



**THE UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON  
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING  
GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2024-2025 Academic Year**

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## **WELCOME**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with guidelines for policies, procedures and core information that will be needed while you are enrolled as a graduate student in the Department of Nursing at The University of Scranton, this includes both master of science in nursing (MSN) and post-graduate APRN certificate students. These policies and procedures are the basis for decision-making regarding student matters.

Every graduate nursing student, including master's and post-master's APRN certificate students, are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures contained in the Department of Nursing **GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**. Upon admission to the program, the graduate student is expected to read and review all policies. In addition, a copy of the Confidentiality Policy, Professional Nursing Behaviors Policy, and Verification of Receipt of the Graduate Student Handbook must be signed and returned to the administrative assistant. Should you have any questions regarding these policies, please see the Director of the Graduate Nursing Program, Dr. Wendy Manetti.

General policies in this handbook apply to all graduate nursing students, including master's and post-master's APRN certificate students. In addition, included are some policies that are specific to certain tracks, these policies are clearly labeled as such. Students are also governed by the policies at the agencies where they receive their clinical education.

## **PREAMBLE TO THE POLICIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NURSING GRADUATE PROGRAM**

The educational policies and policies governing admission, advisement and counseling of students can be found in *The University of Scranton Graduate Studies Catalog*. The policies in this handbook apply to students in the Department of Nursing and were approved by the Dean of the Leahy College of Health Sciences.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

<b>NURSING DEPARTMENT .....</b>	<b>941-7673</b>
Dr. Mary Jane DiMattio, Chairperson.....	941-7628
Email: <a href="mailto:maryjane.dimattio@scranton.edu">maryjane.dimattio@scranton.edu</a>	
Dr. Wendy Manetti, Director Graduate Nursing Program.....	941-6221
Family Nurse Practitioner Program	
E-mail: <a href="mailto:wendy.manetti@scranton.edu">wendy.manetti@scranton.edu</a> )	
Jill O'Connor, Administrative Assistant, .....	941-5531
Nurse Anesthesia Program	
E-mail: <a href="mailto:Jill.oconnor@scranton.edu">Jill.oconnor@scranton.edu</a>	
Donna Cochrane-Kalinoski, Administrative Assistant, .....	941-6658
Graduate Nursing Program.....	
E-mail: <a href="mailto:donna.cochrane-kalinoski@scranton.edu">donna.cochrane-kalinoski@scranton.edu</a> )	
FAX - Department of Nursing .....	941-7903
Bookstore .....	941-7454
Campus Ministry .....	941-7419
Career Services .....	941-7640
Computing Help Desk .....	941-4173
Counseling Center .....	941-7620
Financial Aid Office .....	941-7700
Handicap Coordination.....	941-7580
Royal Card (University ID System).....	941-6181
Learning Resources Center.....	941-4038
Library .....	941-7451
Parking/Security.....	941-7888
Security – Emergencies .....	941-7777
Student Health Center.....	941-7667
Wellness Center .....	941-4253
Weather information Line .....	941-5999

## **Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Department of Nursing at The University of Scranton is to prepare nurses at the baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral levels, who are grounded in the Catholic and Jesuit tradition, and committed to excellence in practice for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our graduates have the knowledge and competencies to deliver high-quality, evidence-based, holistic person-centered care.

## **Philosophy**

The Department of Nursing is an integral part of the Leahy College of Health Sciences of The University of Scranton and reflects the heritage, mission, values, and goals of the University and of the College.

The philosophy of the Department of Nursing is based on a holistic view of the person who has inherent worth, dignity, and human rights. The individual is recognized as a total entity, with consideration given to the interdependent functioning of the physiological, psychological, cognitive, social, cultural, and spiritual domains. Every person is unique and demands the respect of free choice. The person is in constant interaction with a changing environment. The integrity of an individual's potential for growth is maintained and supported.

Each person has the right and responsibility to determine and participate in decisions affecting health and deserves access to health care. Health is viewed on a continuum, as a dynamic state of physiological, psychological, sociocultural, and developmental adaptation. One's state of health is influenced by genetic endowment, sociocultural background, environmental forces, and lifestyle. The primary responsibility for health lies with the individual, and secondarily with the family and community.

The professional nurse accepts responsibility and accountability for the practice of nursing based upon sound clinical judgment. Nurses collaborate with members of the interprofessional healthcare team to promote optimal health. The professional nurse responds to the changing needs of individuals, families, communities, and populations within society. Professional nurses are guided by ethical principles, legal regulations, and standards of practice; and use clinical judgment to provide high quality, safe, and competent care. The professional nurse uses knowledge of the research process and evidence to advance nursing practice. Grounded in faith, evidence-based practice, and clinical expertise, our graduates are prepared to advocate for individuals, families, communities, and populations; and to provide leadership in the delivery of safe, comprehensive, person-centered care.

Learning involves a dynamic interaction between students and faculty. Self-directed learning is expected. The faculty guides, instructs, and facilitates student learning by encouraging development of intellectual curiosity, stimulating self-direction, and enhancing involvement both in professional activities and service to society. Faculty members serve as role models for the students as educators, leaders, researchers, clinicians, and advocates.

### **Purpose of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program**

The purpose of the baccalaureate program is to prepare professional nurses, who as generalists, possess clinical competence to function in a variety of settings. Patient-centered care, quality and safety, collaboration and teamwork, the use of evidence-based practice, informatics, and ethics are emphasized. The program prepares graduates to deliver holistic nursing care to individuals, families, communities, and populations, and to participate in the advancement of the nursing profession.

### **Purpose of the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program**

The master's program is designed to prepare nurses for current and emerging roles in health care delivery, who are equipped with advanced nursing knowledge for improving health outcomes. The program prepares graduates with the competencies to engage in higher level nursing practice and leadership in a variety of roles and settings.

### **Purpose of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program**

The DNP program is designed to prepare graduates for independent practice in advanced nursing practice specialties. The DNP graduate will possess enhanced organizational and leadership skills in health care delivery, expertise in the application of evidence-based practice to improve patient and health care outcomes, and the ability to lead inter-professional teams.

## **Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program Outcomes**

Upon completion of the baccalaureate program the graduate is prepared to:

1. Integrate a personal philosophy into nursing practice and service to others, based on the uniqueness, worth, dignity, and diversity of human beings.
2. Synthesize concepts of leadership, quality improvement, and safety in the provision of evidence-based, person-centered care
3. Assess, plan, implement, and evaluate professional nursing practice through the integration of scientific evidence and the application of clinical judgement.
4. Utilize informatics and other patient care technologies to inform, improve, and create an environment for safe and effective delivery of quality nursing care.
5. Advocate for patient's rights using an understanding of healthcare systems, regulation policies, and scope of practice.
6. Apply interprofessional communication and collaboration to deliver safe, evidence-based, person-centered care.
7. Synthesize evidence to promote health and prevent disease in individuals, families, communities, and populations across the lifespan.
8. Demonstrate responsible and accountable behavior that reflects standards of professional nursing practice.
9. Engage in critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and lifelong learning to support excellence in professional nursing practice.

## **Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program Outcomes**

Upon completion of the master's program the graduate is prepared to:

1. Integrate knowledge from nursing and other disciplines to provide evidence-based care to diverse populations at an advanced practice level.
2. Apply leadership skills that emphasize ethical principles and critical decision making to promote quality and safety in master's level nursing practice.
3. Articulate the process of quality improvement and apply quality and safety principles within an organization.
4. Incorporate research evidence within the clinical setting to resolve practice problems and disseminate results.
5. Utilize informatics and patient-care technologies to deliver nursing care at an advanced practice level.
6. Employ advocacy strategies to promote health and improve health care.
7. Establish interprofessional relationships to mobilize resources and coordinate quality health care.
8. Engage in master's level nursing practice in accordance with applicable specialty nursing standards, integrating concepts of person-centered, and culturally appropriate clinical prevention and population health activities.
9. Demonstrate master's level knowledge and competencies in nursing and relevant sciences to influence healthcare outcomes for individuals and populations.
10. Articulate a commitment for continuous professional development and service to others.

## **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program Outcomes**

Upon completion of the DNP program the graduate is prepared to:

1. Incorporate science-based theories from nursing and other disciplines to develop, implement, and evaluate practice approaches that improve health care.
2. Utilize organizational and systems leadership to promote quality, cost effectiveness, and patient safety in the delivery of health care.
3. Demonstrate leadership in the application and critical evaluation of evidence-based practice to improve patient and health care outcomes.
4. Apply information systems/technology to monitor and improve patient care and health care delivery systems.
5. Consistent with Jesuit values, advocate for health care policies that comply with ethical principles and address health disparities and vulnerable populations.
6. Organize and lead inter-professional teams to improve patient and population health outcomes.
7. Analyze epidemiological, biostatistical, and environmental data to develop, implement, and evaluate clinical prevention and population health initiatives.
8. Function independently in an advanced nursing practice role to improve patient outcomes in a specialty area of practice.
9. Engage in lifelong learning and service to others.

## **Competencies of the Nurse Practitioner**

The graduate of the Family Nurse Practitioner program will demonstrate the following core competencies identified by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (2022), which are outlined below:

NP Domain 1: Knowledge of Practice

NP Domain 2: Person-Centered Care

NP Domain 3: Population Health

NP Domain 4: Practice Scholarship and Translational Science

NP Domain 5: Quality and Safety

NP Domain 6: Interprofessional Collaboration in Practice

NP Domain 7: Health Systems

NP Domain 8: Technology and Information Literacy

NP Domain 9: Professional Acumen

NP Domain 10: Personal and Professional Leadership

## Glossary of Terms

Accountability - ultimate responsibility of own actions.

Adaptation - as a process, it is a patient's response to a changing internal and external environment.  
as a state, it is the result of a patient's response to an altered internal and/or external environment.

Advocate - one who acts in the interest of the health care consumer.

Alteration in Health Pattern - change in any dimension of one or more health patterns.

Altered State of Health - a condition that changes one's usual position on the wellness-illness continuum.

Benchmark - a standard set in the Assessment Plan for measuring the outcome criteria or expected results of the nursing program.

Care-giver - one who implements the nursing process in directing and providing the care of the patient.

Clinical Associate - a representative of a clinical agency who serves as a clinical resource person for a student.

Clinical Competence - the student's ability to demonstrate complex decision-making abilities, technical nursing skill and competence in communication.

Common Health Problem - the most frequently occurring alterations in health of a particular population based on mortality and morbidity of that population.

Community - social groups of people with common characteristics, locations, or interests, living together within a larger society.

Competencies - the content and learning experiences designed to facilitate student achievement of the objectives of the program.

Discipline (of Nursing) - a field of study in which there is a focus on the practice of the discipline as well as the generation of new knowledge to be applied in the practice.

Environment - all internal and external factors, i.e., physiological, sociocultural, psychological, and developmental, with which the individual, family, community, and group interacts.

Evaluation Plan - an ordered set of activities designed to monitor the effectiveness, the efficiency, and the quality of attainment toward meeting the goals of the program. The plan includes evaluation of all elements necessary for the conduct of the program, i.e., faculty, students, curriculum, resources, and outcomes.

Expected Results - the attainment of nursing knowledge, clinical competence, service to others and program satisfaction, which stem from the mission statement of the University and philosophy and purpose of the Department of Nursing.

Faculty - the collective group (body) of professional persons responsible and accountable for the attainment of goals of the program.

Faculty member - the individual professional person.

Family - a social system comprised of two or more interdependent persons, which remains united over time and serves as a mediator between needs of its members and the forces, demands and obligations of society.

First Professional Degree - academic preparation in a senior college or university preparing the student for professional generalist practice in nursing (baccalaureate and generic master's in nursing)

Goal - a desired outcome of the program in general, rather than the more specific outcome of instructional process.

Governance - the government of an institution that includes the shared responsibility for general education and administrative policy, long-range planning, allocation of resources and determinations of faculty status.

Group - a collection of individuals who interact with each other.

Health - a dynamic state of physiological and psychological adaptation that constitutes a patient's well-being. The state of health, at any given point in time throughout the life cycle, is relative to the patient's adaptation.

Health Care - services provided, which enhance the well-being of individuals, families, communities, and groups.

Health Care Recipient - recipients (individuals, families, communities, and groups) of professional nursing care regardless of the state of health.

Health Pattern - a complex of human behaviors forming consistent and/or characteristic forms of adaptation to the environment occurring in sequence across time. Behaviors refer to developmental, physiological, psychological, and sociocultural dimensions of human functioning.

Health Promotion - activities directed toward developing the resources of patients that maintain or enhance wellbeing.

Holistic - recognition of the individual as a total entity; considering the interdependent functioning of the affective physiological, psychological, cognitive, social, and spiritual domains.

Knowledge - the student's ability to demonstrate a grasp of theoretical concepts necessary for competent nursing practice.

Leader - one who influences others in a specific direction through the judicious use of one's knowledge, ability, and power.

Leadership - the activities of coordination, collaboration and consultation utilized in the interactive processes to provide nursing care.

Learning Experience - a planned activity of the curriculum that is used by students to achieve objectives.

Manager - one responsible for the direction and delivery of nursing care to patients.

Mission - the services that the program in nursing and/or the parent institution is chartered to provide as defined by its governing body.

Nursing - the diagnosis and treatment of human responses to actual or potential health problems.

Optimal Health - achievement of adaptation relative to a patient's potential.

Organizing Framework - basic components that unify the curriculum into a functional whole.

Performance Measures - tools used to evaluate the expected results of the program.

Person - a holistic being that reflects developmental, physiological, psychological, and sociocultural dimensions, who is simultaneously an individual, a family member, part of a constantly changing society and an actual or potential recipient of health care.

Program - the educational and/or administrative unit (e.g., department, school, division) that provides planned studies in nursing leading to the first or second professional degrees.

Program satisfaction - the program has met the expectations of the senior level student and its graduates.

Service - activities serving the university, profession, community, and/or department.

Sociocultural - factors that divide people into groups within the community, such as ethnicity, religion, social class, occupation, place of residence, language, education, gender identify, race, age, and political orientation.

Teacher - one who directs and guides the learning process.

Vulnerable Populations - rural residents, the economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic minorities, the uninsured and underinsured, those with low income, children, the elderly, women, the homeless, those with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other chronic health conditions, and those lacking a usual source of health care due to race, ethnicity, age, gender, income, insurance coverage (or lack thereof), housing, poverty, inadequate education, and geographic location.

Wellness - an integrated state of optimal function with diverse developmental, physiological, psychological, and sociocultural dimensions that are manifested by adaptation to the impact of complex individual and environmental factors.

## **GRADING POLICY**

### Didactic/Theory Courses

The grading policy for graduate nursing studies at The University of Scranton is as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>		<u>Percentage</u>		<u>Quality Points</u>
A	=	100 - 96	-	4.0
A-	=	95 - 92	-	3.67
B+	=	91 - 89	-	3.33
B	=	88 - 86	-	3.0
B-	=	85 - 83	-	2.67
C+	=	82 - 80	-	2.33
C	=	79 - 77	-	2.0
F	=	≤ 76	-	0

Any student who fails to receive a final grade of B or higher in any of the FNP specialty courses (specifically NURS: 530, 541, 551, 561, and 571) cannot progress in the specialty sequence. The student may make written application to the Director of the Graduate Program to repeat the course when it is next offered. If approved, the student shall also be required to repeat the co-requisite clinical course, regardless of the clinical grade. There is no guarantee that permission will be granted for a student to repeat a course. (Nursing Graduate Student Handbook)

(Reviewed & Approved 12/6/24)

All graduate students must have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.00 in order to graduate with a master's or doctoral degree. In addition, all graduate students must maintain an overall cumulative graduate GPA of at least 3.00 in order to remain in good standing. A graduate student whose overall cumulative graduate GPA falls between a 3.00 and 2.00 will be placed on academic probation.

A graduate student whose overall cumulative graduate GPA falls below a 2.00 will be subject to dismissal. If a graduate student is placed on academic probation, the student is required to earn a cumulative graduate GPA of at least 3.00 within the next three courses taken (normally nine hours of course work).

(University of Scranton Graduate Studies Handbook)

(Reviewed & Approved 12/6/24)

### Clinical/Practicum Courses

Students must receive a final grade of Satisfactory (S) in the clinical practicum courses to progress in the program. The grade is based upon both faculty and preceptor evaluation of the student's ability to meet course objectives and demonstrate safe advanced clinical nursing practice. A final grade of Unsatisfactory (U) in a practicum course will result in failure of the course and dismissal from the program. (Nursing Graduate Student Handbook)

(Reviewed & Approved 12/6/24)

Unsafe clinical behavior is defined as that which places the patient or staff in either physical or emotional jeopardy. Physical jeopardy is the risk of causing physical harm. Emotional jeopardy means the student creates an environment of anxiety, distress or

uneasiness for the patient or family. Unsafe behavior may be a single occurrence of a very serious nature or may be a pattern of behavior involving unacceptable risk.

To obtain a final grade of Satisfactory (S) in the clinical courses, the student must meet the specific objectives of the course and demonstrate safe advanced clinical nursing practice. This will be determined through faculty and preceptor evaluation of overall performance and weekly logs. Safe clinical practice is defined as:

1. Performs assessments, diagnostic testing, differential diagnoses, and therapeutic interventions consistent with generally accepted conventional practice and the Pennsylvania Nurse Practice Act.
2. Takes nursing actions to correct, minimize and/or prevent risk to patient.

The final clinical grade of Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) is given by the faculty member(s) responsible for supervising the student's clinical practicum.

If at any time during the clinical practicum a student demonstrates unsafe clinical behavior, the student is subject to immediate review by the faculty. The outcome of the review may be recommendation of immediate dismissal from the program or recommendation of a remedial plan that would include a behavioral contract, specifying the specific outcomes that the student must achieve to receive a final grade of Satisfactory (S) and, if needed, an alternate clinical placement site with a new preceptor. In the case of the behavioral contract, if the student fails to meet the recommendations set forth, a final grade of Unsatisfactory (U) will be given and the faculty may recommend dismissal from the program.

### **APPEAL OF A COURSE GRADE**

Students who wish to appeal a final grade in a course must make a written appeal to the instructor within five (5) business days of the date the course grade becomes available to the student from the University, explaining why the grade should be changed. If the instructor agrees that a change of grade is warranted, the student will be notified in writing and a Change of Grade form will be completed and submitted to the Dean. If the instructor finds that the grade is correct as originally submitted, the student will be notified in writing, specifically addressing the student's reason for the appeal. The instructor's response must take place within five (5) business days of the receipt of the appeal from the student. If the student is not satisfied with the written response of the instructor, the student has the right to appeal in writing to the chairperson of the Department of Nursing within five (5) business days of the instructor's response, providing a complete explanation of the appeal and supporting documentation. The chairperson will attempt to facilitate a reasonable solution at the department level and will make written recommendation to both the student and faculty member within five (5) business days of receiving the appeal. If the matter is not resolved at the department level, the student, within five (5) business days of the chairperson review, may request in writing that the Dean review the matter. The request to the Dean shall include complete documentation explaining why the student believes the grade should be changed and any responses the student received from the instructor and chairperson. The Dean will conduct a review and provide a written decision to the student and faculty member within ten (10) business days of receiving

the written appeal. The Dean's decision is final.

A student who has a grievance in the Nursing program should first appeal the matter to the faculty member involved. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, students should next bring the matter to the attention of the program director. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, the student has the right to appeal to the chairperson of the Department of Nursing. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, the student may make a request in writing to the Dean of PCPS for a review the matter.

**Academic Integrity, Academic Code of Honesty:** Students have responsibility for governing their own conduct in compliance with the Academic Code of Honesty, which addresses behavioral integrity in the academic work of the University. Conduct that violates the Code includes plagiarism, duplicate submission of the same work, collusion, providing false information, unauthorized use of computers, theft and destruction of property, and unauthorized possession of tests and other materials. Steps taken in response to suspected violations may include a discussion with the instructor, an informal meeting with the dean of the college and a hearing before the Academic Dishonesty Hearing Board. Students who are found to have violated the Code will ordinarily be assigned the grade F by the instructor and may face other sanctions. The complete Academic Code of Honesty is available in the deans' offices, in the [Student Handbook](#). (Graduate Studies Catalog 2024-2025) (Approved 12/6/24)

**E-Mail:** Students must regularly check their University email and Brightspace for course announcements. E-mail notices will only be sent to your University email address. If you use another email account you may forward your University email to that address. (Approved 12/6/24)

**Examinations and Quizzes:** A grade of zero will be given for exams and quizzes not completed within the designated timeframe. There are no make-up exams without appropriate documentation of the rationale for absence. An unexcused absence for an exam will result in a grade of zero for the exam. An excused missed exam will be rescheduled at the convenience of the professor. The format of the make-up exam may be essay, short answer or multiple-choice at the professor's discretion. Students are required to take the final examination when scheduled. Travel plans should be scheduled after the exam. Ordinarily, no one is permitted to take a final exam before the regularly scheduled time. Students are expected to adhere to the instructors' requirements for online testing procedures. All exams will be given via Brightspace. Normally, to ensure exam integrity, Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor are required. Respondus Lockdown Browser is a custom browser that locks the testing environment within Brightspace and prevents access to other URL's and applications. Respondus Monitor is a companion application for LockDown Browser that uses a webcam to record the student and the student's computer screen while taking an exam. <https://web.respondus.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RLDB-Quick-Start-Guide-Bb-Student.pdf>

(Approved 12/6/24)

**Student Expectations** - Students are expected to complete course assignments, to engage in

self-directed learning, and to participate in class activities.

**Class Assignments:** For every day that an assignment is late 5 points will be deducted from the final grade of that assignment, after 3 days a grade of 0 will be given. Scholarly writing assignments are to be submitted using APA format (7th edition). Visit these websites for APA guidelines and examples:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines>

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples>

(Approved 12/6/24)

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR CLASS**

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken for all synchronous course meetings. Attendance will be taken for all classes that are scheduled to meet synchronously online at specific days/times the same way that is done for seated, in-person (traditional) classes – by taking roll in the class meeting and keeping a record of who attended. Lateness and leaving early will be considered an absence.

Attendance to all synchronous meetings is mandatory. However, if unavoidable, one absence will be allowed. All synchronous meetings will be recorded. In the event of an absence, the student must notify the faculty prior to class via email. Within 72 hours of the absence, the student will be responsible to watch the recorded meeting and take notes summarizing the key points of the class discussion to be shared with everyone via the Discussion Board.

Attendance and completion of all asynchronous course meetings and activities is mandatory. Students are required to log onto Brightspace weekly and review the week's course material. Attendance will be counted based on engagement with the assigned activities and by submitting assignments weekly by Sunday at 2359 hours. If the student fails to complete the assigned activities or submit an assignment when due, the student will be marked absent for that week. More than one unexcused absence will result in a one-point deduction from the final course grade for each unexcused absence, arriving late, or leaving early.

(Approved 12/6/24)

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR CLINICAL PRACTICUM**

Attendance is required. The student must notify university faculty and preceptor/clinical site if absence occurs.

#### **Clinical Schedule**

Clinical days are to be arranged in accordance with the preceptor's availability. (Approved 12/6/24)

**Travel to Clinical Sites** is expected as assigned. Distance to clinical sites averages between 5 - 200 miles from the student's home. Students are responsible for their own transportation and overnight accommodation if necessary.

(Approved 12/6/24)

## **SNOW DAYS AT CLINICAL SITES POLICY**

If, in the judgment of the student, the weather would impede safe travel to an agency in which a clinical practicum is scheduled, the student may cancel the clinical practicum. The student will notify the agency and make rescheduling arrangements as needed to meet course objectives.

(Approved 12/6/24)

## **ANNUAL BACKGROUND CHECKS AND DRUG TESTING**

Students enrolled in the graduate nursing program are required to submit the following prior to starting the initial clinical rotation and annually.

1. **Child Abuse Background Check (as required by state law)**
2. **Criminal Background Check (as required by state law)**
3. **FBI Background Check (as required by the Department of Human Services in the state)**
4. **Drug Testing:** Required by clinical agencies, conducted annually (or more frequently as mandated). Students will cover the costs of these tests while enrolled in clinical courses.

This information is required by the Department of Nursing on behalf of the clinical agencies where the practicum experiences will occur. Students will receive instructions upon registration for the initial clinical rotation to register online at CastleBranch, our background screening vendor. Further instructions on obtaining background checks will be provided to the student from CastleBranch. The results of some background checks are mailed to the student's residence and need to be uploaded to CastleBranch by the student before the deadline. The student and the program director and administrative assistants can view results on the CastleBranch secure website. A positive background check may prohibit a student from participating in the clinical requirements of the course.

Drug Testing is required by clinical agencies and students will be tested annually, and more often if required by the clinical agencies, while enrolled in clinical courses. Drug testing is coordinated through CastleBranch. Students will register and pay for the drug test at CastleBranch. CastleBranch provides information on obtaining the drug test and automatically posts the results to the student's account to be viewed by the student and program director and administrative assistant. A positive drug test may prohibit the student from participating in the clinical requirements for the course.

A student WILL NOT be allowed to attend clinical without obtaining and submitting the required background checks and drug tests by the due date. This information may be shared with the clinical agencies upon their request. The student will be expected to comply with any additional testing or background checks if required by the clinical agencies. Additionally, the student may be required to submit verification of immunizations, background checks, and drug testing information directly to the clinical agencies.

Students should be aware that individual state laws may prohibit the licensure or certification of individuals convicted of felonies related to controlled substances and may also restrict licensure for other felony convictions.

(Approved 12/6/24)

## **CPR CERTIFICATION POLICY**

Prior to the initial clinical experience and continuously throughout the clinical courses, students enrolled in the graduate nursing program must be certified in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and AED for health care providers by the American Heart Association. All graduate nursing students enrolled in clinical courses must upload a copy of the current CPR certification to CastleBranch.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY/ HIPAA**

HIPAA stands for “Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act”. Although this legislative act includes a wide subject range relating to health insurance, a focus of this legislative act is the protection, security, and privacy of patients’ medical records. The University of Scranton has a legal and ethical responsibility to safeguard the privacy of patients and to protect the confidentiality of their health and social information.

Confidentiality of patient information and patient records is of utmost priority in any healthcare setting/agency. While participating in clinical education experiences, students will have access to information that must remain confidential. Patients have the right to privacy and confidentiality of their medical information.

No patient information may be disclosed (verbally or in writing) to unauthorized persons such as friends, family, or other patients.

Any request by the patient to release medical information must be handled by the appropriate agency representative. No student will accept responsibility to release patient information.

Students will not discuss patient information in public areas of an agency or outside of the agency. These areas may include offices if discussions in the office may be overheard by other patients.

Students will not leave medical charts in unrestricted areas of the agency.

Under no condition may samples of documentation containing any identifying information, such as evaluations, discharge summaries, results of diagnostic tests or letters to physicians be removed from the premises of the healthcare facility/agency.

The student’s obligation to keep information confidential continues outside of work hours and after the clinical experience concludes.

Any activity which is in violation of this agreement will be reported to the appropriate clinical and academic supervisor.

By signing this document, I understand and agree that I have read and will comply with all the terms of the above policy. I am aware that my individual clinical site will have a Confidentiality Policy and I agree to honor its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT NAME (PRINT)

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

## **DRESS CODE FOR CLINICAL**

Graduate students in the family nurse practitioner program are expected to wear business casual attire in the clinical setting with a clean white lab coat. A University approved name pin is to be worn on the left-hand side of the lab coat.

Students are expected to be neat, clean, and well groomed. Hair should be appropriate in style and color for professional practice. Jewelry should be kept to a minimum, i.e. wedding band, watch and small pierced earrings. Nails must be neat, trimmed and of appropriate length to allow for patient assessment and care.

Exceptions may be made by the Director of the Graduate Program when the clinical site policy differs from the above.

## **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND SAFETY STANDARDS**

Faculty in the Department of Nursing at the University of Scranton identified essential functions and safety standards that are critical to the successful preparation of nursing students and to future success in their career as nurses and nurse practitioners. These essential functions establish performance levels required to provide safe patient care, with or without reasonable accommodations.

All skills taught and evaluated in the nursing program are required for successful completion of the program. Qualified applicants to the University of Scranton Department of Nursing are expected to meet all admission criteria, including these essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations.

No qualified individual with a disability shall, based on that disability, be excluded from the University of Scranton Nursing Program. In accordance with the applicable law and University policy, the University shall provide reasonable accommodation to a qualified individual with a disability. To request accommodations, individuals must contact the University's Office of Student Support and Success (OSSS).

To enroll in the pre-licensure and nurse practitioner programs, a student must meet the essential functions as described below, with or without reasonable accommodations, and maintain related satisfactory demonstration of these functions for progression through the program. Reasonable accommodations must be arranged through the University's Office of Student Support and Success (OSSS). The essential functions to meet nursing curriculum performance standards include but are not necessarily limited to the information in the table below. "Essential Functions and Safety Standards for Pre-Licensure and Nurse Practitioner Students."

These essential functions are not intended to be a complete listing of all nursing behaviors, but some examples of types of abilities needed by nursing students to meet program outcomes and requirements. The University of Scranton, Department of Nursing or its affiliated agencies may identify additional critical behaviors or abilities. Additional criteria may apply at the discretion of the University of Scranton Department of Nursing.

The nursing program reserves the right to dismiss a student who fails to meet the essential functions, whose physical fitness, work, personal or professional behavior demonstrates lack of fitness for the profession, or endurance to continue in the program.

<b>Essential Functions and Safety Standards for Admission, Progression, and Completion of Pre-Licensure and Nurse Practitioner Programs ( I – V)</b>	
<b>Essential Functions</b>	<b>Related Examples</b>
<p><b>I_ General Abilities:</b> In order to provide safe and effective nursing care, an applicant and/or student in the University of Scranton nursing program is expected to possess <b>functional use of the senses of vision, touch, hearing, taste, and smell.</b> All information received by the senses must be integrated, analyzed, and synthesized in a consistent and accurate manner. The applicant/student must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. In addition, the individual is expected to possess the ability to perceive pain, pressure, temperature, position, equilibrium, and movement.</p>	<p><b><u>Visual Ability</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient to independently assess patients and their environments.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detect changes in skin color or condition.</li> <li>• Collect data from recording equipment and measurement devices used in patient care (ex. Blood pressure).</li> <li>• Detect a fire in a patient area and initiate emergency action.</li> <li>• Draw up the correct quantity of medication into a syringe.</li> <li>• Clearly observe a person and objects at a near and far distance.</li> <li>• Read fine print (Ex. medication or nutrition labels).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Tactile Ability</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient to independently assess patients and implement the nursing care developed from such assessment.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detect changes in skin temperature.</li> <li>• Detect unsafe temperature levels in heat-producing devices used in patient care.</li> <li>• Detect anatomical abnormalities (e.g., subcutaneous crepitus, edema, or infiltrated intravenous fluid).</li> <li>• Detect changes in surfaces (e.g., skin)</li> <li>• Feel pulses</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Auditory Ability</u></b></p> <p>____ Sufficient to independently assess patients and implement the nursing care developed from such assessment.</p> <p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hear sounds within normal range.</li> <li>• Effectively listen with a stethoscope.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hearing faint body sounds (e.g., blood pressure sounds, assess placement of tubes).</li> <li>• Hear auditory alarms (e.g., monitors fire alarms, call bells).</li> <li>• Hear normal speaking level sounds (e.g., person-to-person report)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Olfactory Ability</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient to detect environment and odors.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Example of relevant activity*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detect odors from patient and environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>II. Observational Skills:</b> Students require the <b>functional use of vision, hearing and somatic sensations</b>. A student must be able to observe lectures, lecture, and laboratory demonstrations, and observe microscopic studies of tissues. The student must be able to observe a patient accurately, observe digital and waveform readings, and other graphic images to determine a patient's/client's condition. Integral to the observation process is the functional uses of the senses and adequate motor capability to conduct assessment activities. [See related examples for General Abilities]</p>	<p><b><u>Critical Thinking/ Clinical Judgement Ability</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient to collect, synthesize, analyze, integrate, and prioritize information and knowledge to make clinical judgments and management decisions that promote positive patient outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate response to treatment and interventions.</li> <li>• Prioritize tasks</li> <li>• Process information.</li> <li>• Use long- and short-term memory.</li> <li>• Problem solves.</li> <li>• Evaluate outcomes.</li> <li>• Transfer knowledge to accomplish application of theory information to the practice setting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>III. Communication Skills:</b> Students must be able to communicate in many forms; these include: <b>speech, language, reading, writing and computer literacy (including keyboarding skills)</b>. Students must be able to communicate in English in oral and written form with faculty and peers in classroom and laboratory settings. Students must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients/clients, maintain written records, elicit information regarding mood</p>	<p><b><u>Communication Ability</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient ability to speak, comprehend, and write legibly in English at a level that meets the need for accurate, clear, and effective communication.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give clear oral reports.</li> <li>• Provide clear and concise written documentation.</li> <li>• Direct activities of others by providing clear written and oral instructions to others.</li> <li>• Utilize effective communication with various devices (e.g., mobile phones, electronic health records, computers, pagers, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Reading Ability</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient to comprehend the written word.</li> </ul>

<p>and activities, as well as perceive non-verbal communications. Students must also be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with other members of the health care community to convey information for safe and effective care.</p>	<p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and comprehend graphs and tables (e.g., Lab reports, vital signs sheets).</li> <li>• Read and comprehend documents.</li> <li>• Speak, read, write, and comprehend the English language written at the 12th grade level.</li> <li>• Professionally express and exchange ideas in verbal or written form using the English language.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Math Ability</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient to do accurate computations.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read measurement marks.</li> <li>• Count rates (ex. Heart and respiratory rates)</li> <li>• Calculate intake and output.</li> <li>• Read digital displays.</li> <li>• Tell and measure time (ex. count duration of contractions).</li> <li>• Accurately calculate medication dosages.</li> <li>• Perform math calculations (basic algebra).</li> <li>• Use cognitive (thinking) abilities to measure, calculate, reason, and analyze information and data.</li> <li>• Prioritize data to make decisions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>IV. Psychomotor Skills:</b> Students, in the classroom, must have the ability to sit, stand, and/or walk, for up to 4 hours daily. In the clinical setting, students must have the ability to sit, stand or walk for at least twelve hours daily modified according to the schedule of the specific facility to which a student is assigned. Students must possess sufficient motor function to elicit information from the patient/client examination, by palpation, auscultation, percussing, and other examination maneuvers. Students must be able to execute movements (including twist, bend, stoop and/or squat) required to provide general and therapeutic care, such as positioning, lifting, transferring, exercising, or transporting patients; to perform or assist with technical</p>	<p><b><u>Gross Motor/Physical Endurance</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient physical endurance, strength, and mobility to perform required care activities in a safe and effective manner for the entire length of the clinical experience.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working 8 or 12-hour shifts, days, evenings or nights, weekends, holidays.</li> <li>• Standing, walking, bending, squatting, lifting, or moving objects weighing 25 to 50 pounds or more. Moving, transferring, and lifting patients safely.</li> <li>• Stand and walk without assistance for long periods of time</li> <li>• Promptly respond to emergencies.</li> <li>• Provide active nursing care over an entire shift (8-12 hours).</li> <li>• Have sufficient strength to push, pull, turn, and position equipment and persons.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Fine Motor</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient to perform manual psychomotor skills integral to patient care.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manipulate small equipment and containers</li> <li>• Manipulate syringes, vials, ampules, pills, capsules, and medication packages) to administer medications.</li> </ul>

<p>procedures, treatments, administration of medications, and emergency interventions. These skills require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movement, equilibrium, physical strength and stamina, and the integrated use of touch, hearing and vision.</p>	
<p><b>V. Behavioral and Social Abilities:</b> Students must possess the psychological ability required for the utilization of their intellectual abilities, for the exercise of good judgment, for the prompt completion of responsibilities inherent to the diagnosis and care of patients/clients, and for the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. Students must be able to tolerate physically and mentally taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must be able to tolerate and adapt to a changing, unfamiliar (and perhaps, uncomfortable) environment, display flexibility, respect individual differences, and learn to function in the face of ambiguities inherent in the clinical problems of patients/clients. Concern for others, honesty, integrity, accountability, interest, and motivation are necessary personal qualities. As a component of their education and practice, students must demonstrate ethical behavior. Examples include recognizing and appropriately reacting to one's own immediate emotional responses to situations while maintaining a professional demeanor. Students should maintain</p>	<p><b><u>Psychological/Social/Cultural Functions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Function within the ethical and legal standards of nursing practice settings.</li> <li>• Effectively function in stressful situations.</li> <li>• Safeguard and maintain privacy of patient information</li> <li>• Use social media platforms in a responsible manner</li> <li>• Respond professionally and interact therapeutically to angry or challenging persons.</li> <li>• Work effectively in a group or as part of a team.</li> <li>• Concentrate on a task without being distracted.</li> <li>• Effectively manage time and respond to schedules/deadlines.</li> <li>• Manage two or more activities or sources of information without becoming confused.</li> <li>• Utilize problem-solving and decision-making skills.</li> <li>• Adapt to change.</li> <li>• Assume responsibility for own actions.</li> <li>• Interact with persons from various cultural, spiritual, and sexual orientation in an open and compassionate manner</li> </ul> <p><b>Emotional Stability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient to assume responsibility/accountability for actions.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish therapeutic relationships and communicate in a supportive manner.</li> <li>• Deal with the unexpected (ex. Change in patient status, patient crisis).</li> <li>• Handle strong emotions.</li> <li>• Adapt to changing environment/stress.</li> <li>• Maintain focus on tasks.</li> <li>• Monitor and maintain control own emotions.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Interpersonal Skills</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient to interact with individuals, families and groups respecting social, cultural, gender, sexual and spiritual diversity.</li> </ul>

<p>professional standards as outlined in the ANA Code of Ethics and practice within their scope of practice. Students should adhere to professional regulations and maintain compliance in national standards such as HIPPA and QSEN.</p>	<p><b><u>Examples of relevant activities*</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate interpersonal conflict.</li> <li>• Establish positive rapport with patients, other students and member of the University including faculty and staff.</li> <li>• Interact with others effectively and appropriately.</li> </ul>
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## **EXPOSURE TO BLOOD AND/OR BODY FLUIDS IN THE CLINICAL SETTING**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a protocol for action when a student is exposed to bodily fluids in the clinical laboratory setting. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) definition of occupational exposure is used as the basis for this policy and is defined as:

a percutaneous injury (e.g., a needle stick or cut with a sharp object), or contact of mucous membranes, or nonintact skin (e.g. when the exposed skin is chapped, abraded, or afflicted with dermatitis) or when contact with intact skin is prolonged or involving an extensive area with blood, tissues, or other body fluids to which universal precautions apply, including: a) semen, vaginal secretions, or other body fluids contaminated with visible blood, because these substances have been implicated in the transmission of HIV infection;... b) cerebral spinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, peritoneal fluid, pericardial fluid, and amniotic fluid, because the risk of transmission of HIV from these fluids has not been determined...; and c) laboratory specimens that contain HIV (e.g., suspensions of concentrated virus) (CDC, 1998). For human bites, the clinical evaluation must include the possibility that both the person bitten and the person, who inflicted the bite, were both exposed to bloodborne pathogens (CDC, 10/5/16).

### **Student Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the student to immediately report the exposure incident to her/his preceptor and faculty course instructor, as certain interventions are most effective when initiated promptly. In addition, the student is expected to report the exposure incident according to the clinical agency's policy, and to seek access to post exposure evaluation and treatment as per the agency's policy when appropriate (e.g., hospital setting, agency's policy may include emergency treatment in the ER). If an exposure occurs in a clinical setting where facilities are not available for the prompt evaluation and treatment of an exposure, it is the student's responsibility to access the nearest facility equipped to evaluate and treat an exposure (e.g., the closest emergency department).

### **Evaluation of the Exposure**

The exposure should be evaluated for potential to transmit hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV based on the type of body substance, and the route and severity of the exposure by the designated person (emergency room physician/infectious disease physician) at the clinical agency or other facility to which the student was sent for evaluation and treatment.

## **Testing**

Bloodborne pathogens testing should be done at time of exposure and for specific intervals, thereafter, as recommended by the CDC. All testing should be based on initial risk evaluation by an agency representative of the exposure and student's immunity status. It is recommended that bloodborne pathogen testing be performed as indicated by the clinical agency. It is the student's right to choose the testing site. Results will remain confidential.

Testing is at expense of the student.

## **Record Keeping**

The results of HIV testing will not be reported to, nor kept by the University. It is recommended that all HIV testing results remain the confidential property of the student.

Refer to CDC Blood/Bodily Fluid Exposure Module at [CDC.gov](http://CDC.gov)

## **GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES**

There is graduate nursing student representation on each of the following departmental committees: Faculty Organization, Graduate Committee, and Resources Committee. Appointments are made during early September of each year. Interested students should contact the Director of the Graduate Program.

## **HEALTH AND LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Students enrolled in the graduate nursing program are expected to have their own health insurance. **Health insurance is not offered by the University of Scranton.**

In addition, while enrolled in the clinical courses, nurse practitioner students are required to have student nurse practitioner liability insurance. All graduate nursing students enrolled in practicum courses utilizing affiliating agencies must upload evidence of their health and liability insurance to their CastleBranch account prior to starting their practicum hours. Clinical sites may require additional information prior to starting at that facility.

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

The health requirements for the Department of Nursing are to assure that the student:

- 1) maintains that level of health necessary to complete the course of studies and to perform the duties of a professional advanced practice nurse.
- 2) is free of any illness or disease that may endanger the health and welfare of themselves and others.

Students enrolled in affiliating agencies for their practicum courses must abide by the following regulations. The pre-clinical physical examination shall include a complete physical examination administered by a certified nurse practitioner or physician with verified evidence of the following: current negative tuberculin skin test (PPD) within previous 12 months (if the PPD test is positive or the student has a history of a positive PPD, a chest x-ray or QuantiFERON Gold TB test is required); immunization for diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis within the previous ten years; immunization for measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella OR documented laboratory immunity. Influenza vaccine is required each year for the current flu season. The deadline date to receive the influenza vaccine is October 15. In addition, students are required to submit proof of Hepatitis B immunization or sign a declination form.

Subsequently, a PPD skin test must be administered every 12 months while the student is in the clinical nursing courses. If the PPD test has converted to positive, a chest x-ray or QuantiFERON Gold TB test is required, with follow-up as appropriate. (Note: The PPD can be obtained at Student Health Services, which has a facility in the Roche Wellness Center at 1130 Mulberry Street.)

Students with a history of a positive PPD test must complete a "Tuberculosis Symptom Screening Questionnaire" annually. If there are any positive findings on the questionnaire a repeat chest x-ray or QuantiFERON Gold TB test is required, with follow-up as appropriate.

The student must upload their health record, which includes all the above-mentioned requirements, to their CastleBranch account. It is the responsibility of the student to keep their account up to date. The student **WILL NOT** be able to attend clinical if all appropriate completed physical exam, diagnostic studies and immunizations, and documented health insurance and liability coverage are not uploaded to their CastleBranch account for viewing by the program director or administrative assistants by the due date. Health documents may be provided to clinical agencies upon request.

Additional vaccines, including Covid-19, may be required throughout the student's enrollment in the nursing program. These requirements will be communicated as needed. Clinical agency requirements may supersede the University's requirements.

### **IMMUNIZATION EXEMPTION POLICY**

Immunization exemptions may be granted for medical reasons only. Students who have a documented medical condition that qualifies for an exemption must seek an accommodation from the Office of Student Support and Success (OSSS) through the Accommodate system. The name of the vaccine must be specified, and appropriate medical documentation provided. Specific vaccine exemptions may or may not be granted by the University.

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate this process no later than May 1 to ensure documentation

can be evaluated, and a determination can be made.

OSSS will determine whether sufficient documentation has been received to grant the accommodation. If the accommodation is granted, the student must provide the accommodation paperwork to the department of nursing (paper form, electronic form), including appropriate medical documentation from the healthcare provider that is providing care for the student.

If the student does not receive a medical exemption, the Department of Nursing will attempt to secure an alternate clinical site for the student. If the Department is unable to secure an alternate clinical site for the student, the student will not be able to progress in the program.

This process must be done each year that the students is enrolled in the program. Exemptions are granted for each academic year separately.

Being granted a medical exemption for an immunization from the University of Scranton does not guarantee that clinical agencies will accept/honor the exemption. Clinical agency requirements supersede the University's requirements.

(Approved 12/6/24)

### **LICENSURE**

All graduate nursing students enrolled in clinical courses must upload a copy of their professional nurse license to their CastleBranch account prior to starting the clinical rotation. Students completing their clinical rotation in another state must be licensed in that state. If the professional nurse license expires during the student's enrollment, the student must upload the renewed license. If the professional nurse license is revoked or suspended, the student must notify the program director and may be dismissed from the program.

(Approved 12/6/24)

### **PREGNANT STUDENT'S POLICY**

It is the responsibility of the student to give written notice of her pregnancy to the Director of the Graduate Program when she has written confirmation of the pregnancy. This will only be shared with the clinical faculty responsible for that student.

The pregnant student will sign a "Student Pregnancy Health Release Form" to continue in the clinical portion of the program. The pregnant student must obtain written consent from her physician or nurse midwife regarding her participation in the nursing program.

Clinical faculty will not knowingly assign the student to a situation that poses a recognized potential threat to the welfare of the pregnant student or the fetus. The student is responsible for discussing any concerns regarding her assignment with the instructor.

Students must submit clearance by physician or midwife to return to clinical.

**The University of Scranton  
Department of Nursing**

**STUDENT PREGNANCY/HEALTH RELEASE FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, release the University of Scranton from any liability related to health consequences to myself or the fetus as a result of my clinical experiences.

I have presented written consent from my physician/midwife regarding my participation in the nursing program. (attach consent from physician/midwife)

I have presented written confidential confirmation of my pregnancy to the Department of Nursing. (attach confirmation from physician/midwife)

I understand that the clinical faculty will not knowingly assign me to a situation that poses a recognized potential threat to the welfare of myself or the fetus. I understand that it is my responsibility to discuss any concerns regarding my clinical assignment with my instructor.

I understand that I must follow all mandated universal precautions.

I understand that pregnancy-related injuries sustained from improper body mechanics will not be the responsibility of the University of Scranton.

I understand the above restrictions and responsibilities that have been placed upon me. I accept responsibility for complying with them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student/Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student (Printed Name)

## **PROFESSIONAL NURSING BEHAVIORS POLICY**

Graduate nursing students are expected to consistently demonstrate the professional nursing behaviors listed below. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the graduate nursing program.

- ❖ Ethical behavior according to the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses.
- ❖ Maintenance of a safe environment for the patient in the clinical setting.
- ❖ Punctuality for lecture, classroom, and clinical laboratories.
- ❖ Consistent preparation for lecture, classroom, and clinical laboratories.
- ❖ Completion of assignments within allotted parameters.
- ❖ Positive relationships with peers, faculty, patients, and staff.
- ❖ Compliance with the clinical dress code.
- ❖ Acceptance and incorporation of faculty feedback.
- ❖ Adherence to policies and standards established in The University of Scranton's student handbooks.
- ❖ Respect for peers, faculty, patients, and staff.

The Department of Nursing faculty reviews the progress (academic and clinical) of every nursing student each semester. The purpose and goal of the evaluation process is to review the professional development of students. Each nursing department faculty member (including part-time) will review every student in her/his respective lecture and/or clinical sections each semester. If there is a concern raised regarding a student, the faculty member will complete the Professional Nursing Behaviors Evaluation Form. This form will be submitted to the Program Director and Department Chairperson. At that time the Program Director, Department Chairperson or designee will meet with the student and develop a plan for remediation. Should a graduate student receive a second unprofessional behavior warning, the student's behavior will be referred to the Graduate Committee for discussion. The Graduate Committee will make a recommendation to the Department Chairperson who will contact the Dean regarding further action, which may include dismissal from the graduate nursing program.

I have received a copy and understand this policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**PROFESSIONAL NURSING BEHAVIORS EVALUATION FORM**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_ Course/Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester/Year: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_\_ Summer \_\_\_\_\_

Nursing Behaviors

Areas of Concern

Ethical behavior according to the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses	
Maintenance of a safe environment for the patient in the clinical setting	
Punctuality for lecture, classroom and clinical laboratories	
Consistent preparation for lecture, classroom and clinical laboratories	
Completion of assignments within allotted parameters	
Positive relationships with peers, faculty, patients, and staff	
Compliance with the clinical dress code	
Acceptance and incorporation of faculty feedback	
Adherence to policies and standards established in The University of Scranton's student handbooks.	
Respect for peers, faculty, patients, and staff	

Comments:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **SIGMA THETA TAU** **IOTA OMEGA CHAPTER**

### **I. Objectives and Purpose**

Joining an honor society signifies one's commitment to excellence in his or her chosen profession and acknowledges the individual's achievements-whether academic or professional. The specific purposes of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International membership is to:

- ❖ Recognize superior achievement.
- ❖ Recognize the development of leadership qualities.
- ❖ Foster high professional standards.
- ❖ Encourage creative work.
- ❖ Strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession.

More details about specific qualifications for membership can be found in the Sigma Theta Tau International bylaws.

### **II. Qualification**

There are two entry levels into membership within Sigma Theta Tau International; academic and professional. Each chapter makes a professional judgment about candidates' membership eligibility based on documentation received from the candidate.

The academic qualification is based on the grades a student receives during initial or graduate nursing preparation. Even though schools in different countries assign grades in various methods, it is possible for any honor society to establish a system in which students with high academic achievement can be considered for admission.

The second route to qualify for admission is through one's professional achievement. Accomplishments are seen in areas such as research, publication, leadership, clinical practice, and education. Nurses qualify for entry into the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International because they are recognized for their contribution to nursing by providing leadership to peers, encouraging achievement in others, having contributed to research that will have an impact on health care and patient care, and/or having developed an innovative practice or method of caring for patients or managing a department.

### **III. Criteria for Graduate Students**

- 1) Must have completed  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the nursing curriculum.
- 2) Must have at least a GPA of 3.5 (based on a 4.0 scale).
- 3) Must meet the expectation of academic integrity.

### **IV. Application**

Graduate students who meet the criteria for induction should contact the Faculty Counselor at the beginning of September regarding app

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Social media is defined as mechanisms for communication designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using easily accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media is commonly thought of as a group of Internet-based applications that allow for the creation and exchange of user generated content. Examples include but are not limited to LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Flickr, blogs, podcasts, RSS feeds, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and MySpace. In addition to the following guidelines, students are expected to adhere to the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing's Guide to the Use of Social Media, while engaging in the use of social media. Students must represent the University of Scranton and the Department of Nursing in a fair, accurate and legal manner while protecting the brand and reputation of the University.

\*\* Students may use social media to discuss, among other things, other students. But they are restricted as Nursing students from doing so when it would reveal information that is otherwise confidential to the Program.

\*\* Students may not post confidential or proprietary information about the University, staff, students, clinical facilities, patients, or others with whom students have contact in the role of a University student.

\*\* Students must be mindful of copyright and fair use and must not violate intellectual property rights.

\*\* No University or Department marks, such as logos and graphics may be used on personal social media sites.

\*\* During clinicals, use of PDAs and other devices employed for social media will be used only as authorized by faculty and in accordance with agency policies.

\*\* No personal phone conversations or texting are allowed at any time while in patient areas or in the classroom.

\*\* Use of computers (PDAs, Notebooks, etc.) during class shall be restricted to note taking and classroom activities.

\*\* Students may not record (audio or video) professors, guest speakers, or fellow students for personal or social media use without the expressed permission of the faculty, guest, or fellow student.

\*\* Students may not photograph, or record patients, nor may students post or otherwise transcribe or transfer any recordings of patients, whether legitimate or not, via social networking.

\*\* Students may not post or share clinical or class materials developed by Department faculty or staff without express written permission.

Violation of the Social Media Policy will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Department's Professional Behaviors Policy, up to and including program dismissal.

## **STUDENT APPEAL POLICY**

(Note: The Department of Nursing Appeal of a Course Grade Policy and The University of Scranton Academic Code of Honesty and Sexual Harassment policies should be followed when applicable.)

A student who has a grievance should first appeal the matter to the faculty member involved. The student has the right to appeal to the faculty member's chairperson, who will make a recommendation to his or her dean. The student may request the Dean to review the matter.

## **STUDENTS AS LEGAL WITNESSES POLICY**

To avoid unnecessary legal entanglements and involvement in situations that are possibly beyond the student's competence, the graduate nursing students at The University of Scranton, while assigned to clinical agencies as part of course requirements, are prohibited: 1) to solicit signatures of patients and/or family members on consent forms, 2) to sign as a witness or to witness the signing of consent forms or any other legal documents including wills/contracts, etc.

This policy does not prohibit the student from asking the patient's consent to invasive procedures that the student is to perform as part of his/her assignment.

## **STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CLINICAL ROTATION POLICY**

The Department of Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner Program Director will secure clinical sites and preceptors for all students in the MSN and post-graduate APRN certificate program. Preceptors for the FNP students must be nationally certified, master's or doctoral prepared nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, or physicians. Preceptors are expected to have a minimum of one-year recent clinical experience in their roles and be available onsite and an active participant in the student's clinical learning.

A student may request to be placed with a preceptor of their choice. Students must discuss any requests for specific preceptors with the program director, who will determine if the site/preceptor is appropriate for the course. The program director, in conjunction with the graduate program administrative assistant, will verify credentials and obtain affiliation agreements for all preceptors. Preceptors and clinical sites are chosen to facilitate attainment of the course objectives. Clinical sites for FNP students include primary care, pediatrics, internal medicine, family practice, women's health, long-term care, and urgent care settings. A 1:1 preceptor-student ratio is used in the clinical setting. All FNP students spend at least one clinical rotation with a nurse practitioner.

### Criteria for Clinical Sites/Agencies

1. The agency is accredited and/or approved by the appropriate governing body, where applicable.
2. The philosophy of the agency is compatible with the philosophy of the nursing program.
3. The agency provides a milieu conducive to learning and safe patient care.
4. An adequate number and diversity of learning experiences are available to enable the student to meet course objectives.

**VERIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK**

I have read and understand the contents of The Graduate Student Handbook,  
Department of Nursing, The University of Scranton.

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

Return forms to Donna Cochrane-Kalinoski or Jill O'Connor, Dept. of Nursing,

Administrative Assistants Graduate Program.

Thank you.

# **APPENDIX**

## **(General Information)**

**APPENDIX**  
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## **OVERVIEW OF GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM TRACKS**

### **FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER TRACK**

Nurse practitioners (NPs) are registered nurses who have advanced education and clinical training in a health care specialty area. NPs practice under the rules and regulations of the Nurse Practice Act of the state in which they work. NPs also hold national certification in their specialty area. In Pennsylvania (PA), the NP is certified as a Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP) by the PA State Board of Nursing. National certification is also required to practice as an NP in PA and in most states.

Family nurse practitioners (FNP) are prepared to provide advanced nursing practice for individuals and families across the life span. Specifically, the FNP is educationally prepared to assess, diagnose, and treat common acute and chronic disorders, and to provide health promotion and disease prevention interventions and counseling. NP practice includes independent and interdependent decision making and direct accountability for clinical judgment.

The University of Scranton's FNP track is a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree program designed to prepare registered nurses to deliver primary health care to families in a variety of community and out-patient settings. To complement the FNP role, students also receive course work in research, evidence-based practice, systems leadership, health policy, and health care financing.

Each student is required to complete a clinical practicum. Faculty will identify and assign the student to a clinical setting and preceptor. During the clinical practicum, the student will provide advanced nursing care for individuals across the life span using obstetric/gynecological (women's health), pediatric (children's health), adult and geriatric primary care diagnostic and management skills, under the guidance and supervision of licensed physicians, certified NPs, and certified nurse midwives. All preceptors must have a minimum of one year of clinical experience. Each credit of clinical equals 125 clock hours per semester, so that total clinical practicum for the FNP program is 875 hours.

The FNP track is offered as a 36-credit master's degree program for baccalaureate prepared nurses, and as a 27-credit certificate option for nurses already holding a master's degree in advanced practice nursing and who wish to become FNPs. Graduates will be able to function as FNPs in a variety of settings such as primary care offices, clinics, private practices, schools, health departments, chronic and long-term care facilities, and home care agencies. Graduates of the program are eligible for certification as an FNP in PA through the PA State Board of Nursing and nationally through the American Nurses' Credentialing Center and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.

## **DESCRIPTION OF UNIVERSITY FACULTY ROLE FOR GRADUATE PROGRAM CLINICAL COMPONENT**

The University faculty assumes overall responsibility for theory and clinical courses. Faculty will develop the course syllabus, identify the content to be included in the course, and select the methods that will be used to evaluate student learning, and assign the course grade. The faculty works closely with students and preceptors to assist students in achieving the course objectives.

Students are assigned by faculty to a specific clinical site based on such variables as educational opportunity, student background, and location. The faculty member will communicate with the preceptor through written communication, phone conversations, meetings and/or virtual site visits about the course objectives and the student's progress. The frequency of contact will vary according to the needs of the student, the clinical site, and the specialty.

A faculty member will arrange, through the student, a virtual clinical site visit each semester according to the program guidelines, a minimum of one time per semester at each clinical site. Site visits assist faculty in determining if there is adequate opportunity for the students to meet the learning objectives and the nurse practitioner role and population focused competencies. The site visit will include a discussion of the student's performance between the faculty and preceptor. If concerns arise in the clinical setting by a student or preceptor, the supervising faculty must be contacted. The faculty will create a remediation plan for the student and decide regarding additional site visits and follow up with the preceptor and student.

Formal evaluation is done each semester by the preceptor, student, and university faculty member. Faculty will also meet with the student on a regular basis to discuss the clinical practicum and review informal as well as formal preceptor evaluations and student self-evaluations.

(Approved 12/6/24)

## **DESCRIPTION OF PRECEPTOR ROLE FOR GRADUATE PROGRAM CLINICAL COMPONENT**

Formal arrangements are made between The University of Scranton and the preceptor/clinical faculty. An agreement specifying the exact arrangements will be sent to each preceptor or preceptor organization/hospital.

Preceptors serve as clinical instructors, supervisors, and evaluators of students. Course work provides students with the knowledge and principles required to graduate as safe practitioners. Preceptors continue that instruction as the student initially observes, then gradually becomes responsible for providing the direct care that forms the basis for advanced practice nursing.

The role of the preceptor includes:

- \* Orienting the student to the clinical site
- \* Facilitating a mutually respectful environment for learning
- \* Being an expert role model
- \* Providing evidence-based learning experiences
- \* Observing and reviewing clinical management and advanced practice nursing knowledge and skills
- \* Providing on-going feedback and evaluation to the student
- \* Directing the student to resources and readings

Preceptors assess the student's clinical skills, knowledge, and competencies throughout the clinical experience and evaluate progression as related to student's achievement of course objectives. Providing verbal constructive feedback each day is important.

Preceptors are asked to complete a written formative evaluation of the student's performance midway through the planned clinical practicum and a summative evaluation at the end. Discussion of student performance at each point is critical, sharing your assessment of the student's strengths and areas where improvement is needed. If at any time you are concerned about a student's progress or other aspects of the clinical practicum, contact the faculty and/or program director or the chairperson of the Department of Nursing. Together with the faculty as lead, a plan for improvement will be developed.

Although not a requirement, preceptors are encouraged to give their input on course content, learning activities and other aspects of instruction. Preceptors are also welcomed to serve as guest lecturers.

## **DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT ROLE FOR GRADUATE PROGRAM CLINICAL COMPONENT**

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of her/his own unique learning needs and to make them known to faculty and preceptors. Students are expected to negotiate their schedules with the preceptors to fulfill the course time and experience requirements. Students are responsible for providing their own transportation to the clinical site, and they are responsible for contacting the preceptor site in the event of illness/problems that prevent them from attending their assigned clinical day.

Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to ensure all required clinical documentation including time logs, case logs, and evaluations are signed by the preceptor and/or student and submitted to the seminar course faculty by the due date indicated in the course syllabus. Failure to do so will result in an unsatisfactory grade and course failure.

Students are expected to complete formal self-evaluations of their clinical performance each semester. In addition, students are responsible for keeping track of all their clinical experiences and must submit clinical hours and logs to their assigned faculty member. The student is also responsible for ascertaining the preceptor's signature on a daily log confirming hours attended each day.

Student maintenance of proper communication with both the University faculty and the preceptor is critical to maximize the clinical experience. Students are to take the initiative to discuss with the preceptor and faculty any problems that are related to the clinical site. A faculty member will arrange, through the student, a virtual clinical site visit each semester according to the program guidelines, a minimum of one time per semester at each clinical site. Site visits assist faculty in determining if there is adequate opportunity for the students to meet the learning objectives and the nurse practitioner role and population focused competencies. The site visit will include a discussion of the student's performance between the faculty and preceptor. If concerns arise in the clinical setting by a student or preceptor, the supervising faculty must be contacted. The faculty will create a remediation plan for the student and decide regarding additional site visits and follow up with the preceptor and student.

Specifically, for the FNP track: In the initial clinical course students are expected to become oriented to the primary care clinical setting, focus on refining health assessment skills and conducting comprehensive histories and physicals, and providing health promotion counseling. In the subsequent clinical courses in the FNP program, students are responsible, under the supervision of preceptors and faculty, for assessing patient's needs, establishing a plan of care, and implementing and evaluating that plan of care.