



**School of Nursing  
Doctor of Nursing Practice  
Student Handbook  
AY 2026/2027**

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

This handbook supplements the current West Chester University Graduate catalog and other university publications. The guide includes valuable information for your success in the DNP program. You are strongly encouraged to keep and refer to this handbook throughout your course of study.

Please note that the material in this handbook is subject to change as university or school policies are revised. Your advisor is there to guide you, but it is still your responsibility to complete all requirements, conform to policies in force, and meet all deadlines. Periodic checking of the School and University websites 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 you will take advantage of all that our School and the University have to offer.

## *The Graduate Faculty*

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## Faculty and Staff

Table 1: School of Nursing Faculty

Faculty	SECC Room	Telephone
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<b>Daniel Bileth, DNP, RN-BC, CPN</b>	322	(610) 436-3489
<b>Beth Brady, MSN, RN, CNE</b>	306	610) 436-3474
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<b>Jean Herb, MSN, RN</b>	310	(610) 436-2839
<b>Christina Hayes DNP, RNC-OB, RN-BC</b>	331	(610) 436-3488
<b>Michelle Kensey, DNP, RN, CNS, CNE</b>	308	(610) 436-0548
<b>Julie Kurkowski, PhD, MSN, RN</b>	149	(610) 436-3471
<b>Julie McCulloh Nair, PhD, RN, APHN-BC, CCRE</b>	321	610) 436-2331
<b>Carolyn Meehan, PhD, CRNP,</b> M.S. In Nursing (with Accelerated B.S.N.) Program Director	313	(610) 436-3204
<b>Megan Mraz, PhD, MSN, RN</b> Assistant Chair, School Nurse Certificate Program Director	317	(610) 430-4408
<b>Jackie Owens, DNP, CRNP, FNP-BC</b> Graduate Program Director	333	610) 436-2314
<b>Eunice Park-Clinton, DNP, MSN, MBE, AGPCNP-BC</b>	320	(610)436-2693
<b>Norine (Nina) Pulliam, PhD, MSN, PHCNS-BC, RN</b>	311	(610) 436-6918
<b>Carol Romano, DNP, RN</b>	319	(610) 436-6927
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<b>Lauren Stoltzfus, DNP, RN, CNE</b>	309	(610) 436-2692
<b>John Taylor, DNP, RN-BC, CPN, CNE</b> Pre-Licensure Program Director	323	(610) 436-6964
<b>Kasey Trill, Ed.D., RN, CMSRN</b>	335	(610) 436-3490
<b>Christina Von Colln-Appling, PhD, MSN, RN</b>	318	(610) 436-3473
<b>Adrienne Wharry, DNP, RN, CCRN</b>	316	(610) 436-2323
<b>Danielle Yocom, DNP, RN, FNP-BC</b> RN-BSN Program Director	315	(610) 738-0549
Staff	Room	Telephone
<b>Janine New, MSN, RN, GEOR-BC</b> Staff Lab Coordinator	148	(610) 436-3470
<b>Cindy Pistritto</b> Administrative Assistant	324	(610) 430-4181
<b>Stacey Pedicone</b> Department Secretary	327	(610) 436-2219

All faculty, staff and Nursing Lab Coordinator of the Nursing Department are located: SECC Building, 155 University Ave., West Chester, PA 19383

## Mission Statement and Philosophy

The mission of the West Chester University School 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.

The School 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 School of Nursing's philosophical beliefs.

The School 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 School of Nursing provide 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 school'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 2021 AACN *Essentials* document (*The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education*), the 2021 AACN *Essentials* document (*The Essentials of Master's Education*), and the 2021 AACN *Essentials* document (*The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*) provide structure for the curriculum content of all programs. The faculty designed programs 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.

*Adopted; December 2015*

## **Program Outcomes**

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 healthcare 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, except for the first two-credit course which has an on-campus one day orientation.

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 healthcare policy to design, implement, and evaluate the effect on future patient outcomes;
5. analyze the scope of healthcare 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.

## **Admission Requirements**

Applicants to the Graduate Program must meet the [Graduate Nursing Requirements](#). All qualified applicants are admitted to the program. Students who are unable to demonstrate 500 preprogram clinical hours within their master's program must complete a gap analysis with the graduate faculty coordinator prior to starting the program.

## Curriculum

### Plan of Study

Students may begin the DNP program in any fall semester. The structure of the program is a cohort model for three-year plan students. Courses are offered every other year except for NSG 810, 811 and 812 Post-MSN-DNP students may complete the program in approximately three years or more, but no longer than six years.

*Table 1: 3 Year Plan of Study for 2025 and 2027 Cohort*

<b>Year 1 Fall</b>	<b>Year 2 Fall</b>	<b>Year 3 Fall</b>
NSG 701 (1) NSG 704 (3) NSG 707 (3)	NSG702 (3) NSG703 (3)	NSG810 (4)
<b>Year 1 Spring</b>	<b>Year 2 Spring</b>	<b>Year 3 Spring</b>
NSG705 (3) NSG708 (3)	NSG706 (3) NSG709 (3)	NSG811 (3) NSG812 (3)

*Table 2: 3 Year Plan of Study for 2024 and 2026 Cohorts*

<b>Year 1 Fall</b>	<b>Year 2 Fall</b>	<b>Year 3 Fall</b>
NSG 701 (1) NSG 702 (3) NSG 703 (3)	NSG704 (3) NSG707 (3)	NSG810 (4)
<b>Year 1 Spring</b>	<b>Year 2 Spring</b>	<b>Year 3 Spring</b>
NSG709 (3) NSG706 (3)	NSG705 (3) NSG708 (3)	NSG811 (3) NSG812 (3)

A 5-year plan is available, but we encourage students to stay within the cohort model for timely graduation.

*Table 2: 5 Year Plan for 2025 and 2027 Admits*

<b>Year 1 Fall</b>	<b>Year 2 Fall</b>	<b>Year 3 Fall</b>	<b>Year 4 Fall</b>	<b>Year 5 Fall</b>
NSG 701 (1) NSG 704 (3)	NSG702 (3)	NSG707 (4)	NSG 703 (3)	NSG810 (4)
<b>Year 1 Spring</b>	<b>Year 2 Spring</b>	<b>Year 3 Spring</b>		
NSG705 (3)	NSG706 (3)	NSG708 (3)	NSG 709	NSG811 (3) NSG812 (3)

*Table 3: 5 Year Plan for 2024 and 2026 Admits*

<b>Year 1 Fall</b>	<b>Year 2 Fall</b>	<b>Year 3 Fall</b>	<b>Year 4 Fall</b>	<b>Year 5 Fall</b>
NSG 701 (1) NSG 702 (3)	NSG704 (3)	NSG703 (4)	NSG 707 (3)	NSG810 (4)
<b>Year 1 Spring</b>	<b>Year 2 Spring</b>	<b>Year 3 Spring</b>		
NSG706 (3)	NSG705 (3)	NSG709 (3)	NSG 708	NSG811 (3)

## Course Descriptions

### **NSG 698 DNP Practicum Transition Course (3) credits**

This course is designed for pre-DNP students who did not complete 500 practice hours in their master's degree and need to complete practice hours prior to their DNP program. The student will complete 250 practice hours under the supervision of a preceptor during this 3-credit course. This is a 250 clinical hour practicum course.

### **NSG 701 Transition to Doctoral Study (1) Credit**

This course is designed for those either in clinical practice or in areas that support those in practice environments including administration, informatics, organizational leadership/management, and policy. This course exposes the student to the leadership roles expected of DNP practitioners. The importance of evidence-based practice, clinical inquiry, scholarship, and ethics within nursing and related disciplines will be explored. The importance of interprofessional collaboration to promote quality improvement and safe, patient outcomes will be investigated. This initial course provides an overview of the DNP program and the university resources available to students. An introductory dialogue about the DNP Quality Improvement Project will be presented.

### **NSG 702 Leadership for Advanced Nursing Practice (3) Credits**

Students examine the role of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) nurse as it related to leadership. Theoretical leadership concepts and models are reviewed in relation to personal and professional values. Emphasis is on working with multiple disciplines and on leading multiple and diverse constituencies. Topics include innovation, communication, conflict resolution, resource management, change leadership, strategic planning and healthcare transformation.

### **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 (3) Credits**

This course will focus on information systems technology, its application in healthcare settings, and the value of technology and nursing informatics. Current and emerging technologies are introduced, as well as the role of the DNP/ Nurse Scientist in healthcare information systems, patient care technology, usage of data for quality improvement, ethical, legal, and policy issues, the value of health information, and leading the advancement of informatics practice and research.

### **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 within 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. Prior to data collection or intervention DNP students complete the protection of human subjects/IRB process.

**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. 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 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.**

## Clinical Practice Requirements

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) (2008), "nursing as a practice profession requires both practice experts and nurse scientists to expand the scientific basis for patient care." (p.7). Therefore, the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) focuses on both practice and scientific inquiry and designates clinical hours as part of the curriculum. The new AACN Essentials (2021) focus on the accomplishment of competencies through scholarship and practice.

### Premise

The WCU graduate faculty acknowledge the following:

- ❖ Many DNP students hold positions in a leadership role within a healthcare organization.
- ❖ They have job responsibilities that require high-level expertise, but they seek additional education to take it to the next level.
- ❖ Within their roles, they can seek out different experiences that fulfill practice time and DNP Essential competencies.
- ❖ It is not easy to achieve all clinical hours at the end of the program.

The WCU graduate faculty have determined that:

- ❖ A steady accumulation of hours throughout the program enhances the AACN Essentials and optimal student learning achievement.
- ❖ Student learning outcomes and the Essentials drive the selection of clinical hours.
- ❖ All hours must be above and beyond any job responsibilities.
- ❖ Students may engage in clinical hours while working in their current nursing role; however, these hours must be outside the job description.
- ❖ Faculty may accept or deny clinical hours on an individual basis for students based on the type of experience.
- ❖ All experiences, whether performed at their institution or outside, need to ensure that each student has a wide range of DNP practice hours/experiences at the doctoral level to fulfill the requirement of DNP Essentials to meet graduation requirements for the degree.

Students are required to complete *a minimum of 500 clinical practicum hours* throughout the DNP program.

### Practice Hours

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, and co-operating agencies. Throughout the course sequence students will write a practicum hour completion plan and discuss it with the course faculty and their advisor. Students will maintain the hours within the eLog system and final hour approval will be completed by faculty at the beginning of NSG 810 and at end of NSG 812.

### eLogs

Students orient to the use of eLogs, which is a cloud base tracking system. This system allows students to track practicum hours that link back to the achievement of competencies. Within eLogs, students create a portfolio of hours, descriptions, and evaluation of practicum activities.

The NSG 810, NSG 811, and NSG 812 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

## 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 doctoral-prepared WCU faculty member and a project 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 their 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 NSG 810 with a well-defined DNP Project, working closely with the WCU DNP Project faculty member.

Students are responsible for securing a DNP project site at an approved clinical agency where the experience aligns with the course and program objectives. The Graduate Coordinator will assist students in identifying and obtaining a preceptor whenever possible. However, out-of-state students may be required to identify potential sites independently, as the Graduate Coordinator may have limited contacts with clinical agencies outside the local region.

### Types of DNP Projects:

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

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

### Starting the DNP Project

The DNP Project is conducted during three consecutive courses, NSG 810, 811 and 812. In the courses prior to NSG 810, faculty guide students regarding possible topics and questions related to clinical practice, the health care delivery system, or a health care policy issue. The information obtained in the previous courses provide the DNP students with the opportunity to review and discuss the topics/ideas and discuss. Timelines for graduation application, confirmation of title project, and final project online submission apply and are published by the [Graduate College](#). As a part of the process, students must also register their project with the Graduate School with the electronic Intent to Submit a Project/Dissertation/Thesis form.

### DNP Project Requirements

**Project Faculty Member:** A WCU faculty member will be assigned as the project faculty member. 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 a potential external project mentor.

**Project Practice (External) Mentor:** In consultation with your project faculty member, the student will identify a potential project practice mentor. It is preferred that the mentor holds an earned doctorate. This 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 project faculty member. The mentor also typically agrees to serve as the student's practicum mentor. The student must obtain and submit a curriculum vitae (CV) for the project practice mentor. ***Students should not contact, ask, or speak with potential project practice mentors until after they meet with their project faculty member, and receive approval of the potential mentor.***

**Agreement for Project Practice Mentor:** The student will complete the electronic external appointment request form. The project mentor will be sent a form electronically requiring them to complete and agree to mentor the DNP student. Last, the external mentor must send the student their CV for the student to submit in the NSG 810 course site.

## **DNP Project Progression: NSG 810, 811 and 812**

### **NSG 810 DNP Project Requirements**

Students refine the practice inquiry DNP Project question and purpose. Once the student and Project Faculty Member agree on the type of project and a clinical question/purpose, the student will begin to write the Project proposal, consistent with the defined.

**Write and revise:** The student will review the draft proposal with the Project Faculty Member and revise as recommended, allowing ample time between revisions. Once approved by the Project Faculty Member, the student will distribute the proposal to the external team mentor for review.

**IRB submission:** The student will then prepare and submit the proposal to the WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and other appropriate IRB's (*as necessary*). The WCU IRB application must be reviewed and approved by the Project Faculty Member prior to submission. Any requests by the IRB to revise the application will be handled by the student; however, the revised document should be approved by the Project Faculty Member prior to resubmission to the IRB. ***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 and approval is a requirement of NSG 810.***

### **NSG 811 DNP Project Requirements**

Students implement the DNP Project. During this time, the student will remain in close contact with their Project Team members. This course may also include initial evaluation of the project and analysis of data.

### **NSG 812 DNP Project Requirements**

Students analyze and synthesize results in the beginning of this session with final writing and revision to follow. Chapters 4 and 5 will be completed during this course including tables, figures, and appendices.

The student will submit the final manuscript to the Project Faculty Member for review and approval (via D2L), based on a mutually agreed upon schedule. As with the project proposal, ample time should be allocated for revisions with attention to deadlines from [the Graduate School](#). Once approved, the student will distribute the

proposal to the Project Practice Mentor for review.

Once the Project Faculty Member and Practice Mentor approve of the final project report, the student will complete the signature page and forward this to the Project Faculty Member and then to the Project Practice Mentor for final signatures. The student will upload this form to Digital Commons with their completed manuscript.  
the student will complete a presentation.

Last, the student will prepare and deliver a presentation about their DNP Project.

## **Writing the DNP Project Manuscript**

The length of the DNP Project may vary depending on the project/option selected. Students may find that they need to rework sections several times to achieve clarity, brevity, and completeness. All work is to adhere to the most recent edition of APA style.

*\*\*Of note, all graduate level nursing students are required to purchase and own an APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition writing manual throughout the duration of their academic careers at WCU\*\**

Preliminary Pages including title page, acknowledgements, dedication, copyright, abstract, table of contents, etc. as per The Graduate School and School Guidelines

### **Chapter 1**

Introduction

Background

Significance: Impact of the problem on patients, families, community, SDOH

Clinical Question

Goals of Project

Summary of Chapter

### **Chapter 2**

Introduction

Terms, Concepts & Definitions

Review of the Literature

Gaps in Literature

Summary of Chapter

### **Chapter 3**

Introduction

Design

Change Theory/Models: examples Lewin, Rogers or Donabedian

Setting

Population/Sample: Include DEI

Instrument

Data Collection & Analysis

Protection of Human Subjects/IRB

Resources, Personnel, & Technology: DNP Project Team, interprofessional communication

Timeline: Gantt Chart

Summary of Chapter

### **Chapter 4**

Introduction

Project Management: PDSA cycles, Team Leadership (self-assessment of leadership and biases, resolving conflict, and interprofessional communication), Stakeholder

Engagement, Self-Care Strategies, Interprofessional Communication, Attention to Safety

Data Collection

Statistical Results

Summary of Chapter/Conclusion

## **Chapter 5**

Introduction

Review of the problem

Impact on Patients, Staff, and Community: include DEI

Strengths and Limitations of the Project/Lessons Learned

Interprofessional Communication: Evaluation of team, leadership evaluation

Implications for Nursing Practice, Education, and Research (policy, practice, partnerships, SDOH)

Plan for Dissemination and Sustainability

Summary of Chapter/Conclusion

**References**

**Appendices**

## **Frequently Asked Questions About the DNP Project**

### **What is the role of the Project Faculty Member?**

The Project Faculty Member works closely with the student as they plan and execute the doctoral project. The Project Faculty Member should be aware of all plans, timelines, changes and problems throughout the project process. The Member must hold an earned doctorate and be a WCU faculty member. The Member will be the assigned course faculty for NSG810, 811 and 812. All efforts will be made to maintain the same Member throughout all three courses.

### **How should I determine my Project External Mentor?**

The Project External Mentor 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 the Project Faculty Member.

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

**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.

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

### **Will I have to get multiple IRB approvals?**

This will depend on the nature of the project and policies of the Project site.

### **What if my project proposal gets delayed in the IRB?**

If the application is delayed in the review process, the student will work with their Project Faculty Member to revise the timeline and expectations.

### **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's time; adhere to meeting due dates
- ❖ Commitment to enable the relationship to develop and function

## **DNP Project Submission**

### **West Chester University of Pennsylvania Digital Commons**

After the final Project Manuscript has been completed and approved by the *Project Faculty Member* and the *Project External Mentor*, students shall submit this to the West Chester University of Pennsylvania Digital Commons. The Graduate School website has all information about the digital commons. The student will communicate directly with the Graduate College for requested revisions and resubmissions. AFTER all submissions and approvals, the student will be cleared for graduation.

#### **Graduate School Thesis/Culminating Project Process Guidelines:**

*West Chester University of Pennsylvania Digital Commons* is a showcase of scholarly works by WCU researchers, faculty and student, a scholar archive and our university press. Scholars at WCU 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 WCU 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.

WCU 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.

WCU Digital Commons is administered by Francis Harvey Green librarians. Participation in the Commons is open to all WCU 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 user

## Graduate School Policies

*\*Please note: Policies change regularly so be sure to download the latest Graduate Student Handbook and check the WCU Graduate Handbook. Each course syllabus will be specific to course requirements.*

### Enrollment Policy

Students have a maximum of six years for degree completion. During that time, students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment during the 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, The Graduate School, Financial Aid Office (if applicable), and Center for International Programs (if applicable) to discuss implications of non-enrollment. A maximum of two semesters of non-enrollment is permitted before a student must enroll or request a leave of absence. Students who fail to re-enroll or request a leave of absence are subject to readmission.

### Leave of Absence (LOA)

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 School](#) webpage. 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.

### NG Grades at the Graduate Level

NG grades will be given when a student fails to complete course requirements, and the professor grants a time extension by the end of a semester. Students must meet course requirements as stipulated by the professor as and not 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 an NG, graduate students have until the 14th week of the subsequent semester 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 as and not 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.

Graduate academic policies can be found online in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

### Academic Integrity

Any situation involving a violation of academic integrity is of major concern to the University. Faculty members preserve and transmit the values of the academic community through example in their own academic pursuits and through the learning environment that they create for their students. They are expected to instill in their students a respect for integrity and an understanding of the importance of honesty within their chosen profession. Faculty must also take measures to discourage student academic dishonesty.

Commitment to maintaining and encouraging high standards of academic integrity is demonstrated in many ways. One way is through the establishment of policies and procedures governing violation of the standards of academic integrity. The following policies, procedures, and definitions are intended to help faculty meet these responsibilities.

First, the instructor has both the right and responsibility to demand academic honesty if a student is to remain in good standing in the course and is to be evaluated fairly by the instructor. A grade certifies both knowledge and a standard of academic integrity. It is essential that the instructor retain the right to set the minimum academic penalty for academic dishonesty in a course, subject to the appeal rights of a student.

Second, cheating is not just a matter between an instructor and student in a specific course. While it is the right and duty of the instructor to set minimum penalties for dishonesty in a particular course, the University is responsible for the minimum standards of academic integrity and achievement on which degrees are based. It is the University that permits students to remain members of the academic community and finally certifies that students have attained sufficient academic credit and exhibited acceptable standards of conduct to entitle them to a degree.

Third, students accused of academic dishonesty have the right to have their case heard in a fair and impartial manner, with all the safeguards available within the bounds of due process.

### Graduate Grading Scale

*Table 4: Graduate Grading Scale*

Grade	Quality Points	Percentage Equivalents	Interpretation
A	4.00	93-100	Superior Graduate Attainment
A-	3.67	90-92	
B+	3.33	87-89	Satisfactory Graduate Attainment
B	3.00	83-86	
B-	2.67	80-82	
C+	2.33	77-79	Attainment Below Graduate Expectations
C	2.00	73-76	
C-	1.67	70-72	
F	0	< 70%	Failure

The grade assigned to the student must reflect the percentage equivalent of the plus, minus, and straight grades earned in a course.

West Chester University does not recognize a grade of D for graduate study. Therefore, any grade below a C- in a graduate course is considered a failure and carries zero quality points.

- IP (In Progress) is given to indicate work in progress and will be used only for protected courses (theses, practicums, internships, recitals, and research reports); see "Removing 'In Progress' Designation."
- NG (No Grade) is given when a student fails to complete course requirements by the end of a semester, and a time extension is granted by the instructor; see "Removing 'No Grade' Designation."
- W (Withdrawal) is given when a student withdraws from a course between the end of the first and the end of the ninth-class week of the semester or the equivalent in summer sessions.
- Y (Administrative Withdrawal) is given under appeal when there are nonacademic mitigating circumstances, and there is documentation that the student never, in fact, attended class.

- M (Military Withdrawal) In accordance with PA House Bill No. 1460: A grade of "M" will be given for military students and spouses who have to withdraw due to military obligation. PA National Guard and other reserve components called to active duty (for reasons other than for training) and their spouses will receive a grade of M when unable to complete classes due to activation for military obligations. Students are required to notify the Registrar's Office to receive a non-punitive M grade and will be required to provide appropriate documentation.
- Z Grade A grade received when a student stops attending a course and fails to officially withdraw from it. The grade is counted the same way that an F would count toward the cumulative average and Academic Standing.

### **Grade Change Policy**

Course grades are awarded by the professor of record and reported to the university registrar. These grades, other than NG or IP, are considered final, but may be changed at the discretion of the faculty member within 9 weeks from the start of the subsequent Fall or Spring semester. Any change submitted after that date requires approval of the Provost or their designee. Appropriate justifications for changing a final course grade include, but are *not limited to*:

1. Computational error
2. Completion of course work missed during the semester
3. Other

### **Grade Appeals**

The Grade Appeals Policy applies only to questions of student evaluation. Since appeals involve questions of judgment, the Grade Appeals Board will not recommend that a grade be revised in the student's favor unless there is clear evidence that the final grade awarded for the class was based on prejudiced or capricious judgment or was inconsistent with official University policy. Please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy for cases where the grade appeal involves a grade given for academic dishonesty. Grades are awarded by the faculty member of record and can only be changed by said faculty member, unless the Provost directs otherwise following the procedure outlined on the Graduate School website and catalog.

### **Academic Standing**

Students must maintain a 3.00 cumulative average to remain in good standing.

### **Academic Probation/Dismissal**

Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation. Graduate students must raise their GPA to 3.00 by the end of the next semester (or full summer term) in which they register. An additional probationary semester may be granted at the discretion of the graduate dean. If a student fails to meet the conditions of academic probation, they will be dismissed. Graduate students earning a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or lower will be dismissed from their graduate program without a probationary period. Graduate students admitted provisionally who fail to meet the provisions of admission are subject to dismissal.

A graduate student earning an F grade in any course will be dismissed. Departments/programs reserve the right to establish an official policy in which students are not dismissed for an F grade. An F earned at West Chester University may not be made up at another institution of higher learning for the same course.

Students dismissed from the university may apply for re-admission. Courses taken prior to the dismissal may be applied to a subsequent program with departmental consent. The original program reserves the right to refuse to re-admit the student.

Grades earned during summer sessions count the same as grades earned during the academic year. All grades recorded determine the student's academic standing, even if a student changes degree programs. Students

dropped from a graduate program due to unsatisfactory work will not be permitted to take courses for credit towards a graduate degree in that department beyond the semester in which they are dropped.

Individual programs may have higher GPA minimums or additional requirements. To be eligible to receive a graduate certificate or degree, graduate students must complete all requisite courses and credits with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00.

### **Application for Graduation**

Each candidate for a graduate degree must apply to graduate in RamPortal. 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

## Campus Resources

### The Graduate School

The Graduate School is in McKelvie Hall on Rosedale Avenue. Students can access information in the new student section. The telephone number is 610-436-2943, and the hours are Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Graduate School [Services and Resources webpage](#) provides graduate students with links to campus resources.

### Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is a student governing body for graduate students that promotes the well-being of graduate students through education, professional and social events at West Chester University and advocates for their needs.

### Francis Harvey Green Library

The FHG Library offers the graduate student an excellent environment for study and research. Among the many services are references, computerized online literature searching, *and free* interlibrary loan for graduate students, and photoduplication. Use of the library is enhanced by:

WCU's online card catalog - a computerized network of indexes and abstracts on CD-ROM

Internet periodical indexes (Search Bank, etc.)

The library has day, evening, and weekend hours of operation. The circulation desk telephone number is 610-436-2946. **A current ID must be presented to check out material and to access indexes from home online.**

### Information Services and Technology

WCU has an abundance of technical support. Go to the resources for new students on the web to learn about all the available items. Also, if you come on campus, along with the library, there is the Academic Computing Center (ACC) that is in Anderson Hall, North Campus on Church Street. Hours of operation for the ACC are found at Service Now.

### Student ID Cards

To borrow books from the library, or to enter any buildings on campus, graduate students must have a WCU ID (identification) card. An ID card may be obtained via the [Ram Card website](#).

## **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 purposes of this society are to recognize superior achievement, recognize the development of leadership qualities, fosters high professional standards, encourage creative work, and strengthen the commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession. 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.

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 and 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 reached 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 significant achievement in nursing education, practice, research, or publication.

### **Mary Kline Lecture Series and Professional Day**

The Department of Nursing has established an annual campus-wide lecture series 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.

### **WCU Nursing & Xi Delta Research & Evidence Based Practice Conference**

This conference is held in the spring for students and alumni to share their current research and evidence-based practice projects.

### **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 several committees on campus, such as CAPC, Space Allocation, Library, Sykes Union Advisory Committee, etc. Interested students may get information from a faculty member or the Graduate Student Association.

### **Graduate Research Day**

Research Day is the only WCU-wide event 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.