



POLICY AND PROGRESSION
DOCOTRATE OF NURSING PRACTICE
(MS-DNP) DEGREE
2009-2010

INTRODUCTION

These policy and guidelines have been prepared to assist you while pursuing the Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree at the University of Utah. This progression manual is specific to the **MS-DNP** program. We advise you to also consult additional sources of information available to help make your graduate experience successful.

Please see the Graduate School information pages at http://web.utah.edu/graduate_school/

for general information about:

Graduate Handbook

Important Dates

Online Forms

Graduate Fellowship & Scholarships

Tuition Expenses

Graduate Tuition Benefit Guidelines

Graduate Student Health Benefit Plan

Registrars Office

It is also important to be familiar with the Student Code that is designed to set forth the specific authority and responsibility of the University to maintain social discipline, to establish guidelines that facilitate a just and civil campus community, and to outline the educational process for determining student and student organization responsibility for alleged violations of University regulations:

University of Utah Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities at www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html.)

I. General Requirements

The **MS-DNP** program of study will be individualized based on previous education and experience and specialty requirements. Master's prepared nurses who are candidates for the DNP Degree in the College of Nursing must accumulate a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate courses. The program of study for most MS-DNP students will include more than 30 semester hours.

MS-DNP students who have a nursing degree must be licensed to practice as a registered nurse or advanced practice registered nurse in one of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) jurisdictions. Any exceptions to the licensure requirement must be approved by the MS and DNP Program and Curriculum Committee. Students may have access to their own academic records maintained in the Office of Academic Affairs and Students Services at the College of Nursing. Students may request access to their own file by making an appointment with their Academic Advisor and may review these records in the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services. Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor. Students are encouraged to use advisement consistently in their program planning.

A. Progression in the MS-DNP Program

The general progression of **MS-DNP** students is monitored by the MS-DNP supervisory committee.

The **MS-DNP** Program in the College of Nursing is divided into two phases: Course work and Capstone.

1. Supervisory Committee:

Supervision of the student's progress in the MS-DNP program is the responsibility of a committee that consists of the MS-DNP Program director, the student's Capstone project Chair, and the Executive Director of the Clinical Graduate Programs. In the event that two of these members are the same, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will be 3rd member. The supervisory committee is responsible for ensuring that the student meets the expectations of scholarship and clinical preparation and is approved to graduate with

DNP degree. This committee is responsible for all administrative approvals and signatures for the University. Until a Capstone chair is assigned, supervision of the student's progress in the MS-DNP program is the responsibility of the MS-DNP Program director and the student's advisor. Students will be assigned to a capstone group and a Capstone Chair before the beginning of the semester of the first capstone course. If a graduate student's preliminary work is deficient, supplementary undergraduate courses for which no graduate credit is granted may be required to proceed in the program.

2. Course Work:

Course work includes core courses in the College of Nursing and electives offered in the College of Nursing or other departments. Electives are intended to support the chosen capstone project or enhance the specialty area of the student, and must be approved by the advisor or capstone chair/leader. Additional elective courses may be selected by the student including independent study.

Electives must be graduate level courses or equivalent. Students may use elective credits to obtain certification in a sub-specialty area relevant to their practice. The MS-DNP program director and the MS and DNP Curriculum committee must approve such a request.

NOTE: The DNP Essentials require 1000 hours of supervised clinical practice in a post-baccalaureate academic program. If a student in the MS-DNP program has not accumulated sufficient hours in advanced practice through a Master's degree program or work experience, additional electives may be needed. Students who want to register for an independent study must identify a faculty member to supervise the independent study. The student and faculty must develop a list of objectives and outcomes for the project. There is a request form for independent study; this can be obtained from the Graduate Academic Advisor.

3. Capstone

The Capstone immersion experience provides an opportunity for further synthesis and expansion of learning in the MS-DNP program. The Capstone experience is designed to help students build and assimilate knowledge for advanced specialty practice at a high level of complexity.

The Capstone project must represent the results of scholarly inquiry and be a contribution to nursing in the areas including but not limited to leadership, policy, or evidence-based practice. The Capstone project uses evidence to improve practice or patient outcomes. The Capstone project should provide evidence of an advanced understanding of relevant literature and policy/practice issues, and must be presented in an acceptable style and must adhere to ethical academic standards. Examples of suitable Capstone projects are systematic reviews with clinical practice guidelines, needs or program assessments, program evaluations, or assessment of outcomes of complex clinical practice.

The Capstone project is overseen by a Capstone Chair who is also the Capstone Seminar Leader. Two or more content experts will be selected by the student, and approved by the Chair, to inform particular aspects of the project. This group has responsibility for assisting the student in developing and completing a scholarly Capstone project. The responsibility of approval for successful completion of the Capstone project lies with the Capstone Chair. The Capstone Chair/Seminar Leader will consult with the content experts who provide additional content and/or methods expertise for specific aspects of the project as part of this approval decision.

The Chair must be faculty in the College of Nursing, doctorally prepared and will generally have expertise in one facet of the student's Capstone project. The Capstone Chair provides guidance over two three-credit semesters of Capstone. Capstone Chairs are charged with facilitating the experience for a group of students in completion of the capstone immersion project. Capstone Chairs will collaborate with the content experts in the process of guiding the student in development, implementation and completion of the capstone project.

The content experts will be selected by the student with input and approval from the Chair. The content expert will be an identified expert or specialist in a specific area related to the Capstone project or the student's specialty area. Although the content expert will not have the responsibility or authority of final approval of the Capstone project, their expertise in specific aspects of the project will be critical.

An acceptable Capstone project will take two semesters (6 credits) from concept development, design, implementation and final presentation, and is generally completed in the final two semesters (3 credits each semester) of the DNP program. The Capstone seminars provide students with the opportunity to discuss the progress of their project in small groups with faculty supervision. Following the completion of the Capstone immersion project, there will be a public oral defense of the Capstone project before seminar participants, Chairs and content experts, and other members of the community as appropriate.

The final product is additionally approved by the supervisory committee before graduation. The complete project report or manuscript, on the basis of which the degree is awarded, must be provided in a specified format that will be retained in the College of Nursing.

4. Grade Requirements:

MS-DNP students are expected to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA (this corresponds to an average of B or higher; an average of B- or below is not acceptable). A grade of B- or higher must be earned in core courses in order to have the course applied toward graduation. In other words if a student receives a grade of C+ or lower in a core course, the course must be repeated. No grade of C- or below will be accepted for graduate credit.

5. Advisement

Students are assigned a faculty academic advisor within the first semester of entry into the program. The advisor will meet with the student at regular intervals and assist in selection of specialty electives, development of a Capstone project idea, and identification of appropriate Capstone mentors.

6. Assessment

Regular, formative assessment is the responsibility of the MS-DNP student, program director and faculty. Students are expected to keep all of their written assignments for review during and at the end of the program, and to keep a reflective log of their experiences in the degree program and the Capstone immersion experience.

Graduate specialty program directors will ensure that each student in the program has a formative evaluation at least once per academic year.

The program director, or designee from faculty in the program, will meet with the student. The student is responsible for bringing a copy of the most current grade transcript or DARS report to the meeting for review.

Program directors (or designees) will review the transcript and summaries of the student's clinical performance (if appropriate), and complete the Formative Evaluation Form (see appendix).

A copy of the form will be placed in the student's file in the Student Affairs Office; the student may request a copy as well.

B. Failure to Progress and Probation

To remain in good standing in the **MS-DNP** program, students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 or better in all courses applied to the degree. Students will automatically be placed on probation if their CGPA falls below 3.0. If the student does not raise the CGPA to 3.0 or above during the next two semesters, or after completing the next 12 graduate credits (whichever comes first), the student will be recommended for dismissal from the program, per due process procedures as outlined in the Student Code. Per College of Nursing standards, students will be terminated from the program if they receive a non passing grade (C- or below) in two required courses or receive a non passing grade in the same course requirement twice.

The MS and DNP Program and Curriculum Committee may place students on probation if they fail to progress towards the degree. In the event of probation, an individualized plan of progression will be developed, indicating terms for probation. Failure to adhere to the probation plan will result in dismissal from the program.

C. Termination/Dismissal

The MS and DNP Program and Curriculum Committee may terminate/dismiss students if they fail to progress towards the degree. Reasons for termination or dismissal from the program include, but are not limited to, the following: a) failure to meet grade requirements after probationary status, b) academic or professional misconduct..

D. Academic or Professional Misconduct.

The MS-DNP program director expects all students to be familiar with the "Statement of Beliefs about Academic Integrity" that can be found in the Appendix to this manual and on the College website. The program director also expects all students to be familiar with and comply with the Student Code (<http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/guides/students/studentRights.html>)

Any violation of academic or professional conduct may be entered into a secure database kept by the College, as a means of identifying repeated infractions. If an incident occurs, the faculty will inform the student that an entry has been made in the database. Only the Executive Director of Undergraduate Programs, the Executive Director of Clinical Graduate Programs, and the Director of the PhD program will have reading access to this database. Each director will only review records of infractions by students enrolled in their respective programs.

This database is in addition to any University policies regarding academic or professional misconduct. Serious violations of the Student Code (<http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/guides/students/studentRights.html>) and University policies on Academic and Professional Misconduct may result in termination or dismissal.

E. Appeals

The Academic Misconduct and Appeals Committee of the University of Utah College of Nursing provides students and faculty with a vehicle for the making of decisions relative to student contested academic actions; academic sanctions for misconduct; and dismissals from participating in class. The Committee functions in accordance with the directives outlined in the University of Utah Code of Student Rights at <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html>

II. CREDIT POLICIES

A. Maximum Hours per Semester

Candidates for a graduate degree will not be permitted to register for more than 16 credit hours in any one semester. Refer to the University of Utah General Catalog for more details.

B. Transfer of Credit

Per University policy, no more than six (6) semester hours may be transferred from other institutions for graduate credit. Credit may be approved toward fulfillment of graduate degree requirements provided the transferred courses are passed with a B or higher grade. Courses taken for Credit/no credit are not transferable. Course requirements may be waived with the approval of the MS-DNP Program Director and the MS and DNP Program and Curriculum Committee. Waiver for a course will only be considered if the student can provide evidence that the course objectives have been met. The request and supporting evidence are submitted to the current faculty of record who must support the request.

Courses taken to fulfill the requirements for another graduate degree cannot be counted or transferred to fulfill requirements for the DNP degree.

In addition, the Supervisory Committee may advise the student to pursue studies for a period of time at another institution, related to availability of special facilities or learning experiences. This study may be considered work in residence, provided that arrangement has been approved in advance by the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and the Dean of the Graduate School.

C. Credit Limitations

University of Utah regulations specify that a student may not apply more than 9 hours of non-matriculated credit toward any graduate degree unless the student's registration for additional credit hours is specifically approved in advance by the Dean of the Graduate School. Specific courses may be considered based upon relevancy to their graduate program. Courses taken via distance education are considered in residence courses, provided they are a part of the student's approved program of study. Courses taken by correspondence or home study are not eligible for graduate credit. Online courses from accredited universities may be eligible for graduate credit.

D. Option for Credit/No Credit Grading

See the General Catalog on the University of Utah website. Graduate students are reminded that it is often important to receive letter grades to build their GPA. This is especially important if the student applies for fellowships or traineeships on a competitive basis or transfers to another institution. See the University of Utah General Catalog for more information on credit/no credit courses.

E. Incomplete (I) Grade

The grade incomplete (I) may be given for work not completed because of circumstances beyond the student's control, providing the student is passing the course and has completed at least 80% of the work required for the course. Arrangements must be made between the student and the faculty concerning completion of the work. If incomplete work has not been finished and a grade has not been reported within the calendar year after the (I) was given, the (I) is changed to an (E) by the Registrar's Office. Students on a Leave of Absence still must adhere to this timeline. Capstone seminar credit hours may receive grades of T until the final project is completed.

F. Minimum Continuous Registration

All graduate students must maintain continuous registration (3 credit minimum) from the time of formal admission through the completion of requirements for the degree they are seeking unless granted an official leave of absence. If students do not comply with this continuous registration policy and do not obtain an official leave of absence, their Supervisory Committee is terminated and their records are inactivated. For more information refer to the University of Utah General Catalog under Minimum Continuing Registration. The regulations do not apply to summer term.

G. Withdrawal from the University

If a student finds it necessary to withdraw from the University during any semester, an application to withdraw from school should be filed with the Registrar's Office. Failure to do so may jeopardize eligibility for readmission to the University.

H. Leave of Absence

A student wishing to discontinue study for one or more semesters must file a Request for Leave of Absence form available from the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services. Leaves of Absence (LOA) are only granted for extenuating and unusual circumstances and must be approved by the MS-DNP Program Director, the Academic Advisor or the Supervisory Committee Chair, the Executive Director for Clinical Graduate Programs and the Dean of the Graduate School. Leaves are granted for a maximum of one academic year at a time. In making a decision to grant a Leave of Absence to a student, the MS and DNP Program and Curriculum Committee will take into consideration if faculty resources will be available for students upon return to the College. The committee reserves the right to deny a Leave of Absence request. An LOA does NOT extend the time period for finishing an incomplete. The Leave of Absence is void if a student registers for classes in a semester for which a leave was granted. Leave of Absence forms are available on the University of Utah website or from the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services. See the University of Utah General Catalog for additional information.

III. GRADUATION POLICY

To officially graduate from the University of Utah in May of the academic year, all work must be completed according to the deadlines in the Calendar on the University of Utah Graduate School Website. However, because the University of Utah holds only one graduation exercise per year, students may participate in the convocation exercise if the capstone project has been successfully defended and all required course work has been completed. There may be specific exceptions in which a course will be completed by the end of summer following the convocation exercise. These exceptions must be approved by the MS-DNP Program Director, the Executive Director for Clinical Graduate Programs or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

IV. SPECIAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Accident Report Procedure

Students who incur an injury (i.e., needle stick, fall, etc.) during a clinical practicum in an affiliated agency should report the incident to their supervising faculty and the agency and follow the accident procedure for the agency in which they are located. In addition, a College of Nursing form must be completed and submitted; this form can be obtained from the Student Affairs Office. Students who are injured during educational experiences in the College, University, or clinical agencies are not covered by University insurance-workman's compensation. All costs incurred relative to the incident (initial and follow-up) are the sole responsibility of the individual student.

B. Drug Testing Policy

Clinical agencies may conduct random drug testing. The University of Utah Health Sciences Drug Testing Policy is in the appendices.

C. Criminal History Review

Some clinical facilities may require criminal background checks for personnel who provide patient care services. The College of Nursing must comply with these requirements. Students may be required to request and pay for a criminal background check if affiliated with one of these agencies as a student.

D. Faculty Right to Request Medical Clearance

College of Nursing faculty, especially those who teach students in clinical or laboratory settings, have the right to request written medical clearance from the student's health care provider if there is reason to believe that a known or suspected problem or illness (physical or emotional) may compromise patients, staff, faculty, peers or the student's own health, welfare and safety. The student will not be allowed in the clinical area and/or classroom until such written documentation is obtained. A copy of the letter from the health care provider will be kept on file in the Student Affairs Office. All expenses related to the medical clearance are the sole responsibility of the student.

E. Malpractice Insurance

Coverage for graduate students is in the student role; however, it is highly recommended that students carry individual malpractice coverage. Students who are employed must carry individual insurance coverage as the College assumes no responsibility for student activities when they are employed by an agency.

F. Out-Of-State Clinical Experiences

Requests for consideration of clinical placement outside the state should be made through the MS-DNP Program Director.

G. Other College or University Requirements

The College of Nursing reserves the right to require students to meet additional College or University requirements that are mandated.

APPENDICES

University of Utah College Of Nursing Statement of Beliefs about Academic Integrity

We believe that:

- Faculty and students are individually and mutually responsible for maintaining academic integrity to support a foundation of professional integrity.
- A professional code of conduct is an inherent component of academic integrity.
- Faculty members have a responsibility to model professional teaching and mentoring behaviors.
- Faculty and students are mutually accountable and responsible for maintaining a positive learning environment.
- Faculty and students have a reciprocal commitment and responsibility to identify and report behavior that is not consistent with academic integrity. Examples of reportable behaviors include, but are not limited to plagiarism, unprofessional behavior, cheating, unethical conduct of nursing research, and disruptive behavior.
- These beliefs about academic integrity apply in each and every learning environment, encompassing clinical, didactic, scholarly, and research activities.



FORMATIVE EVALUATIONS

Graduate specialty program directors will ensure that each student in the program has a formative evaluation at least once per academic year.

The program director, or designee from faculty in the program, will meet with the student. The student is responsible for bringing a copy of the most current grade transcript or DARS report to the meeting for review. The student may obtain a DARS report from the Campus Information System.

https://gate.acs.utah.edu/psp/plpr/EMPLOYEE/EMPL/h/?tab=PAPP_GUEST

Program directors (or designees) will review the transcript and summaries of the student's clinical performance (if appropriate), and complete the attached form (Formative Evaluation Form).

A copy of the form will be placed in the student's file in the Student Affairs Office; the student may request a copy as well.

Review of academic progress for:

STUDENT NAME _____

PROGRAM: _____

I have reviewed the student's progression and academic status to date.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

This student has satisfactory performance in course-work: grades and GPA are at or above the required minimum. This student's program plan requires no change from the last review.

This student's academic record does not meet the required minimum grade or GPA. Attached is a written summary of the remediation plan agreed to by the student and the program director

CLINICAL PERFORMANCE

This student shows satisfactory progress in clinical, with appropriate performance for this point in the program. This student is approved to proceed in the clinical program.

This student's clinical performance does not meet the expected level for this point in the program. Attached is a written summary of the remediation plan agreed to by the student and the program director.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____