that the student is safe to take the medication while driving and practicing in a clinical setting before the student will be allowed to attend clinical functions while on medications that may impair judgment.
4. In the event of a positive urine drug test result: Confirmatory testing using a gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) screening will be completed before the results are given to the student. This confirmation test will be performed at the student's expense.
5. Medical Review Officer (MRO): WKU Health Services or her designee will review all positive drug screens. The MRO will contact all students with positive tests to determine if there is a valid reason for the results (e.g. OTC drugs, herb preparations, and/or prescription drugs currently being taken). The MRO will also consult with the School of Nursing to determine if a prior Medication Exemption form was filed.
6. MRO makes the final decision: All drug test results, and the decision of the MRO will be accepted by the School of Nursing as the final results. Any concerns about the validity of the test results or additional information concerning how a test might have registered as positive must be addressed through the MRO.
7. Program administrator notified: The MRO will notify the program administrator of all positive results. The program administrator may also notify other appropriate administrators or committee members who are involved in the decision-

making process concerning student dismissals. All students testing positive on drug screens will be dismissed from the program.

8. School of Nursing and/or the University reserves the right: SONAH and/or University reserves the right to refer the student to the Dean of Student Life for university disciplinary investigation and/or action. Test results for properly prescribed prescription medications which are covered under the Medication Exemption form (see above) will be treated as medical information and held confidential per HIPAA rules. There is no assumption of privacy for tests results indicating illegal drug use and the School of Nursing reserves the right to report illegal drug use to university and legal authorities for follow up. A positive drug screen in a licensed individual (RN or LPN) will be reported to the Kentucky Board of Nursing or the licensing board of whatever state/s the individual holds a license.
9. Students who are dismissed: Students dismissed for drug or alcohol use may petition to be re- admitted to the School of Nursing, to re-enter the program after at least one year of drug/alcohol evaluation and treatment. In order to be considered for re-admission to the WKU School of Nursing, the student must submit a written petition to the program coordinator along with a letter from a treatment agency verifying completion of a drug evaluation/treatment program. Documentation must include a statement by the therapist that the applicant will be able to function effectively and provide safe, therapeutic care for clients in the clinical setting. **Readmission is not guaranteed.**
10. Student with positive drug test is readmitted: If student is readmitted to the nursing program, increased random drug screening will be performed at the student's expense throughout the program of studies. A second positive drug test will render the student ineligible to continue or be re-enrolled in the program.

Criminal Background Check

Various clinical healthcare agencies utilized by the WKU Nursing Programs require a criminal background check of current nursing students therefore clinical agencies have the right to deny a student clinical placement at their facility if the student has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor. If a clinical agency refuses a student clinical access due to a criminal conviction, the student may be unable to meet the clinical objectives of the nursing course and may be dismissed from the nursing Program. Students will have a criminal background check on admission to the nursing program. In addition, students are required to notify the program coordinator immediately of any criminal charges that occur once they are in the program. A student's failure to notify the nursing program of any change in their criminal record since initial admission will also result in the student's immediate dismissal from the program.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR POLICIES

Student Engagement in the Curriculum and Policy Process

Students have an opportunity for input into the curriculum, to voice their concerns to faculty, and to provide input into policies and decisions that impact student welfare, policies and privileges.

Students will be selected/elected to represent student concerns at the program committee meetings. Student representatives will be notified of faculty committee meetings via e-mail.

Student Appeals

Students who feel they have cause for an appeal of a faculty or program decision have the right to appeal the decision as described in the WKU Student Handbook.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in the School of Nursing or any university building. Smoking is currently permitted in marked areas outside of buildings, away from doorways and other high traffic areas. In addition, smoking policies of clinical facilities must be upheld when students are off campus. Students will be expected to abide by the smoking policies at the university and all clinical facilities. Infractions of smoking policies, like other policies, are cause for written misconduct statements and repeat offenses can lead to dismissal from the clinical agency or the nursing program (see Professional Conduct Policy for more information).

Acceptance of Gifts

Occasionally clients or family members may wish to thank students or staff for a job well done by giving them a small gift. While the School of Nursing does not encourage this practice, it is essential that faculty and students abide by the policy of the clinical institution regarding gift acceptance. Students must discuss the situation with the faculty before accepting any gift.

Academic Honesty

Western Kentucky University nursing students are expected to demonstrate a high standard of academic honesty in all aspects of their academic work and college life. Without intellectual integrity there cannot be genuine learning. Academic dishonesty represents a direct attack on this integrity. In taking tests and examinations, completing homework, laboratory and clinical work, writing papers, and using information technology, students are expected to demonstrate honesty. Cheating, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will lead to a failing grade on the assignment/exam and/or a failing grade in the course. Repeat occurrences of this type of behavior can result in dismissal from the program.

Cheating

Cheating is defined, but not limited to, the wrongful giving, taking or presenting of any information or material by a student with the intent of aiding himself/herself or another in any academic work. Such behavior is not acceptable. Any behavior of academic dishonesty will be addressed in a conference with the student and a panel of faculty. A score of zero will be applied to an examination or assignment for academic dishonesty. Abstracted from Western Kentucky University Student Handbook, *"Cheating-No student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment or other project which is submitted for purposes of grade determination."*

It is understood that because of the nature of the nursing curriculum at Western Kentucky University, a certain amount of teamwork and sharing of information is necessary for completion of assignment; however, these situations will be clearly identified by the course instructor. Cheating on an examination can take a variety of forms including:

- Discussing the examination during the examination with anyone except the instructor or the instructor's substitute unless specifically authorized to do so by the instructor.
- Giving, receiving, or soliciting unauthorized aid during any examination, take-home examination, or make-up examination before or after the regular scheduled examination has been administered.
- Using materials in any examination except those that are specifically authorized by the instructor.
- Exchanging materials with another student during the examination unless authorized to do so by the written examination instructions.
- Violating any rules that the instructor has established for an examination period.

Plagiarism

A nursing student must not plagiarize materials of others. Students' work is expected to be the result of their own thought, research or self-expression. Plagiarism is the act of presenting the information, ideas, organization or phrase of another source without appropriate acknowledgment or credit given, either intentionally or because of gross negligence. Any act of plagiarism by a nursing student is not acceptable. Abstracted from Western Kentucky University Student Handbook- *"Plagiarism-To represent written work taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his/her own. One must give any author credit for source material borrowed from him/her. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage without reference to the source after having changed a few words is also plagiarism."*

Confidentiality Policy (HIPAA)

Information obtained by students through their activities and experiences in nursing clinical/laboratory/classroom settings related to patients/clients, personnel, and facilities are considered confidential. Such matters are discussed for the purposes of learning in nursing conferences and classes only.

WKU policy prohibits the recording of any personally identifiable client information in any format. This includes written information, photocopies, audio or digital recordings, video, or pictures of clients or client records. Papers related to clinical/laboratory experiences will not identify any person, agency, or agency personnel by name. Student papers may contain the student and clinical instructor names only. Web sites that contain online personal journaling with reflections, comments,

and/or hyperlinks provided by the writer have legal implications with regards to HIPAA, even if they are password protected or shared with a limited audience. Sharing protected health care related information (including pictures) obtained during classroom, laboratory, or clinical experiences or from patients/clients in this or any other manner is a violation of federal regulations and as such may result in dismissal from the program (see professional misconduct).
Committee Approval: Approved by WKU School of Nursing Faculty 12/14/2007

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT & STUDENT EXPECTATIONS POLICY

Professional Conduct of Nursing Students

Western Kentucky University nursing students are expected to demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct in all aspects of their academic work and college life. Professional nursing behavior is guided and shaped by adherence to the American Nurses Association Scope and Standards of Practice, and the Code for Ethics (http://www.nursingworld.org/) and other agencies code of ethics, such as the NSNA Code of Conduct for prelicensure students, the National League for Nursing Code of Conduct and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Education Programs (https://www.aacnnursing.org/CCNE-Accreditation/Accreditation-Resources/Standards-Procedures-Guidelines). The professional behavior of nursing students is thus directed by these standards and guidelines, as well as by clinical agency policies, Federal regulations and laws such as HIPAA and University policy. Professional misconduct may result in a student's dismissal from the nursing program.

Disrespectful or Inappropriate Behavior

As members of the nursing profession, it is imperative that nursing students recognize their responsibility to society and their patients and exhibit behavior representing high standards, polite etiquette, compassion and respect for human dignity. Disrespectful or inappropriate behaviors include, *but are not limited to*: non-preparedness for a class or clinical, failure to notify faculty members in advance if they are not able to attend clinical for any reason, refusing a class or clinical assignment, not following the prescribed school or clinical agency policy for dress, smoking, and hygiene standards, use of profanity with patients/ancillary staff, degrading comments or actions, disrespectful nonverbal communications, fraudulent behavior, deception, and/or neglect of patients. Students who engage in disrespectful or inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the class or clinical setting and may be given an unsatisfactory performance or a failing grade for that particular class or clinical day. Students who repeat such behaviors may receive a failing grade for the course or be dismissed from the program.

Dismissal for Non-Academic Reasons - Professional Misconduct

A student who engages in unsafe, unethical or inappropriate conduct in a clinical or non-clinical setting may be dismissed from the nursing program. Students who engage in behavior that places patients, staff members, other students, faculty or themselves at risk will be asked to leave the class or clinical area immediately. This policy includes *but is not limited to* verbally or physical threatening patients, staff, students or faculty, violation of federal or state regulations, being under the influence of alcohol or other mind-altering drugs, and/or performing actions outside of the nursing student scope of practice.

When a faculty member determines that a student may need to be removed from the nursing major because of unsafe, unethical, or grossly inappropriate conduct, the faculty member will inform the Director and Program Coordinator of the problems identified and the rational for a recommendation to dismiss the student from the Program. The faculty, Program Coordinator and Director will meet with the student. Students dismissed from the program have the right to appeal the dismissal as described in the WKU Student Handbook.

In the event that the student is retained within the program following professional misconduct, the student will have a written misconduct statement placed in their student record. The student will be given guidelines to follow concerning remediation and will be dismissed if the guidelines for remediation are not followed or if additional instances of professional misconduct are committed.

This policy serves as written warning to students of the professional misconduct policy.
The WKU Nursing Programs reserve the right to impose discipline against a student without additional warnings if circumstances justify such action at the discretion of the WKU Nursing Programs. Nothing herein shall be interpreted to require the WKU Nursing Programs to provide additional warnings to a student prior to any disciplinary action being taken, and the WKU Nursing Programs reserve the right to dismiss a student at any time for violation of School, Agency, or University Policies, professional conduct codes, or federal regulations.
Approved by School of Nursing Faculty 12/14/2007

Social Media Policy

Often students do not realize that items posted in various electronic media can be accessed even if they have been deleted and even if the student uses various privacy settings. These documents are discoverable in a court of law. Privacy settings are not sufficient to ensure privacy and will not keep a student from being legally responsible for the information that they post. Nurses and nursing students are held to a higher standard than the general public due to their positions of public trust and their potential ability to damage the reputation of a clinical facility with irresponsible postings. Therefore, the following policy for appropriate Social Media use will apply to all nursing students at WKU School of Nursing.

Policy

The School of Nursing (SON) ascribes to the recommendations for social media use published by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (Spector, 2012).

Procedure

Students enrolled within the School of Nursing will follow the policy for use of social media. Students found in violation of this policy will be subject to dismissal from the WKU School of Nursing.

1. Recognize that you have an ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient, faculty and other student's privacy and confidentiality at all times.
2. You must not transmit by way of any electronic media any patient-related information or image that is reasonability anticipated to violate patient rights to confidentially or privacy.
3. You must not transmit any electronic media, message or image that is reasonably anticipated to degrade or embarrass a patient, co-worker, fellow student, faculty member, WKU or any clinical facility while enrolled in a WKU nursing program.
4. You must not disseminate any information (including images, lab data, x-rays etc.) about a patient or information gained while in a student patient relationship with anyone; unless there is a care-related need to disclose the information or other legal obligation to do so.
5. You must not identify patients by name, ID number, birthdate or post or publish information that may lead to the identification of a patient. Limiting access to postings through privacy settings is not sufficient to ensure privacy.
6. You must not refer to patients in a disparaging manner, even if they are not identified by name, number or other means.
7. You must not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including mobile devices, even if the patient says it is ok.
8. You must maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media.
9. You must consult employer and school's policies or an appropriate leader within the organization for guidance regarding work or school related postings.
10. You must promptly report any breach of this policy by others to the appropriate authority within the clinical agency and/or the School of Nursing.
11. You must be aware of and comply with SON and clinical agency policies regarding the use of agency or school owned computers, cameras, and other electronic devices and the use of personal devices in the workplace.
12. You must not transmit or post disparaging remarks about classmates, faculty, clinical agencies, staff nurses or other co-workers.
13. You must not transmit any test questions, quiz questions, case studies, or answers to such nor post such items in any format, electronic or otherwise, outside of the context of your class. You may answer electronic quiz questions for a grade, you may not share the questions nor the answers with anyone. This is for exam security.
14. You may not purchase or otherwise obtain test questions or test banks from nursing textbooks, which are to be available to faculty only. This is in violation of the textbook copyright and will be subject to legal repercussions as well as dismissal from the nursing program. You may not represent yourself online or otherwise as a nursing faculty member to obtain access to materials that are for faculty use only. You may purchase and use nursing review books, which have sample NCLEX questions and are not part of the test database used for the development of nursing exams given in School of Nursing.

Related Policies

School of Nursing Confidentiality (HIPAA) policy and Clinical Agency policies on patient privacy

School of Nursing Academic Honesty Policy

Spector, N. (2012, September/October). What nurse educators should consider when developing social media policies. *Dean's Notes*, pp. 1-2.

Selection and Evaluation of Clinical Sites for WKU School of Nursing

Policy

The Course Coordinator shall use the criteria listed below along with program specific criteria (if applicable) in the selection and evaluation of clinical sites for use by WKU School of Nursing.

Each clinical site will be evaluated for these criteria before being added to the list of available clinical sites. The program or course coordinator will work with the SON Clinical Agency Coordinators to get new sites under contract before they are placed on the active list. Students will not be placed in clinical sites which are not on the active list. Clinical sites will be re-evaluated annually by faculty and students who use the site. Clinical sites which do not continue to meet the criteria will be dropped from the active clinical site list but may be re-evaluated for use at a later time if circumstances change at that facility.

Basic Criteria for WKU SON Clinical Sites

- Sufficient numbers of qualified nursing staff or preceptors
- Clinical Agency Contract in place or can be obtained
- Offers students opportunities to meet course outcomes
- Realistic distance for student/faculty travel
- Level of care appropriate for level of Student
- Appropriate patient census
- Welcoming to students

DNP PROGRAM PURPOSE

The DNP faculty believes that the purpose of graduate education is to prepare the advanced practice nurse for specialization in nursing. The program further develops expertise in advanced nursing practice that demands increased accountability, proficiency, and leadership. The WKU DNP curriculum is designed to prepare nurses who can function in the advanced practice roles as either nurse practitioners or nurse executives. Nurses entering the post-MSN DNP program will gain knowledge and skills to positively impact health care systems through evidenced-based practice, health policy, technological innovations, interprofessional collaboration, and leadership. BSN to DNP students will gain competencies in their new roles integrating evidence-based practice, health policy, technological innovations, interprofessional collaboration, and leadership.

The faculty believes that students are active, self-directed adult learners who are committed to and are accountable for integrity of academic accomplishments, professional practice and self-assessment. The DNP program is built upon beliefs related to adult education theory. The faculty provides resources and guidance to increase the student's competencies and skills as a doctorally prepared nurse scholar and leader.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes of graduates of the DNP program are to:

- Critically appraise theoretical concepts and knowledge from nursing and other disciplines and integrate this evidence in developing, implementing, and evaluating best practices for improved health outcomes.
- Develop, integrate, and evaluate evidence-based health care innovations while considering cultural, economic, ethical, legal, political, and technological issues across health systems and models.
- Use and evaluate information systems and technology to improve clinical decision making, and health outcomes.
- Demonstrate leadership in the critical analysis and application of economic, ethical, political, and social components of health care policy.
- Demonstrate interprofessional collaboration and leadership skills to improve patient and population health outcomes.
- Analyze and apply advanced nursing practice concepts of clinical prevention and health promotion to improve health outcomes in relevant populations.
- Apply the relevant advanced practice role to improve patient health outcomes and health care systems.

CURRICULUM PROGRESSION

The DNP program is built upon The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (AACN, 2026), and the National Organization for Nurse Practitioner Faculty (NONPF) Core Competencies for Nurse Practitioners (2022). The BSN to DNP Program includes one specialty track, the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP).

Post-MSN option degree requirements are:

NURS 601	Orientation to Doctor of Nursing Practice	2
NURS 620	Biostatistics for Healthcare Professionals	3
NURS 630	Advanced Epidemiology	3
NURS 700 **or** LEAD 500	Healthcare Leadership and Organizational Theory Effective Leadership Studies	3
NURS 701	Leadership in Health Policy	3
NURS 712	Evidenced-Based Practice	3
NURS 714	Economic and Financial Influences in Healthcare Systems	3
NURS 740	Technology in Healthcare	3
NURS 750	Program Development and Evaluation in Healthcare	3

NURS 755	Quality Improvement in Healthcare	3
NURS 765	Institutional Review Board Process in Nursing	1
NURS 780	Clinical Practicum	6
Total Hours		36

BSN-DNP Family Nurse Practitioner option degree requirements are:

	Graduate Statistics Course	3
NURS 500	Advanced Physiological and Pathophysiological Concepts	4
NURS 503	Advanced Health Assessment	2
NURS 504	Theoretical Foundations of Professional Nursing	3
NURS 505	Advanced Health Assessment Clinical	1
NURS 508	Advanced Issues in Professional Nursing	1
NURS 509	Practice Management for Advanced Practice Nurses	1
NURS 510	Graduate Nursing Research	3
NURS 515	Advanced Pharmacology	4
NURS 546	Primary Care of the Infant, Child, and Adolescent	3
NURS 547	Primary Care of the Infant, Child and Adolescent Clinical	2
NURS 548	Primary Care of the Adult	3
NURS 549	Primary Care of the Adult Clinical	2
NURS 554	Primary Care Internship	5
NURS 601	Orientation to Doctor of Nursing Practice	2
NURS 605	Leadership in Nursing Practice	3
NURS 620	Biostatistics for Healthcare Professionals	3
NURS 630	Advanced Epidemiology	3
NURS 700 **or** LEAD 500	Healthcare Leadership and Organizational Theory Effective Leadership Studies	3
NURS 701	Leadership in Health Policy	3
NURS 712	Evidenced-Based Practice	3
NURS 714	Economic and Financial Influences in Healthcare Systems	3
NURS 740	Technology in Healthcare	3
NURS 750	Program Development and Evaluation in Healthcare	3
NURS 755	Quality Improvement in Healthcare	3
NURS 765	Institutional Review Board Process in Nursing	1
NURS 780	Clinical Practicum	6
Total Hours		76

POLICIES

General Policies related to admission, progression, and graduation can be found in the WKU Graduate Catalog found on the Graduate School website (https://www.wku.edu/graduate/). Program specific policies follow. Program specific forms can be found on the DNP Program Blackboard site.

Admission Criteria and Process

Admission to the Graduate School at WKU is a two-step process first requiring that the applicant submit an application with fee and official copies of all higher education course work and degrees to the Graduate School. The application must be submitted online. Following receipt of these materials, the SONAH Graduate Program is notified of the student's acceptance to WKU and a recommendation form requesting approval for official admission to the major is sent to the Graduate Coordinator. Additional requirements for admission to the DNP program include:

- Have earned a BSN or MSN from an accredited nursing program.
- GPA – 3.25 cumulative in BSN or MSN. Students with a GPA of less than this GPA may submit GRE scores and request admission. Students must score at or above the university minimum posted on the Graduate School website.
- Submit three professional references on form provided to applicant.
- Provide a written goal statement.
- Submit a resume or CV highlighting past education, relevant clinical experience scholarly endeavors and professional service (BSN to DNP students must document one year of full-time experience as a registered nurse prior to enrolling in a clinical course).
- Professional license & clinical clock hours–
    a. MSN to DNP –
        i. Applicants must have current and unencumbered RN licensure in the state of residence in which clinical experiences will be completed.
        ii. Completed verification of post-baccalaureate practice hours form. (Applicants who cannot demonstrate a minimum of 500 clinical clock hours in graduate program will be expected to complete clinical course work beyond the proposed curriculum.)
        iii. Completion of a graduate level statistics course within past 5 years.
    b. BSN to DNP – current and unencumbered RN license in Kentucky or compact state.

Following receipt of all admission requirements, the application is initially reviewed by the DNP Coordinator and approved by the SONAH Graduate Committee. The interview questions include a review of the student's goals; validation of any questions identified following initial review of the applicant's admission materials; a discussion of the students plan for success in the program; research interests and possible funding for the program. Additionally, the student's initial questions are answered related to the process and resources.

DNP Program Progression

Progression in the DNP Program requires the student to earn a minimum cumulative overall GPA of 3.0 in graduate nursing courses and a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 in the DNP degree courses. A grade of "B" or higher is required in all specialty courses. Students may repeat one specialty course one time in the DNP course curriculum.

- The BSN to DNP FNP specialty courses are: NURS 500, 503, 505, 508, 509, 515, 546, 547, 548, 549, 554.
- The MSN to DNP specialty courses are: NURS 700, 712, 714, 701, 750, 755.

In specialty courses which have co-requisite didactic and clinical courses, a grade of "B" or higher must be earned in the didactic course and a pass must be earned in the clinical course. If a "B" and/or a pass (contingent on course type) is not earned both the didactic course and the clinical course must be repeated. DNP students may repeat up to nine (9) hours and may repeat each course only one time. In the clinical didactic family nurse practitioner specialty courses including NURS 503, NURS 546, and NURS 548 a student must earn a minimum of 80% on tests and quizzes prior to adding any additional points earned on papers, projects, and SOAP notes to the final grade. Further, a minimum of a B must be earned in these courses to progress to the next sequential course. If you request and receive an incomplete grade in a course, you must complete the requirements and have the incomplete removed and changed to a letter grade of A or B in order to progress in the DNP Program unless you receive prior approval from your advisor.

Dismissal from the Program

Students will be dismissed from the program due to the following circumstances:

1. A second occurrence of a failure to earn a B in a specialty course.
2. Failure to earn a "B" on a second attempt in NURS 510.
3. A second occurrence of academic probation.

4. Failure to remove a grade of incomplete according to the Graduate Catalog policy.
5. Failure to meet professional standards and SONAH policies as follows but not limited to:
    - Academic dishonesty
    - Incivility to patients, preceptors, staff, peers, or faculty.
    - Violation of clinical policies
    - Failure to follow HIPAA policies.
    - Failure to follow professional Scope and Standards of Practice.
    - Any violation of the social media policy (see pages 15-16).
    - Failure to notify faculty of actual or potential situations that could result in actions on the student's RN license.

FNP Certification: BSN to DNP Program

Graduates of the BSN-DNP degree program who have completed all the requirements for the degree with a concentration as a Family Nurse Practitioner are eligible to sit for the family nurse practitioner certification examinations. Information about nationally recognized certification exams and those for which individual students are eligible can be found at the following websites: *American Nurses Credentialing Center*, or the *American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, and *The National Certification Corporation*. All nurse practitioner students must complete a portion of their clinical experience with a nurse practitioner of their population focus.

Preceptor Qualifications, Evaluation and Orientation

Preceptor Qualifications

Preceptor qualifications are assessed by program faculty including preceptors' clinical experience, licensure validation, and clinical faculty experience. Preceptors must meet the following qualifications:

1. The preceptor who is an APRN shall have at least one year of clinical experience in the role and population focus for which the student is preparing.
2. A physician or PA who serves as a preceptor shall have at least one year of clinical experience and shall practice in the same or similar population focus for which the student is preparing.
3. A preceptor shall not precept more than two students at a time.

Selection of preceptors is a collaboration among faculty, preceptor, and student; faculty endeavor to place students with appropriate and qualified preceptors in or near their county of residence. Documentation of clinical faculty review of preceptor qualifications is completed through the Medatrax Clinical Tracking System with the approval of a preceptor request.

Preceptor Evaluation

Preceptors formally evaluate the student at midterm and at the end of the semester/clinical experience. Informal evaluation of the student is maintained through direct communication between preceptor and the clinical course faculty. Preceptors in NURS 505, Advanced Health Assessment, only complete an end of semester evaluation as the clinical experience only requires 80 hours. Course faculty complete an evaluation of the student during their onsite visit to the clinical site. During each clinical experience the preceptor and clinical site are evaluated by the student through Medatrax in each clinical course.

Preceptor Orientation

The WKU SONAH has a written plan for orienting preceptors. The Preceptor Orientation Packet is located in Medatrax, printed by the student, and given to the preceptor. NONPF resources are made available to the preceptor and preceptors are encouraged to utilize the resources. All preceptors sign the preceptor orientation packet indicating completion of the orientation.

Preceptor Guidelines

Purpose: The preceptorship is an organized and planned educational program in which preceptors facilitate the integration of nursing students into their role responsibilities in the practice setting. The purpose for utilization of a preceptor is to guide and enhance the practice activities and learning experiences for students.

Accountability and Responsibility: Ultimate responsibility and accountability for nursing education rest with Western Kentucky University's School of Nursing & Allied Health and the faculty. Faculty is responsible for the application, integration, and enhancement of the theoretical constructs of each program's curriculum as it relates to the student's clinical experiences. Faculty is responsible and accountable for the control, direction, delegation, supervision and evaluation of these experiences.

Role expectations of faculty:

1. Contact appropriate administrator and solicit name(s) of recommended preceptors(s).
2. Provide written confirmation of selected preceptors(s) prior to beginning clinical.
3. Provide an orientation program for preceptors, including course and clinical objectives, clinical experiences, and student evaluation criteria.
4. Be available to preceptors and students via telephone, email and/or paper.
5. Make on-site visits to coordinate, supervise, and evaluate student performance and learning experiences.
6. Make on-site visits within 24-48 hours if warranted.

Role expectations of preceptors:

1. Provide a copy of resume including documentation of current licensure/certification.
2. Be willing to serve as a preceptor, recognizing the time commitment required.
3. Receive orientation to the preceptor role.
4. Collaborate with nursing faculty on student learning experiences.
5. Orient student to the clinical agency or institution and its policies and procedures.
6. Provide guidance for student achievement of learning objectives.
7. Supervise student performance as it relates to learning objectives.
8. Provide ongoing evaluation of student's progress and performance.
9. Meet with faculty to provide feedback regarding student performance and progress.
10. Inform faculty of unacceptable or problematic student behavior in a timely manner after behavior.
11. Complete and discuss with the student an evaluation at the end of the rotation.

Role expectations of students:

1. Meet with preceptors to share expectations, learning needs, and plan dates and time for clinical experiences.
2. Be prepared/punctual for clinical and schedule make-up with preceptors.
3. Seek-feedback regarding clinical performance from preceptors and faculty.
4. Coordinate site visits with faculty and preceptors, including date and time.
5. Conduct themselves in a professional manner and dress appropriately (business professional attire unless otherwise directed).
6. Document achievement of clinical objectives by keeping a log or journal.
7. Evaluate effectiveness of preceptor at the end of the clinical experiences.
8. Adhere to the policies of the WKU SONAH and the clinical agency.

Qualifications of Preceptors: Clinical preceptors for the BSN to DNP student may be nurse practitioners, physicians or other graduate prepared faculty who meet the licensing and/or certification requirement in the state in which they are practicing. Nurse practitioners in the preceptor role must be MSN prepared with a minimum of one year experience.

Web-based Resources: The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties has developed vignettes to assist in nurse practitioner (NP) preceptor orientation and giving feedback to NP students. These vignettes are filmed in the acute care setting but are situations common to precepting students in any setting. Vignettes are accessible at http://www.nonpf.org/?page=Preceptor_Vignettes

- Precepting the Primary Care NP Student
- Working with the Overly Confident NP Student
- Working with the Overly Sensitive NP Student

Clinical Practicum Requirements

All DNP students are responsible for compliance with the School of Nursing & Allied Health general policies. Clinical Hours: In order to achieve the DNP competencies, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) states that DNP programs should provide a minimum of 1,000 hours of supervised clinical practice post-baccalaureate. Practice experiences should be designed to help students achieve specific learning objectives related to The Essentials and competencies. These experiences should be designed to provide systematic opportunities for feedback and reflection. Experiences include in-depth work with experts from nursing as well as other disciplines and provide opportunities for meaningful student engagement within practice environments.

BSN to DNP students should be aware that the FNP concentration requires 750 supervised clinical hours within their post-baccalaureate education to qualify for certification testing.

Time Limit on Degree

The Graduate School at WKU requires that a student enrolled in a doctoral program will have ten years to complete all requirements including the clinical project. This time begins with the first class required in the program of study. Requests for extensions must be approved by the SONAH Graduate Committee, the WKU SONAH Director and the Graduate School Dean or his/her designee.

Doctor of Nursing Practice Program - Leave of Absence Policy

Students considering a leave of absence must discuss their plans with their academic advisor, prior to making a formal request. Students are also strongly encouraged to discuss this with the student loan or financial aid office as it may affect loan deferment. In addition to avoiding the need to reapply, leave of absence allows for priority registration. Students may request a leave of absence from the Doctor of Nursing Practice program in certain circumstances, for example the birth of a child, illness of a family member, etc. Students must (1) submit the request for leave in writing, (2) have it approved by their faculty academic advisor and then (3) approved by the program coordinator for the DNP program. Request for leave must be made prior to the beginning of the semester leave is requested. No more than two consecutive and four total semesters in leave of absence status may be requested. Students who do not enroll in courses for more than one semester must submit a new application to the Graduate School at WKU and be readmitted to the program by the DNP Coordinator. The student may be required to submit an updated Graduate School Program of Study if curriculum changes occur resulting in the omission of courses from the WKU Graduate Catalog.

Financial Support for Research

Limited University financial support is available from the Graduate School at WKU. Information on applying for this support is available at the Graduate School website. Funding may be received for the following:

- Graduate Student Research Grants: Funding up to $750 is available for students conducting research.
- Research Grant Calendar: Submission dates for research grant proposals and interview dates for selected applicant.
- Travel Award: Conferences and Research: Funding is available for graduate students to attend professional meetings and conferences and to support research project travel.

Additional resources for funding:

- Other external organizations.
- Members of Kappa Theta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International (Sigma) may be eligible to apply for small research grants of $250. Additional information may be obtained from the Kappa Theta President. Contact information can be obtained at the School of Nursing & Allied Health website on the Kappa Theta Chapter of STTI web page.
- Faculty advisors are also a resource related to locating grant opportunities.

Use of Mailing List

All students are required to subscribe to the Graduate program's e-mail mailing list, primary-care. The primary-care mailing list is used extensively to facilitate communication among faculty, staff, and graduate students. Announcements related to scholarships, grants and seminars are examples of announcements regularly posted on the

primary-care mailing list. It is the student's responsibility to check TopperMail (WKU's student e-mail) frequently and notify appropriate persons if the student is not receiving primary-care mailing list information. To subscribe to the mailing list the student must send an email from TopperMail account to primary-care-subscribe@lists.wku.edu

If a student changes the company from whom they obtain e-mail services, the student MUST unsubscribe to the mailing list from the previous company and re-subscribe using the new e-mail address. Otherwise, an error message is received for each message sent. (Graduates may also wish to have their name deleted from the list and should follow the procedure outlined below.) To unsubscribe go to https://www.wku.edu/its/mailing-lists/utilities/my-lists.php and follow the directions.

DNP Faculty Advisors

Faculty advisors are assigned to DNP students upon admission to the program. They provide academic guidance and mentoring for their DNP advisees. The advisor meets regularly with their advisees to assist students with clinical, scholarly and professional development as related to the DNP program. Faculty advisors do not need to be experts in the student's area of interest. Rather, they serve as facilitators, and they guide the student's progress in the program. The advisor is responsible for assisting advisees when identifying an appropriate clinical mentor and an additional faculty member for the student's committee. The committee member and clinical mentor are selected early in the program of study. A copy of the Graduate School Program of Study and any subsequent revised plans are kept on file in WKU's TopNet Electronic Imaged Documents, Student Program Documents. Students are advised to keep copies of all forms submitted and approved. Student advisees are expected to work with their faculty advisor and the program director when developing the advisee's Graduate School Program of Study plan and selecting their committee member and clinical mentor.

Project Chair and Committee

Advisor. The student is responsible for meeting with the assigned advisor each semester during the DNP program. The DNP Project Proposal Request Form is completed by the end of NURS 712 and sent to the advisor. This is after a systematic review of the proposed project is completed and reviewed by the advisor.

Project Committee. The project committee is made up of the student, the WKU faculty advisor who serves as the student advisee's committee chair and a WKU faculty member. The committee members work together closely throughout the student's program of study.

Faculty Project Committee Chair. The faculty committee member is an appointed member of the committee who has practice, content or methodology expertise in the advisees' area of interest and in particular in the student's DNP project focus. The faculty member assists the advisor and advisees on matters related to the student's DNP project. Within the structure of the committee, the faculty member also provides insight on matters that pertain to the project during course work. For example, the faculty member provides input on the chapters developed as part of the project.

Clinical mentor. Clinical mentors are experts in the students focus area, willing to assist in clinical coaching and agree to collaborate with the advisor. Clinical mentors serve in the role of consultant. They have an ongoing relationship with students throughout the program, contributing especially to the student's development as a leader in the student's area of practice or executive management. Clinical mentors may be selected from among a variety of disciplines, thereby building upon the DNP program objective to enhance the student's interdisciplinary experience. It is preferable for the clinical mentor to be doctorally prepared in their discipline. The clinical mentor form should be completed by the student and forwarded to their advisor for approval.

DNP Project Electronic Portfolio and Publishable Manuscript Option

DNP students admitted in Summer 2015 and thereafter will complete a DNP project which includes an electronic portfolio and one publishable manuscript.

DNP Portfolio

The DNP Portfolio will be electronic through the organizational DNP site. All bolded headings found in the DNP Portfolio section should have separate folders in the electronic portfolio.

Introductory Documents

Portfolio Requirements:

1. Goal Statement submitted with admission application.
2. CV submitted with application.

Folder One: Essential I Scientific Underpinnings for Practice

1. *Integrate nursing science with knowledge from ethics, the biophysical, psychosocial, analytical, and organizational sciences as the basis for the highest level of nursing practice.*
2. *Use science-based theories and concepts to:*
    - *determine the nature and significance of health and health care delivery phenomena;*
    - *describe the actions and advanced strategies to enhance, alleviate, and ameliorate health and health care delivery phenomena as appropriate;*
    - *evaluate outcomes.*
3. *Develop and evaluate new practice approaches based on nursing theories and theories from other disciplines.*

Portfolio Requirements:

1. NURS 620 DNP Project Statistical Plan, graded with revisions if recommended by advisor.
2. NURS 630 Epidemiology Project Assessment, graded with revisions if recommended by advisor.
3. Student chosen exemplar: Students will add an assignment, presentation, paper or advisor approved activity that demonstrates competency in Essential I. The exemplar must be in addition to the portfolio requirements.
4. Scholarly description of completed course activities, DNP project, and the relationship to DNP Essential I and the WKU program outcomes.

Folder Two: Essential II Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking

1. *Develop and evaluate care delivery approaches that meet current and future needs of patient populations based on scientific findings in nursing and other clinical sciences, as well as organizational, political, and economic sciences.*
2. *Ensure accountability for quality of health care and patient safety for populations with whom they work.*
    a. *Use advanced communication skills/processes to lead quality improvement and patient safety initiatives in health care systems.*
    b. *Employ principles of business, finance, economics, and health policy to develop and implement effective plans for practice-level and/or system-wide practice initiatives that will improve the quality-of-care delivery.*
    c. *Develop and/or monitor budgets for practice initiatives.*
    d. *Analyze the cost-effectiveness of practice initiatives accounting for risk and improvement of health care outcomes.*
    e. *Demonstrate sensitivity to organizational cultures and populations, including patients and providers.*
3. *Develop and/or evaluate effective strategies for managing the ethical dilemmas inherent in-patient care, the health care organization, and research.*

Portfolio Requirements:

1. NURS 700 Leadership Philosophy, graded with revisions if recommended by advisor.
2. NURS 714 Cost-Benefit Analysis Paper, graded with revisions if recommended by advisor.
3. Student chosen exemplar: Students will add an assignment, presentation, paper or advisor approved activity that demonstrates competency in Essential II. The exemplar must be in addition to the portfolio requirements.
4. Scholarly description of completed course activities, DNP project, and the relationship to DNP Essential II and the WKU program outcomes.

Folder Three: Essential III Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice

1. *Use analytic methods to critically appraise existing literature and other evidence to determine and implement the best evidence for practice.*
2. *Design and implement processes to evaluate outcomes of practice, practice patterns, and systems of care within a practice setting, health care organization, or community against national benchmarks to determine variances in practice outcomes and population trends.*

3. *Design, direct, and evaluate quality improvement methodologies to promote safe, timely, effective, efficient, and patient-centered care.*
4. *Apply relevant findings to develop practice guidelines and improve practice and the practice environment.*
5. *Use information technology and research methods appropriately to:*
    - *collect appropriate and accurate data to generate evidence for nursing practice*
    - *inform and guide the design of databases that generate meaningful evidence for nursing practice*
    - *analyze data from practice*
    - *design evidence-based interventions*
    - *predict and analyze outcomes*
    - *examine patterns of behavior and outcomes*
    - *identify gaps in evidence for practice*
6. *Function as a practice specialist/consultant in collaborative knowledge-generating research.*
7. *Disseminate findings from evidence-based practice and research to improve healthcare outcomes.*

Portfolio Requirements:

1. NURS 712 Systematic Review or Integrative Review, graded with revisions if recommended by advisor.
2. Student chosen exemplar: Students will add an assignment, presentation, paper or advisor approved activity that demonstrates competency in Essential III. The exemplar must be in addition to the portfolio requirements.
3. Scholarly description of completed course activities, the DNP project, and the relationship to DNP Essential III and the WKU program outcomes.

Folder Four: Essential IV Information Systems/Technology and Patient Care Technology for the Improvement and Transformation of Health Care

1. *Design, select, use, and evaluate programs that evaluate and monitor outcomes of care, care systems, and quality improvement including consumer use of healthcare information systems.*
2. *Analyze and communicate critical elements necessary to the selection, use and evaluation of health care information systems and patient care technology.*
3. *Demonstrate the conceptual ability and technical skills to develop and execute an evaluation plan involving data extraction from practice information systems and databases.*
4. *Provide leadership in the evaluation and resolution of ethical and legal issues within healthcare systems relating to the use of information, information technology, communication networks, and patient care technology.*
5. *Evaluate consumer health information sources for accuracy, timeliness, and appropriateness.*

Portfolio Requirements:

1. NURS 740 Technology Evaluation, graded with revisions if recommended by advisor.
2. Student chosen exemplar: Students will add an assignment, presentation, paper or advisor approved activity that demonstrates competency in Essential IV. The exemplar must be in addition to the portfolio requirements.
3. Scholarly description of completed course activities, the DNP project, and the relationship to DNP Essential IV and the WKU program outcomes.

Folder Five: Essential V Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care

1. *Critically analyze health policy proposals, health policies, and related issues from the perspective of consumers, nursing, other health professions, and other stakeholders in policy and public forums.*
2. *Demonstrate leadership in the development and implementation of institutional, local, state, federal, and/or international health policy.*
3. *Influence policy makers through active participation on committees, boards, or task forces at the institutional, local, state, regional, national, and/or international levels to improve health care delivery and outcomes.*
4. *Educate others, including policy makers at all levels, regarding nursing, health policy, and patient care outcomes.*
5. *Advocate for the nursing profession within the policy and healthcare communities.*
6. *Develop, evaluate, and provide leadership for health care policy that shapes health care financing, regulation, and delivery.*
7. *Advocate for social justice and ethical policies within all healthcare arenas.*

Portfolio Requirements:

1. NURS 701 Health Policy Gap Analysis, graded with revisions if recommended by advisor.
2. Student chosen exemplar: Students will add an assignment, presentation, paper or advisor approved activity that demonstrates competency in Essential V. The exemplar must be in addition to the portfolio requirements.
3. Scholarly description of completed course activities, the DNP project, and the relationship to DNP Essential V and the WKU program outcomes.

Folder Six: Essential VI Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes

1. *Employ effective communication and collaborative skills in the development and implementation of practice models, peer review, practice guidelines, health policy, standards of care, and/or other scholarly products.*
2. *Lead interprofessional teams in the analysis of complex practice and organizational issues.*
3. *Employ consultative and leadership skills with intraprofessional and interprofessional teams to create change in health care and complex healthcare delivery systems.*

Portfolio Requirements:

1. NURS 755 Quality Improvement Plan, graded with revisions if recommended by advisor.
2. Student chosen exemplar: Students will add an assignment, presentation, paper or advisor approved activity that demonstrates competency in Essential VI. The exemplar must be in addition to the portfolio requirements.
3. Scholarly description of completed course activities, the DNP project, and the relationship to DNP Essential VI and the WKU program outcomes.

Folder Seven: Essential VII Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation's Health

1. *Analyze epidemiological, biostatistical, environmental, and other appropriate scientific data related to individual, aggregate, and population health.*
2. *Synthesize concepts, including psychosocial dimensions and culturally sensitivity, related to clinical prevention and population health in developing, implementing, and evaluating interventions to address health promotion/disease prevention efforts, improve health status/access patterns, and/or address gaps in care of individuals, aggregates, or populations.*
3. *Evaluate care delivery models and/or strategies using concepts related to community, environmental and occupational health, and cultural and socioeconomic dimensions of health.*

Portfolio Requirements:

1. BSN to DNP (only) NURS 605: Population-Based Program Proposal
2. NURS 750 DNP Program Evaluation Proposal, graded with revisions if recommended by advisor.
3. Student chosen exemplar: Students will add an assignment, presentation, paper or advisor approved activity that demonstrates competency in Essential VII. The exemplar must be in addition to the portfolio requirements.
4. Scholarly description of completed course activities, the DNP project, and the relationship to DNP Essential VII and the WKU program outcomes.

Folder Eight: Essential VIII Advanced Nursing Practice

1. *Conduct a comprehensive and systematic assessment of health and illness parameters in complex situations, incorporating culturally sensitive approaches.*
2. *Design, implement, and evaluate therapeutic interventions based on nursing science and other sciences.*
3. *Develop and sustain therapeutic relationships and partnerships with patients (individual, family or group) and other professionals to facilitate optimal care and patient outcomes.*
4. *Demonstrate advanced levels of clinical judgment, systems thinking, and accountability in designing, delivering, and evaluating evidence-based care to improve patient outcomes.*
5. *Guide, mentor, and support other nurses to achieve excellence in nursing practice.*
6. *Educate and guide individuals and groups through complex health and situational transitions.*
7. *Use conceptual and analytical skills in evaluating the links among practice, organizational, population, fiscal, and policy issues.*

Portfolio Requirements:

1. BSN to DNP (only) Advanced Physical Examination Checklist
2. BSN to DNP (only) Cumulative Medatrax Time Log
3. Clinical hours log from NURS 740, NURS 750, and NURS 780 (BSN to DNP and MSN to DNP).
4. Student chosen exemplar: Students will add an assignment, presentation, paper or advisor approved activity that demonstrates competency in Essential VIII. The exemplar must be in addition to the portfolio requirements (BSN to DNP and MSN to DNP).
5. Scholarly description of completed course activities, the DNP project, and the relationship to DNP Essential VIII and the WKU program outcomes (BSN to DNP and MSN to DNP).

Summary Documents

1. IRB Application
2. Current CV
3. Oral Defense PowerPoint presentation
4. Publishable Manuscript

Dissemination of DNP Project

All students will disseminate their project through a poster, podium presentation, scholarly article or advisor chosen venue. Podium and poster presentations must be approved by the advisor. Students should utilize the posted guidelines for podium and poster presentations. If a journal article is chosen, the selected journal must be approved by the faculty advisor. Students should utilize the journal guidelines for authors specified in the selected journal to develop a scholarly manuscript. The journal guidelines will specify length and format of the manuscript. The publishable manuscript must be submitted for publication; however, acceptance of the manuscript for publication is not a requirement of NURS 780 or graduation from the DNP program. NURS 780 culminates in an oral defense and dissemination of your project.

Following approval from the DNP Project Committee, the student will notify their advisor to schedule the DNP final defense. The student will coordinate his/her availability and the availability of the clinical mentor; the clinical mentor may choose to be present or participate by conference call. Announcements of the defense including the student's name, date, and location will be distributed through the appropriate venues.

Participation in Graduation Ceremony

In order to participate in the graduation ceremony held in May, DNP students must complete the application for graduation in TopNet no later than the dates communicated by email or posted on the Registrar's website. Early submission is strongly recommended.