



**SCHOOL OF NURSING**  
**GRADUATE PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2014-2015**

**(Revisions effective January, 12, 2015)**

The revisions contained in this document are effective January 12, 2015. They supersede existing policy in the *School of Nursing Graduate Program Student Handbook 2014-2015* and the *Graduate Bulletin 2014-2015*.

## SCHOOL OF NURSING ACCREDITATION

The baccalaureate degree in nursing/master's degree in nursing/ Doctor of Nursing Practice, and post graduate APRN certificate programs at Wilkes University are accredited by the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#).

## CLINICAL CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS

Students are responsible for arranging clinical experiences, selecting preceptors or mentors, and completing the required Certified Background clinical clearance process. Graduate nursing faculty follow the university SON policy for violations found on background checks. Each finding is evaluated on an individual basis. However, healthcare organizations can deny students access to clinical rotations based upon violations noted in background clearances, in spite of university policy. Specific student, preceptor or mentor, and faculty criteria exists for each concentration.

### Clinical Requirements for Nurse Practitioner Students

Students in the Adult-Gerontology Primary Care and Psychiatric/ /Mental Health nurse practitioner concentrations need to secure a clinical preceptor for all clinical courses.

Student requirements:

- Complete and submit the Graduate Nursing Clinical Agency and Preceptor/Mentor Form (available on the nursing web site) along with supporting documents as required to the specialty specific, clinical concentration coordinator. **Forms must be submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup> for fall semester and September 1<sup>st</sup> for spring semester** to assure completion of clinical contracts. A student will not be enrolled in a clinical course if the clinical contract is not on file with the University by Sunday 11:59 PM ET prior to the start of the Monday clinical course.
- Initiate a profile in Certified Background, 4 months prior to the start of the clinical experience, which includes a comprehensive list of requirements for clinical clearance (some clearances can take a minimum of 3 months to receive). Students not meeting all clinical requirements by Sunday, 11:59 PM EST prior to the start of the Monday clinical course, cannot begin clinical. Students will not be enrolled in clinical courses until all requirements for Certified Background are satisfied. Students not enrolled by the second week of the semester start will need to wait for the next course offering to register. Students will be disenrolled from the course if Certified Background information expires during the semester, after the student begins clinical, and the student does not update the information.

The site for Certified Background can be located at <https://www.certifiedbackground.com/>

- Meet additional agency requirements related to the practicum experience that exceed those required by the School of Nursing (OSHA, HIPAA, training).
- Obtain nurse practitioner student professional liability insurance.
- Attend a clinical Residency for direct supervision and evaluation by nurse practitioner faculty or be prepared for an onsite visit by nurse practitioner faculty for evaluation of NP competencies. Each course syllabus dictates the terms of the specific course Residency and clinical expectations.

#### Preceptor requirements:

- Hold a graduate degree
- Educated in a clinical area which he/she is teaching or providing supervision or be extensively clinically experienced in those areas.
- Licensed in his/ her State and nationally board certified (advanced practice nurses) or board eligible (as appropriate, physicians) to practice in his/her population-focused area or specialty area of practice.
- Provide a copy of current State licensure and/or verification statement, national board certification (advanced practice nurses), board eligible (as appropriate, physicians), and curriculum vita.

#### Graduate nursing clinical faculty requirements:

- Grant/discuss approval of clinical preceptors by the Graduate Clinical Concentration Coordinator, after completion of a comprehensive vetting process.
- Availability to clinical preceptors, as needed.
- Provide oversight of clinical preceptors during each clinical course.
- Communicate with preceptors a minimum of one time per semester; this can be done face to face or via telecommunication.

### **Practicum Requirements for Nurse Executive Students**

Students in the Nurse Executive concentration need to secure a clinical preceptor for all practicum courses.

#### Student requirements:

- Complete and submit the Graduate Nursing Clinical Agency and Preceptor/Mentor Form (available on the nursing web site) along with supporting documents as required to the specialty specific clinical concentration coordinator. **Forms must be submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup> for fall semester and September 1<sup>st</sup> for spring semester** to assure completion of clinical contracts. A student will not be enrolled in a clinical course if the clinical contract is not on file with the University by Sunday 11:59 PM ET prior to the start of the Monday clinical course.
- Initiate a profile in Certified Background, 4 months prior to the start of the clinical experience, which includes a comprehensive list of

requirements for clinical clearance (some clearances can take a minimum of 3 months to receive). Students not meeting all clinical requirements by Sunday, 11:59 PM EST prior to the start of the Monday clinical course, cannot begin clinical. Students will not be enrolled in clinical courses until all requirements for Certified Background are satisfied. Students not enrolled by the second week of the semester start will need to wait for the next course offering to register. Students will be disenrolled from the course if Certified Background information expires during the semester, after the student begins clinical, and the student does not update the information.

The site for Certified Background can be located at <https://www.certifiedbackground.com/>

**Students completing a practicum in the agency where they are employed can obtain a letter as written verification from the agency that all clinical clearances were met. Therefore the certified background process does not need to be initiated. A letter should be provided to the clinical coordinator verifying agency acceptance.**

- Meet additional agency requirements related to the practicum experience that exceed those required by the School of Nursing (OSHA, HIPAA, training).
- Follow the course syllabus for terms of the practicum.

Preceptor requirements:

- Hold a graduate degree
- Educated in the area which he/she is teaching or providing supervision or be extensively clinically experienced in those areas.
- Licensed in his/ her State and hold appropriate credentials.
- Provide a copy of current State licensure and/or verification statement and curriculum vita.

Graduate nursing clinical faculty requirements:

- Grant approval of preceptors after completion of a comprehensive vetting process.
- Availability to preceptors, as needed.
- Provide oversight of clinical preceptors during each practicum course.
- Communicate with preceptors via telecommunication, a minimum of one time per semester.

### **Practicum Requirements for Nursing Education**

Students in the Nursing Education concentration need to secure a preceptor for all practicum courses.

Student requirements:

- Complete and submit the Graduate Nursing Clinical Agency and Preceptor/Mentor Form (available on the nursing web site) along with supporting documents as required to the specialty specific clinical concentration coordinator. **Forms must be submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup> for fall semester and September 1<sup>st</sup> for spring semester** to assure

completion of clinical contracts. A student will not be enrolled in a clinical course if the clinical contract is not on file with the University by Sunday 11:59 PM ET prior to the start of the Monday clinical course.

- Initiate a profile in Certified Background, 4 months prior to the start of the clinical experience, which includes a comprehensive list of requirements for clinical clearance (some clearances can take a minimum of 3 months to receive). Students not meeting all clinical requirements by Sunday, 11:59 PM EST prior to the start of the Monday clinical course, cannot begin clinical. Students will not be enrolled in clinical courses until all requirements for Certified Background are satisfied. Students not enrolled by the second week of the semester start will need to wait for the next course offering to register. Students will be disenrolled from the course if Certified Background information expires during the semester, after the student begins clinical, and the student does not update the information.

The site for Certified Background can be located at <https://www.certifiedbackground.com/>

- Meet additional agency requirements related to the practicum experience that exceed those required by the School of Nursing (OSHA, HIPAA, training).
- Follow the course syllabus for terms of the practicum.

Preceptor requirements:

- Hold a graduate degree in nursing.
- Educated in the area which he/she is teaching or providing supervision or be extensively experienced in those areas.
- Licensed in his/ her State as an RN and hold appropriate credentials.
- Provide a copy of current State licensure and/or verification statement and curriculum vita.

Graduate nursing clinical faculty requirements:

- Grant approval of preceptors after completion of a comprehensive vetting process.
- Availability to preceptors, as needed.
- Provide oversight of clinical preceptors during each practicum course.
- Communicate with preceptors via telecommunication, a minimum of one time per semester.

### **Clinical Requirements for DNP Students**

Students in the DNP program need to secure a clinical mentor prior to entering NSG 608a: Scholarly Project. The DNP program requires completion of a total of 1000 hours of practice experience beyond the bachelor's level of nursing education. The hours will be conducted in the scholarly project courses. Advanced practice nursing students (CNS, NP, Midwife, CRNA) and those students who have completed practicum hours to satisfy a nurse executive/management curriculum requirement may be credited with hours from their master's program in nursing.

Validation of those hours is required and may be provided by official transcript or a letter verifying the number of practicum hours.

Students in the BS-DNP program complete clinical hours according to the concentration chosen. These clinical hours can be applied towards the 1000 clinical hours required for completion of the DNP degree.

Student requirements:

- Complete and submit the Graduate Nursing Clinical Agency and Preceptor/Mentor Form and the Graduate Nursing Clinical Initiation Form (available on the web site in the nursing section) 4 months prior to the start of the clinical experience.
- Initiate a profile in Certified Background, 4 months prior to the start of the clinical experience, which includes a comprehensive list of requirements for clinical clearance (some clearances can take a minimum of 3months to receive).  
The site for Certified Background can be located at <https://www.certifiedbackground.com/>
- **Students completing scholarly projects in the agency where they are employed can obtain a letter as written verification from the agency that all clinical clearances were met. Therefore the certified background process does not need to be initiated. A letter should be provided to the Scholarly Project Chairperson verifying agency acceptance.**
- Meet additional agency requirements related to the practicum experience that exceed those required by the School of Nursing (OSHA, HIPAA, training).
- Provide a copy of professional liability insurance

Clinical mentor requirements:

- Supervise student clinical hours while in Scholarly Project (NSG 608a and 608b).
- Hold graduate degree in area of expertise.
- Licensed in his/her State and be nationally board certified (advanced practice nurses) or board eligible (physicians) to practice in his/her population-focused area or specialty area of practice.
- Provide a copy of current State licensure and/or verification statement, national board certification (advanced practice nurses), board eligible (as appropriate, physicians), and curriculum vita.

Scholarly Project Chairperson requirements:

- Grant approval of clinical mentors after completion of a comprehensive vetting process.
- Availability to clinical mentors, as needed.

## **COURSE/CLINICAL ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to participate in online classes from the first day of each course, which includes students in clinical courses starting clinical hours at approved clinical sites. A student unable to meet course requirements for a distance education course is expected to notify the instructor as soon as the student is aware of the potential conflict. The student's grade will reflect incomplete work for the week. Students may ultimately be disenrolled in a didactic or theory course for non-participation as per the terms of the course.

Students in clinical/practicum courses are required to complete clinical practice hours and assignments as per the syllabus. Clinical hours should be completed weekly and at a minimum of 50% by the mid semester point. Application of classroom didactic theory in the clinical setting is the expectation with learning. Failure to meet the time frames of the course will result in failing grades for the appropriate assignments. For example, mid semester assignments/evaluations for clinical courses are to be completed at the mid semester point which is between 6-8 weeks of the 12 week semester; incomplete clinical hours by week 12 will lead to students receiving a failing grade on the clinical log. Failure of these assignments/evaluations and/or clinical log will result in a course failure. The completion terms for these clinical hours are as outlined.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Distance education is designed as an interactive and collaborative learning environment that requires students to actively and effectively participate in class discussions with respect and understanding for various points of view. Students are expected to participate in distance education classes from the first day of each course. A student unable to meet course requirements for a specific distance education course is expected to notify the instructor as soon as the student is aware of the potential conflict. The student's grade will reflect incomplete work for the week if communication was not initiated with the faculty member. It is the discretion of the faculty member in each course to determine what concessions would be provided to the students for each unit.

Students are expected to:

- Utilize the Wilkes University email system (wilkes.edu) as the primary means of communication between the student and the faculty, staff and university. To ensure a quality classroom experience students are expected to check their emails every 24-48 hours and respond to faculty within 72 hours of the initial email. One reminder email will be sent to the student. If the student remains unresponsive, the Director of Graduate Nursing Program will be notified due to a violation of the Student Conduct policy outlined in the this handbook.
- Assure that computer hardware is setup and required software is installed.
- Complete the Wilkes University orientation program for online students.
- Notify their advisor and course instructor of any disabilities, or specialized learning needs as soon as identified.
- Assume a self-motivated, independent, and engaged learning role.

- Actively participate in all online activities, open and read all course content.
- Meet course deadlines and place assignments etc. in Dropbox provided.
- Have access to the online syllabus and refer to it throughout the course.
- Comply with the Wilkes University Academic Integrity Policy at all times.
- Respect copyrighted course materials and use them within accepted guidelines.
- Practices good Netiquette (<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>) throughout each course by demonstrating respect for the personal and professional growth of oneself and others through verbal and written interactions with peers, faculty, and university staff.
- Demonstrate respect for faculty, peers, and staff regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious, moral, or political beliefs.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding information communicated related to patients, employers, and other students.
- Obtain course work missed due to interruption in internet service or technology failure. Extension of assignment deadlines will be considered at the discretion of faculty.
- Maintain high ethical standards in the preparation and submission of assignments.

Any action, verbal statement, or written statement that threatens or violates the personal safety of any faculty, staff, or student, or any conduct which interferes with the online educational process will be referred to the Director of Graduate Nursing Program.

Faculty is expected to:

- Be prepared with all online course materials prior to the first day of class.
- Notify the student advisor if classroom issues occur such as lack of participation, poor performance, etc.
- Log into the online classroom a minimum of three times per week.
- Be engaged in the online discussion forum providing substantive discussion post feedback for students weekly.
- Provide timely grades and constructive feedback for all assignments, within 5 days for 8 week courses and 2 weeks for 12 week courses, via the learning management system classroom (Dropbox).
- Respond to student emails within 24-48 hours.

### **PROFESSIONALISM (newly written Spring, 2015 revision)**

Graduate nursing students are expected to adhere to the American Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Nurses* (2001) (<http://www.nursingworld.org/codeofethics>). Students found to have violated any provision of the Code of Ethics will be subject to academic disciplinary action. In the event that a violation constitutes a breach of the Student Code of Conduct (as outlined in the graduate nursing handbook), sanctions may (depending on the circumstances) result in a failing grade on an assignment or course, or dismissal from the graduate nursing program. Final decisions on disciplinary action shall be made by the Dean of the School of Nursing. Students



shall have a right of appeal to the University Provost, whose decision shall be final and not subject to further appeal.

### **PROCTOR NOW**

Students enrolled in courses with examinations are required by policy to complete all examinations while being proctored online through the learning management system, D2L, using a webcam and a high speed internet connection. Further information is available in each course requiring the proctoring services. Course faculty will provide further direction on these requirements, as appropriate.

### **SCHOLARLY PROJECT**

#### **MS-DNP**

Students in the graduate program are required to complete a Scholarly Project that demonstrates mastery of theoretical content through analysis and synthesis. Students are expected to begin working on the Scholarly Project upon admission to the program. DNP Scholarly Project oversight is provided by a Scholarly Project Chairperson.

Two other committee members are chosen by the student to serve as readers and can include graduate faculty members or community members, who are serving as scholarly project mentors. The DNP Scholarly Project validates that candidates have achieved competency in *The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* (AACN, 2006) through the application of research and clinical implementation. The Scholarly Project is 6 credits and completion is over the last 2 semesters of the program. Information on writing the Scholarly Project manuscript is available in each doctoral level course of the distance education classroom.

The Scholarly Project at Wilkes University is a pilot study directed at making a practice or policy change. All students are expected to model their project in this fashion. The difference between DNP and PhD work is that the DNP project 1) is clinically focused, 2) has NO control group, and 3) uses outcome data to support a practice or policy change. Students should have a topic prior to entering the program and will research the topic throughout their DNP coursework. It is a program expectation that students continually work and move forward. Students may be required by graduate faculty to seek an editor, if their strength is not in writing.

Students must complete 1000 clinical hours for the DNP degree. This includes the clinical supervised hours conducted in attaining the master's degree. The remaining hours will be conducted by the student, in collaboration with a clinical mentor, when completing the DNP Scholarly Project. Clinical clearance requirements are as per the policy. Scholarly Project Chairpersons will validate the official hours required by students for completion of the 1000 hours on the Clinical Log for the DNP Program. Completion of these hours can include conferences, seminars, interviews, and data collection that is associated with the Scholarly Project. Students are expected to complete the Clinical Log for the DNP Program by documenting all hours and details of their experience.

The final project is presented to the Scholarly Project committee via web cam or onsite at the university. The expectation is that students will complete the project over 2 semesters. Students who are unable to complete their Scholarly Project over the allocated timeframe of 2 semesters may be eligible to register for 1 billable credit hour in an additional semester, one time only, to meet the requirements of the project. This additional semester hour is upon approval of the Scholarly Project Chairperson. Details for the scholarly project are posted in each section of the DNP program courses.