DNP STUDENT HANDBOOK

DEPARTMENT
Of

NURSING

Cohort 8
Fall, 2018

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

DNP Program
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Introduction

Welcome to West Chester University and the Department of Nursing graduate program. We hope that you will find your experience here to be challenging and rewarding.

This handbook is intended as a supplement to the current West Chester University Graduate catalog and other university publications. The handbook has been prepared to provide you with useful information about the department and the Doctorate of Nursing Practice. You are strongly encouraged to keep, and refer to this handbook throughout your course of study. You will find it helpful in planning and recording your progress in your program and useful at a later date in reconstructing portions of your professional credentials.

Please note that the material in this handbook is subject to change as University and/or department policies are revised. Department advisors will attempt to keep you informed about department and Graduate Studies policies. Ultimately, however, it is still your responsibility to complete all requirements, conform to policies which are in force and meet all deadlines. Periodic checking of the department and University website and consultation with your advisor can help to prevent an untimely delay in your date of graduation or problems with your practice experiences.

We look forward to a rewarding association with you and hope that you will take advantage of all that our department and the University have to offer.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Schlamb

Cheryl Schlamb
Cheryl Schlamb, DNP, CRNP
Graduate Coordinator

General Information

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College of Health Sciences
Department of Nursing
Mission Statement & Philosophy

MISSION

The mission of the West Chester University Department of Nursing is to provide the highest quality of undergraduate and graduate nursing education to students who come from diverse populations. All graduates are prepared to provide evidence-based quality nursing care, and to become nursing leaders within the nursing profession. The baccalaureate program provides the art and scientific foundations of entry into nursing practice. The graduate programs provide preparation into advanced nursing practice and education roles; thereby, giving students the ability to synthesize knowledge, strengthen communication, and empowerment to promote health care. The Doctor of Nursing Practice program further prepares advanced practice nurses at the highest level to fully evaluate and contribute to increasingly complex health care systems. These contributions are based on contemporary nursing science, organizational, political, cultural and economic principles. Graduates of these nursing programs will be professionals capable of assuming leadership in present and emerging health care roles, citizens who contribute to society and who are committed to life-long learning and personal development.

PHILOSOPHY

The Department of Nursing affirms the WCU Vision, Mission and Values Statements and the College of Health Sciences Mission Statement. It shares the University's commitment to teaching, research, and service to individuals, families, communities and populations. The following statement reflects the Department of Nursing's philosophical beliefs.

The Department of Nursing recognizes that individuals, families, communities and populations are entitled to optimum health and quality health care. Nurses play an integral role in health promotion, disease prevention and enhancing the quality of life throughout the lifespan. According to the ANA "nursing is the protection, promotion and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities and populations." Advanced practice nursing roles include expert clinician, educator, researcher, consultant and leader. The nursing programs at West Chester University recognize the responsibility to provide innovative educational programs that reflect the growing needs and current trends of diverse populations.

The faculty of the Department of Nursing provides a caring and supportive environment while respecting the diversity of the student body and communities

which it serves. The University community cultivates and supports faculty/student collaboration and mentoring. The students are treated as individuals with unique qualities and learning needs. Through professional actions, the faculty reflects the department's philosophy of excellence in nursing practice, creation of evidence-based research, establishing strong interdisciplinary associations and fostering supportive relationships with colleagues, students and the community.

The 2008 AACN *Essentials* document (*The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education),* the 2011 AACN *Essentials* document (*The Essentials of Master's Education),* and the 2006 AACN *Essentials* document (*The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*) provide structure for the curriculum content of all programs. The faculty designed all programs to facilitate the students' abilities to creatively respond to a continuously changing health system. Innovative educational experiences are cooperatively planned to meet the needs of both the students and clients empowering them in the nursing-client partnership. The interpretation, development and implementation of ethical evidence-based research are stressed throughout the educational process.

Ethical decision making, accountability, critical thinking, and effective communication skills are emphasized. This is achieved by the application of nursing theory and empirical evidence to professional practice. All programs promote lifelong learning, leadership, and prepare the student for advance professional degrees or post-doctoral studies.
December 2015

The Department of Nursing offers programs leading to the Doctor of Nursing Practice

The **DOCTOR of NURSING PRACTICE (DNP)** is a practice-oriented program of study that provides the terminal academic preparation for advanced nursing practice. Graduates of this program will be qualified to assume leadership roles in a variety of settings: management of quality initiatives, executives in health-care organizations, directors of clinical programs, and faculty positions responsible for clinical program delivery and clinical teaching. The program is offered in a distance-education format, with the exception of the first two-credit course which is offered on campus.

At the end of the DNP program, the graduate will be able to

1. Utilize collaborative leadership skills on inter- and intra-professional teams to foster effective communication, enrich patient outcomes, and foster change in healthcare delivery systems;
2. integrate evidence-based strategies to ensure safety and quality health care for patients, populations, and communities;
3. evaluate information systems, considering ethical and regulatory issues to improve patient care and healthcare systems;
4. assess policies, trends, and forces influencing health-care policy to design, implement, and evaluate the effect on future patient outcomes;
5. analyze the scope of health-care economics and key information sources as they affect health care for patients and populations; and
6. conduct a comprehensive systematic assessment of health and illness parameters incorporating diverse and culturally sensitive approaches.

DNP Admission Requirements
Applicants to the DNP Program must meet the WCU Graduate Admission and Department of Nursing requirements. All qualified applicants will complete a telephone or in-person interview with the program coordinator for consideration regarding admission to the program.

Curriculum (35 semester hours)

The curriculum* is divided into three components:
1. Nursing science
   NSG 701, 706, 708, and 709
2. Leadership
   NSG 702, 703, and 707
3. Practice
   NSG 704, 705, 810, 811, 812

DNP COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
Beginning Fall, 2018 all courses (excluding for NSG 810- 15 week format) will be offered in the 8-week Sessions Format.

NSG 701 Transition to Doctoral Study (2) Credits
Students address the evolution of the doctorate and its development in the nursing profession. Current and future practice issues that affect the advanced practice nurse are examined. Analysis of the PhD, DNS, and DNP are explored. Driving forces leading to the need for the Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) are considered along with evidence-based findings from nursing leaders and organizations. A dialogue about the DNP Project is introduced (on-campus section of course).

NSG 702 Leadership for Advanced Nursing Practice (3) Credits
Students examine the role development of advanced nursing practice, including a strong focus on ethical practice. Theoretical leadership concepts are synthesized in relation to personal and professional values. Emphasis is on working with multiple disciplines and on leading multiple and diverse constituencies. Issues of creativity, power, innovation, communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, and resources management are addressed.

NSG 703 Healthcare Policy and Advocacy (3) Credits
Students explore the roles and accountability of healthcare providers in responding to the health and social needs of the public and shaping health policy. The course introduces students to the concepts and tools of health policy development and the skills necessary to be an effective health policy analyst and advocate.

NSG 704 Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice in Healthcare I (3) Credits
Students utilize analytic methods to critique existing literature and other evidence to implement the best evidence for practice. Methods of designing processes to evaluate outcomes of practice, practice patterns, and systems of care within a practice setting are explored.

NSG 705 Analytical Methods of Evidence-Based Practice in Healthcare II (3) Credits
Students design and evaluate quality improvement methodologies to promote safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable and patient-centered care. Quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis is covered. Emphasis is placed on applying relevant findings to affect practice guidelines and improve quality in practice and the practice environment.
Prerequisite: Successful completion of NSG 704.

NSG 706 Nursing Ethics in Clinical Practice and Leadership (3) Credits
Students examine ethical principles and legal precedents affecting clinical practice and healthcare policy. Strategies to assist in the resolution of current ethical issues within a student's particular practice or research area are developed through the application of select theories and concepts. Ethical issues are addressed through a case-based approach.

NSG 707 Healthcare Economics for the Advanced Practitioner (3) Credits
Students describe the scope of healthcare economics and key information sources as they affect the advanced practitioner. Highlights of the characteristics of healthcare financing and the quality of health economics financing are explored.

NSG 708 Program Evaluation (3) Credits
Students review evaluation methods best suited for professionals in practice and leadership roles. Standards of evaluation, planning designs, and approaches are examined. Students examine methodologies for classifying interventions and outcomes and for the evaluation the quality of healthcare delivered to individual clients and aggregate populations. Issues related to the implementation of outcomes and quality management programs are explored.

NSG 709 Nursing Informatics (2) Credits
Students use information systems and technology, and provide leadership, to support and improve patient care and healthcare systems. Emphasis is on the knowledge and skills expected of a DNP graduate in analysis of technology, design, and selection of information systems, proficiency in quality-improvement technologies, and evaluation of patient care systems. Related ethical, regulatory, and legal issues are discussed.

NSG 810 Application of Evidence-Based Practice (4) Credits
This course will provide the learner with the opportunity to conceptualize the concepts of scholarship, leadership and advocacy into their advanced nursing practice. The learner will identify the focus of their DNP project. This project should be appropriate with the domain of scholarship of the learner. This course will culminate with recognition of a need and problem statement, a needs assessment and development of goals and objectives. **Prerequisite: Successful completion of all NSG 700 level courses.**

NSG 811 DNP Project Seminar I (3) Credits
Students in DNP Project Seminar I synthesize and integrate newly acquired knowledge and skills and begin the implementation of their DNP project. Prior to data collection or intervention DNP students complete the protection of human subjects/Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. Students continue to prepare and refine the DNP Project paper for submission, measure project outcomes and evaluate the sustainability of their DNP Project. Students must present their work in a scholarly manner to colleagues and faculty. **Prerequisite: Successful completion of NSG 810.**

NSG 812 DNP Project Seminar II (3) Credits
This course will provide the learner with guidance and support in project implementation, evaluation and analysis. Students will prepare the DNP Project paper for submission, measure outcomes, ensure sustainability of the project and disseminate results. Students must present their work in a scholarly manner to colleagues and faculty. The completed DNP Project, presentation and paper are required for completion of the DNP Project Seminar II and graduation. **Prerequisite: Successful completion of NSG 811.**

"Students are expected to perform at the doctoral level and achieve at least 85% on assignments".

Plan of Study

Students may begin the DNP program in any fall or spring semester. The DNP Program is structured in a cohort model. Post MSN-DNP students may complete the program in approximately 3 years.

Clinical Practicum Requirements

Clinical Practicum
Students are required to complete *a minimum of 500 clinical practicum hours* throughout the DNP program. Didactic courses (NSG702 through NSG709) include a *minimum 40 hour practicum component*. The nature of the hours is mutually agreed upon by the student and course faculty, and is further detailed in each course's syllabus. Students with permission may begin recording practice hours in NSG701.

Three courses (NSG810, NSG811 and NSG812) include practicum hours directly related to the student's unique area of inquiry and support the DNP Project and the student's identified clinical practice goals and course objectives. NSG810, NSG811 and NSG812 each require *a minimum of 60 clinical practicum hours.* **NOTE:** The American Association of Colleges of Nursing in *The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* (October 2006) states, "in order to achieve the DNP competencies, programs should provide **a minimum of 1,000 hours of practice post-baccalaureate** as part of a supervised academic program." Students will be required to complete 500 practicum hours in this WCU post-master's DNP program.

Clinical Practicum Hours (NSG702 through NSG709)
Each course contains a minimum of 40 practicum hours related to the course purpose and objectives. During the first two weeks of each course, students will write an anticipated practicum hour completion plan and discuss the plan with the course faculty. Using the program template, students will maintain a practicum

journal that includes practicum goals and objectives, a description of practicum activities, an evaluation of practicum activities and completed hours. **A cumulative practicum log with hours will be submitted to the D2L course at the end of the semester and maintained in the personal file.**

Clinical Practicum Hours (NSG810, NSG811 and NSG812)

Practicum hours are directly related to the student's unique area of inquiry and support the DNP Project and the student's identified clinical practice goals and course objectives. The practicum hours are mutually agreed upon among the student, course faculty, committee chair, and co-operating agencies. During the first two weeks of each of these courses, students will write a practicum hour completion plan and discuss the plan with the course faculty and their committee chair. Using the program template, students will maintain a practicum log that includes practicum goals and objectives, description of practicum activities, evaluation of practicum activities and completed hours. The DNP program uses eLogs. At the completion of each course, students will submit lessons learned from the overall practicum experience, identify areas of clinical strength, areas for improvement and a plan of action. **The final, approved practicum log for each course will be maintained in E Logs.**

The NSG810, NSG811 and NSG812 practicum experience may include, but is not limited to:
- Practice experiences
- Conference attendance (pre-approved)
- Site visits
- Consultation with a national expert
- Planning meetings with the organization where the project will be implemented
- Leading the change team
- Creating/leading support groups
- Presentations

External Mentors

The practicum hours in NSG810, NSG811 and NSG812 requires an external mentor for the DNP Project. This individual is typically the external member of the student's DNP Project Team. Mentors assist the student to conceptualize and approach practice through a scientific mindset – challenging the habits of practice, cultivating curiosity about the scientific and theoretical underpinnings of practice, and formulating practice inquiry questions. Students are encouraged to select mentors who are subject matter experts in their selected area of inquiry, and who agree to guide, advice, counsel, motivate, coach and facilitate the work of the student.

To be successful with the DNP Project and as a mentee, students must establish clear goals and expectations, determine their personal and professional interests, be open to learning, correction, and even failures, and carefully choose the project topic and mentors. Successful mentoring relationships require commitment from parties, as well as the recognition of the needs of both and the understanding that these needs will change with time.

DNP Project Overview

All Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students are expected to complete a DNP Project. This project is a faculty-guided scholarly process to address a theoretically and clinically relevant problem. The DNP Project Team should consist of the DNP student, a doctorally-prepared faculty member and a practice mentor who may be from outside the university. In some instances, additional experts/mentors/partners/facilitators can be formal or informal collaborators and may provide intermittent or limited support throughout the project stages as needed (AACN White Paper August, 2015).

The DNP Project provides evidence of the student's practice inquiry knowledge and skills and her/his ability to apply research, clinical practice and leadership principles through problem identification, proposal development, implementation, and evaluation of a problem related to clinical practice, the health care delivery system, or a health care policy issue.

Much of what goes into DNP Project selection reflects the professional and personal interests of the student. As with any major undertaking, success includes a series of realistic and achievable goals and expectations. Students are expected to begin NSG810 with a well-defined DNP Project topic, working closely with the WCU DNP Project faculty member.

The DNP Project is guided by a two member team, including an assigned WCU faculty member and select an external team mentor. The external team member also typically serves as the student's practicum mentor. Requirements for DNP Project Team members are outlined below.

The DNP Project is conducted during three consecutive courses. In NSG810 students write the first section of the DNP Project document and submit a proposal to the appropriate Institutional Review Board, in NSG 811 students implement the project, and in NSG812 students evaluate and disseminate the project results.

Types of DNP Projects
Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following examples.

1. Practice Change Initiative represented by a pilot study, demonstration project, program evaluation, quality improvement project, research utilization project, or an evaluation of a new practice model.
2. Development of innovative products to foster patient engagement in health-related activities.
3. Substantive involvement in a large scale clinical practice project.
4. Feasibility studies

Starting the DNP Project

In the course prior to NSG810, faculty guide students regarding possible topic and question related to clinical practice, the health care delivery system, or a health care policy issue. The information obtained in the previous course provides the DNP faculty the opportunity to review and discuss the topics/ideas and discuss and identify appropriate chairs. DNP faculty will meet to discuss the assignment of faculty leader or member to student projects, and prior to the beginning of NSG810 students will be notified of their DNP Project Faculty Member.

NSG810 DNP Project Requirements

> **Project Faculty Member:** A WCU faculty member will be identified prior to beginning NSG810. The member must hold an earned doctorate. The student and faculty member are expected to work closely throughout all stages of the doctoral project. The student and WCU team member will discuss their communication expectations and needs, as well as identification of potential external project mentor.
> **DNP Project External Mentor:** In consultation with your WCU faculty member, the student will identify potential an external project mentor. It is preferred that the external project mentor holds an earned doctorate. This DNP Project external mentor will have clinical expertise or a research collaborative relationship that may either facilitate the student's access to the project site, population or data or supplement the clinical expertise of WCU faculty DNP Project member. The external team mentor also typically agrees to serve as the student's practicum mentor. The student must obtain and submit curriculum vitae (CV) for the external DNP Project mentor. ***Students should not contact, ask or speak with potential external DNP Project Team member until after they meet with their DNP Project faculty member, and the DNP Project faculty member approves of the potential members.***

Agreement for External Mentor: The student will complete the external appointment request, and obtain a letter of support from the institution of the external project mentor (*if applicable*). This letter needs to state that the external institution agrees to support the DNP student in their project. The student shall submit the completed letter(s) to their DNP Project Faculty Member and maintain a copy in his/her personal file.

Timetable: The student will develop a DNP Project proposal timetable, including a plan to meet the clinical practicum hour requirement and review the plan with her/his DNP Project Faculty Member.

Refine the practice inquiry DNP Project question and purpose: Once the student and DNP Project Faculty Member agree on the type of project and a clinical question/purpose, the student will begin to write the DNP Project proposal, consistent with writing the DNP Project format, noted below.

Write and revise: The student will review the draft proposal with the DNP Project Faculty Member and revise as recommended, allowing ample time between revisions. The student should plan to have the proposal completed and approved by the DNP Project chairperson. Once approved, the chair/student will distribute the proposal to the external team mentor for review. The external mentor should be given two weeks to review the proposal.

IRB submission: Upon committee approval of the DNP Project proposal, the student is ready to submit the proposal to the WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and other appropriate IRB's (*as necessary*). The student shall prepare the required IRB application forms in consultation with the appropriate institutional IRB departments. The WCU IRB application must be reviewed and approved by the DNP Project Faculty Member prior to submission. ***The student is not permitted to start official work implementing the project until the project receives IRB approval from all required organizational IRBs. IRB submission is a requirement of NSG810.***

NSG811 DNP Project Requirements

Execute the DNP Project. During this time the student will remain in close contact with their DNP Project Team members.

NSG812 DNP Project Requirements

Analyze and synthesize results.
Write and revise: The student will write the remainder of the DNP Project document and submit to the faculty member according to the mutually agreed upon schedule. As with the DNP Project proposal, ample time should be allocated for revisions. Once approved, the faculty member or student will distribute the proposal to the external DNP Project Team mentor for review. Members should be given two weeks to review the project.

Prepare a final oral report: Once the DNP faculty member and external committee mentor approve of the final DNP Project report, the student shall arrange a mutually agreed upon date and time for presentation and dissemination. The student will give a summary including significance or implications for theory, future research, clinical practice, health policy or education.

The student will complete the *DNP Project Completion Requirements*. The template for DNP Project submission can be found on the NSG812 and DNP Resource course. Upon final DNP Project approval, the student must submit an electronic copy to the NSG812 D2L course and maintain in personal file. The student shall submit the DNP Project manuscript to the outlined WCU portal. **AFTER** the DNP Project team and university has approved and signed the successful completion of the DNP Project, the student will be cleared for graduation. Timelines apply and are published by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Writing the DNP Project
The length of the DNP Project may vary depending on the project/option selected. Students may find that they need to rework Part 1 several times to achieve clarity, brevity and completeness. All work is to adhere to the most recent edition of APA style. ***As appropriate to the nature of the project, the following format should be followed. Please also utilize your university template for additional details.***

Title Page

Abstract should not exceed 150 words

<u>**DNP Project Part I:**</u> **Problem Identification, Conceptual Framework and Review of the Literature, Project Design and Methods**

Section 1
Background and Significance
      Description of the problem
      Population affected
      Epidemiology
      Brief description of the state of general knowledge
      Organizational/local knowledge of the problem
      Significance
      Purpose statement
      Clinical questions
      Capstone objectives
      Assumptions and limitations

Review of the Literature
      How have other researchers examined the problem?
      Other sources of evidence: guidelines, expert panels
      Critical synthesis (what are the similarities and differences among studies)
      What is the level of evidence to date?
      Gaps in the literature

Section 2
Conceptual Framework
      Description of framework or model
      Figure or model if relevant
      Clear link to purpose and clinical question/s
      Conceptual definitions

Section 3
Setting
       Population/sample
       Inclusion/exclusion criteria
       Methods:
- What data will be collected?
- What tools will be used to collect these data?
- What is the quality of the measure?
- Who will collect the data?
- How will the data collection methods be systematic and rigorous?
- How will the data be protected, and how will the data be analyzed?

       Timetable
       Resources, personnel, technologies
       Identification of key stakeholders and site support
       Protection of human subjects
       Plan for dissemination to key stakeholders

Part II: Results, Discussion and Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations.
Presentation of data and results
       Explanation of analysis used
       Extent to which each objective was achieved or question answered
       Limitations and lessons learned

Application for practice, theory, policy, research and/or education
       Relevance to change in practice and/or leadership role of the doctoral
       prepared nurse
       Recommendations

References

Appendices

*A template will be provided to students during their NSG 800 level courses.

*Students are expected to complete DNP Project Manuscript submission as required by the WCU Graduate Office for graduation clearance.

INSTRUCTIONS
and
INFORMATION

West Chester University of Pennsylvania Department of Nursing Doctor of Nursing Practice Program Information for External Mentor

NSG810, NSG811 and NSG812 General Information
All Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree students must successfully complete a DNP Project. The DNP Project is a faculty-guided scholarly process to address a theoretically and clinically relevant problem. The DNP Project provides evidence of the student's practice inquiry knowledge and skills and her/his ability to apply research principles through problem identification, proposal development, implementation, and evaluation of a problem related to clinical practice, the health care delivery system, or a health care policy issue.

Each of the three practicum courses (NSG810, NSG811 and NSG812) includes a practicum component. The practicum hours are related to the student's unique area of clinical inquiry and support the DNP Project, the student's identified practicum goals, course objectives and enhance the DNP competencies as described in The American Association of Colleges of Nursing's *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Practice Nursing (2006).*

Students are mentored by faculty and ***selected practicum mentor(s)*** to conceptualize and approach practice through a scientific mindset – challenging the habits of practice, cultivating curiosity about the scientific and theoretical underpinnings of practice, and formulating practice inquiry questions. Students are encouraged to select mentor(s) who are subject matter experts in their selected area of clinical inquiry, and who agree to guide, advise, counsel, motivate, coach and facilitate the work of the student. In most cases, the preceptor will be the external member of the student's DNP Project committee.

External Mentor Requirements

- An earned doctoral degree is preferred and the mentor provides a current curriculum vitae.

- The mentor – student relationship should begin with clearly defined expectations and address issues such as how long the relationship will last, how frequently the mentor and student will meet, and the need for confidentiality.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the role of the DNP Project Team faculty member?
The faculty team member works closely with the student as they plan and execute the doctoral project. The faculty team member should be aware of all plans, timelines, changes and problems throughout the project process. The faculty team member must hold an earned doctorate and be a member of the WCU faculty. Selection of faculty team member may be based upon mutual interests, similar clinical or research experience, and area of expertise and/or previous mentorship relationship.

2. How should I determine my external DNP Project Team mentor?
The external DNP Project mentor if possible should hold an earned doctorate with clinical expertise or a research collaborative relationship that may either facilitate the student's access to the study site, population or data or supplement the clinical expertise of faculty committee members. The external DNP Project mentor also typically agrees to serve as the student's practicum mentor.

3. Does writing my DNP Project count as practicum hours? No

4. Does everyone have to apply for IRB approval?   Yes. Students are expected to publish the results of their DNP Project projects so IRB approval is necessary, even if a project is determined to be exempt.

5. Does my time preparing the IRB submission count as practicum hours?
No.

6. Will I have to get multiple IRB approvals?
This will depend on the nature of the project and policies of the DNP Project site.

7. What if my project proposal gets delayed in the IRB?
If the application is delayed in the review process, the student will work with his/her faculty team member to revise the timeline and expectations.

8. What are the characteristics of a successful mentee?
Clear definition of the support and help you feel is necessary
Recognition that one person cannot help you meet all your mentoring needs
Recognition that your needs for mentoring change over time
Ability to accept and work through meaningful criticism
Interest in working with mentors who will help you to grow professionally
Respectful of mentor and faculty team member's time; adhere to meeting due dates
Commitment to make an effort to enable the relationship to develop and function

West Chester University of Pennsylvania Digital Commons

<u>About the Commons</u>

West Chester University of Pennsylvania Digital Commons is a showcase of faculty and student work, a departmental archive and our university press.

In the WCU Digital Commons is a showcase of scholarly works by West Chester University of Pennsylvania researchers and students, scholars at West Chester University of Pennsylvania may use it to disseminate, publicize, and archive their work. Researchers and other interested readers from anywhere in the world may use it to discover and keep up-to-date with West Chester University of Pennsylvania scholarship. The Commons is a central online system that manages the storage, access and preservation of a variety of materials and formats, including working papers, preprints, post-prints, multimedia teaching materials, books, theses and dissertations.

West Chester University of Pennsylvania Digital Commons also supports the publication of electronic journals and other original material. Publication support software includes processes for peer review and communication among editorial boards.

West Chester University of Pennsylvania Digital Commons is administered by Francis Harvey Green librarians. Participation in the Commons is open to all West Chester University of Pennsylvania faculty, students and staff. Student materials require faculty approval prior to deposit.

Access to materials archived within the repository is free of charge to all users.

After the DNP Project Manuscript has been completed, students shall submit their DNP Project Manuscript to the West Chester University of Pennsylvania Digital Commons. Further directions will be provided in NSG 810-812 and will be guided by the Graduate Office: Policies for Graduation.

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GRADUATE STUDENT POLICIES
West Chester University
Office of Graduate Studies
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Highlights of Select Policies & Procedures

Further details of all policies and procedures can be found in the WCU Graduate Catalog online.

Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty is prohibited and violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University. Academic dishonesty as it applies to students includes, but is not limited to academic cheating; plagiarism; the sale, purchase, or exchange of term papers or research papers; using books or other materials without authorization while taking examinations; taking an examination for another person, or allowing another person to take an examination in one's place; copying from another's paper during an examination or allowing another person to copy from one's own falsification of information which includes any form of providing false or misleading information, written, electronic, or oral; or of altering or falsifying official institutional records. Plagiarism is defined as copying another's work or portions thereof and/or using ideas and concepts of another and presenting them as one's own without giving proper credit to the source. Full details about Academic Dishonesty may be found on the WCU website.

NOTE: The Student Code of Conduct covers theft or attempted theft of property and/or services; destruction; vandalism; misuse or abuse of the real or personal property of the University, any organization, or any individual.

Grade Change Policy

A grade awarded other than IP/NG is final. Final grades can be changed only when there is a clerical or computational error. If the student thinks there is an error the student must report the alleged error in writing to the professor as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the fifth week of the following semester. If a grade change is warranted, the professor must submit a change of grade request to the office of the Registrar not later than the end of the ninth week of the semester. Final grades cannot be changed after the ninth week of the semester following the alleged error.

Graduate Student Course Repeat Policy

Graduate students must repeat courses applied to the degree for which they have received a grade of less than C- and all courses for which the program or department has a higher standard. Courses may be repeated only once and a student can only repeat two courses within the major. Both grades received for a course will remain on the student's record and both grades will be used to calculate the cumulative and major averages.

Continuous Enrollment

All graduate students who have been admitted into a degree program must maintain continuous registration each semester (except summer sessions), or must apply for a formal leave of absence.

Application for Graduation

Each candidate for a master's degree must apply to graduate on **myWCU**. An automatic fee will be added to their account. The following are deadline dates for applying to graduate:

- May graduation - February 1
- August graduation - June 1
- December graduation - October 1

DNP students will be eligible to process in Graduate Commencement after the completion of all doctoral courses and requirements have been met.

Enrollment Policy

Approved through the summer CAPC pilot process. Effective for one year (approved August 8, 2014).

Students have a maximum of 6 years for degree completion. During that time students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment during fall and spring semesters. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment may affect degree completion due to course availability. Before a semester of non-enrollment, students are encouraged to contact their graduate coordinator, graduate studies, financial aid office (if applicable), and international programs (if applicable) to discuss implications of non-enrollment.

A maximum of two semesters of non-enrollment are permitted before a student must enroll or request a leave of absence. Students who fail to reenroll or request a leave of absence are subject to readmission.

Enrollment Classification

1. Enrolled
   a. Enrolled in at least 1 credit-bearing course.
   b. Enrolled in GSR799, Continuous Registration. This denotes Graduate Student Research – This enrollment classification is designated for students completing IP grades and/or taking comprehensive exams. Students will be permitted to enroll in GSR799 if actively engaged in work towards the completion of the IP or comprehensive exams. The graduate coordinator must confirm a student is actively working on the completion of an IP or comprehensive exams before a student is enrolled in GSR799. Students will only be permitted two consecutive semesters of enrollment in GSR799. GSR799 is a non-graded and non-credit bearing course.

2. Non-Enrolled
   a. Enrolled in 0 hours of credit-bearing courses.
   b. Not eligible for GSR799.
   c. Students can have up to two consecutive semesters (fall and spring) of non-enrollment.
   d. Students must apply for a Leave of Absence during the second semester or enroll in credit-bearing courses in order to maintain good enrollment status.

3. Leave of Absence (LOA)
   a. Students wishing to be excused from the enrollment policy due to extenuating circumstances must file a formal request for a Leave of Absence. Forms are available on the Graduate Studies webpage.
   b. A Leave of Absence is not guaranteed, and students must request the LOA before the start of the semester in which the leave is requested.

Graduate Grading Policies

NG Grades at the Graduate Level:
NG grades will be given when a student fails to complete course requirements by the end of a semester and a time extension is granted by the professor. Students must complete course requirements as stipulated by the professor, no later than the end of the 14th week of the subsequent semester, or the NG grade will convert to an F at the end of the semester.

Unless a professor indicates a deadline when assigning a NG, graduate students have until the 14th week of the subsequent to complete course requirements. Please note, this means NG grade changes are due to the Registrar's office at the conclusion of the 15th week.

IP Grades at the Graduate Level:

IP grades indicate work in progress and will be used only for protected courses (theses, practicums, internships, recitals, and research reports). Students must complete course requirements as stipulated by the professor no later than the end of the 14th week of the second subsequent semester, or the IP grade will convert to an F. An IP grade may not be replaced with an NG.

If an NG or IP transitions to an F, a dismissal will be issued to the student. Please refer to the current **policy** on F grades.

All graduate academic policies can be found in the Graduate Catalog.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Office of Graduate Studies

The Office of Graduate Studies is located in McKelvie Hall on Rosedale Avenue. Students may utilize the office for schedules and forms for registration, leave of absence, degree candidacy, and graduation. The telephone number is 610-436-2943 and the hours are Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Graduate Studies home page may be accessed from the WCU home page. Most forms are available via the web.

Graduate Student Association (GSA)

All graduate students are members of the WCU Graduate Student Association. Dues are applied from fees paid with tuition each semester. What does the GSA do?

- GSA hosts graduate orientations in the fall of each year.
- GSA assists graduate students in finding solutions to academically related problems.
- GSA conducts seminars on various topics - Thesis, Computers, Advising, etc.
- GSA hosts December and May graduation receptions for graduate students.
- GSA provides a stipend to graduate students who present research at conferences and seminars.
- GSA represents the graduate student interests at West Chester University.
- GSA produces a newsletter to provide information and tips for graduate students.
- GSA offers opportunities to serve on campus-wide committees and the GSA Executive Board.

The GSA office is located in Sykes Union Building, Room 216, and the telephone number is 610-436-6987.

Library Services

The WCU Libraries' electronic resources and research assistance services are readily accessible to you at a distance from the library's website. You can access:

- nursing-specific databases.
- a nursing research guide, that lists tutorials and websites of interest, as well as contact information for the nursing liaison librarian, Walt Cressler.
- interlibrary loan, a free service that you can use to get books and articles WCU doesn't own.
- research assistance from librarians via phone, text, chat, or email.

For information on getting physical materials sent to you, and other services and support for distance education students see the Library Services for Distance Students guide.

The Academic Computing Center (ACC) & Information Technology

The ACC is located in Anderson Hall, North Campus on Church Street. The ACC is connected to the WCU - Local Area Network (LAN) which allows access to different types of software and services including:

The ACC provides a central location in which the majority of academic computing resources are located. Students and faculty use the ACC for academic research, Internet access, statistical processing, word processing, and numerous other academic purposes.

LARC

The Learning Assistance and Resource Center (LARC) strives to provide quality academic support services which help students become independent, active learners who achieve academic success. The LARC aims to promote cognitive development in a diversity of student populations through assessing and teaching the affective skills necessary for achieving academic and personal learning goals.

The Writing Center

Provides free writing tutoring, workshops, and resources to the entire university community: undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff. Serving writers from diverse academic disciplines and cultural settings, our goal is to help you - either in person or online - become a better writer, reader, and critical thinker.

Information Technology

Computer Configuration

To be successful in the DNP Program, it is important that student computers are configured with programs that function successfully with the appropriate software. Students are responsible to make sure their personal computers are adequate; however, we are here to help. Look at the minimal computer configuration requirements to guide if you need any type of software or hardware upgrades.

IT Assistance

In addition to on campus computing, students have access to a variety of assistance and programs from the Information Technology. The IT Help Desk is the primary point of contact for computer-related inquiries and problems, as well as the liaison between the campus community and the Client Services technical personnel. IT Help Desk analysts will make every attempt to answer questions or resolve computing problems directly. Any problems that the IT Help Desk are unable to resolve will be forwarded to the appropriate technical personnel to ensure a timely resolution.

Computer Programs

A variety of computer programs such as Microsoft Office 365, Adobe Reader, and Adobe Shockwave player, to name few are available to students either free or at greatly reduced cost. Access to this information is found within information technology site.

Desire to Learn (D2L) is supported through our IT Dept. during business hours. After hours support is offered through the D2L portal.

Office of Graduate Studies/GSA Orientation for New Graduate Students

Graduate Orientation

An orientation for all new graduate students is held every semester. The time and day varies and is announced with registration materials. Usually ID services and parking stickers can be purchased at the orientation. Refreshments are provided.

Student ID Cards

In order to borrow books from the library, graduate students must present their WCU ID (identification) card. An ID card can be purchased for a fee at the SSI Office, Sykes Union Building. (For further information on the cost and hours for pictures, contact SSI at 610-436-2955)

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

The Honor Society of the Department of Nursing, West Chester University, was established in the spring of 1985. The first induction for the society was held on March 24, 1985. On April 17, 1994, the Honor Society was chartered as Xi Delta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing in a ceremony conducted by Elizabeth Carnegie, DPA, RN, FAAN, member of the Board of Directors of Sigma Theta Tau. The purposes of this society are to recognize superior achievement, recognize the development of leadership qualities, foster high professional standards, encourage creative work, and strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession.

Each fall, Xi Delta Chapter hosts an induction ceremony to honor new members. Membership is open to undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the nursing program who have demonstrated superior scholastic achievement and potential for community leadership as well as to community nurse leaders. Undergraduate candidates must have achieved a grade average of at least 3.25 and be in the top one-third of their class; graduate students are eligible if they have achieved a grade-point average significantly higher than the minimum requirement for graduation. This should be at least a 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. Community leaders must have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree and have demonstrated marked achievement in nursing education, practice, research or publication.

Mary Kline Lecture Series and Professional Day

An annual campus-wide lecture series has been established by the Department of Nursing to honor Mary L. Kline, a distinguished member of the nursing faculty who retired in 1983 after fourteen years of dedicated teaching and service to the university. These lectures are held annually in the fall semester.

Student Representation on Department and Campus-Wide Committees

Students are invited to serve as student representatives on department committees, such as the Student Affairs, Faculty Affairs, and Curriculum committees. Campus-wide service is possible by serving as a student representative on one of several committees on campus, such as CAPC, Space Allocation and Library, Sykes Union Advisory Committee, etc. Interested students may get information from a faculty member or from the Graduate Student Association.

<u>Research Day</u>

Research Day is a WCU-wide event (Spring/Fall) that provides a venue for faculty and students to present, discuss, and demonstrate research and scholarship in all disciplines. It also serves as a valuable forum for researchers to practice their presentations for upcoming regional and national conferences.

<u>Graduation Celebration</u>

Graduate students typically coordinate and hold a graduation celebration in May or December each year to recognize their accomplishments. Students plan this event and it is held at a private home or a restaurant.