



**THE UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON**

**DEPARTMENT OF NURSING**

**GRADUATE PROGRAM**

**PRECEPTOR MANUAL**

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This Manual is intended to serve as a guide for preceptors in the Family Nurse Practitioner and Executive Nurse Leader tracks of the graduate nursing program. Basic program information is listed along with the expectations of preceptors, university faculty, and students. The university faculty and students greatly appreciate the significant amount of time and effort put forth by the preceptors.

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**SECTION I**  
**GRADUATE PROGRAM GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **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 J. A. Panuska College of Professional Studies 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 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.

## **Master of Science in Nursing Degree Program Objectives**

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.

## **Overview of Graduate Program**

The master's nursing program is comprised of four core courses that cover current issues in advanced practice nursing, research, health promotion, and systems leadership. These core courses provide the foundation for graduate nursing study and are taken by all MSN students. Additionally, students in the FNP track take advanced physiology and pathophysiology, advanced pharmacology, and advanced clinical assessment. Each student is required to take the advanced practice specialty courses in their selected track of study. The specialty courses are listed under each specialization heading. Detailed course descriptions for all courses can be found in the Appendix of this Manual.

All students must maintain a B (3.0 grade point) average and must receive a grade of Satisfactory in all clinical courses to continue in the program and subsequently graduate.

Full-time and part-time study is available. Some of the core courses are offered online, while the specialty didactic courses are offered face-to-face, meeting once per week during the semester. Clinical days and times are arranged between the student and preceptor.

Admission to the graduate program is required before beginning courses. However, once accepted, students may begin course work in either the spring or fall semester.

## **Admission Criteria**

### General Admissions Requirements for the Master of Science in Nursing Degree:

- A baccalaureate degree in nursing from a Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), or Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (CNEA) accredited program.
- Licensure as a registered nurse (R.N.) in the state of Pennsylvania.
- Satisfactory completion of an undergraduate or equivalent approved course in basic physical assessment.
- Satisfactory completion of an undergraduate statistics course.
- Undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 or other evidence of ability to successfully complete a graduate program such as grades in other post baccalaureate courses, scores from national graduate school entrance examinations, or a record of progressively higher work experiences.
- Three professional references.
- A brief essay identifying career goals, demonstrating communication, and writing skills.
- A personal interview with the program director or a faculty member to clarify goals and objectives.

### Post-graduate APRN Certificate Admissions Requirements:

In addition to the above requirements, except for the essay, applicants for the certificate program must possess an earned master's degree in advanced practice nursing from an CCNE, ACEN, or CNEA accredited program.

**SECTION II**  
**FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER TRACK**

## **Overview of 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. Many 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.

Family nurse practitioners (FNP) are prepared to provide advanced nursing care for individuals and families across the life span. Specifically, the FNP is educationally prepared to assess, diagnose, and treat common episodic 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 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, or 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.

## **FNP Track Structure**

### **FULL-TIME STUDENTS (Two-year Program):**

**THE FIRST YEAR FALL SEMESTER** includes advanced physiology and pathophysiology, advanced assessment, and family health promotion, which consists of both a lecture and a clinical course. The latter introduces primary family health care and includes application of concepts related to health promotion and common health deviations. Clinical practice for this semester will take place during the last half of the semester. The focus in the clinical setting will be on assessment (performing histories and physicals) and health promotion.

**THE FIRST YEAR SPRING SEMESTER** students will take an advanced pharmacology course, and a theory and a practicum course related to health problems in the developing family. The latter focuses on the epidemiology, differential diagnosis, and management of acute and chronic health care problems of the developing family (conception through adolescence). Clinical practice for this semester will occur in woman's health and pediatric settings. Students will continue to develop their health promotion skills for this age population, as well as their role as nurse practitioners.

An online course that discusses issues in advanced practice nursing will be taken over the summer between the first and second years.

**IN THE FALL OF THE SECOND YEAR**, students will take research methodology and application, and a theory and a practicum course related to health problems in the established family. The latter focuses on the epidemiology, differential diagnosis, and management of acute and chronic health care problems of the established family (young adult through older adult). Clinical practice for this semester will take place in family practice, and adult health and geriatric primary health care settings. Students will continue to develop their health promotion skills for this age population, as well as their role as nurse practitioners.

**IN THE SPRING OF THE SECOND YEAR**, students will take a course in systems leadership and a family health synthesis theory and practicum. In the family health synthesis course, which is the capstone course for the FNP track, the student will be expected to synthesize and apply all the previously learned concepts utilized by the nurse practitioner to the care of patients with more complex problems. Clinical practice for this semester will take place in family practice, adult health, and geriatric primary health care settings.

### **PART-TIME STUDENTS (Three-year Program):**

These students take (non-clinical) core courses during the first year and the (specialty/clinical) courses the last two years of the program.

**SECTION III**  
**EXECUTIVE NURSE LEADERSHIP TRACK**

## **Overview of Executive Nurse Leadership Track**

The Executive Nurse Leadership (ENL) track, offered in conjunction with the Department of Health Administration and Human Resources, prepares nurse executives to be leaders in the increasingly complex and rapidly changing healthcare climate. The curriculum emphasizes content in organizational and financial management perspectives, as well as the knowledge and skills to exert a leadership role in health care and contribute to the art and science of nursing. The executive nurse leadership track is a 30-credit Master of Science in Nursing degree program for baccalaureate-prepared nurses. Students are admitted in the fall or spring semester. The program can be completed in 21 months. Some of the courses are online.

Each student is required to complete a 125-clock hour executive nurse leadership practicum. Faculty will provide guidance and support in selection of a preceptor for the practicum who will work with the student to facilitate real-world experience in the application of leadership and management principles. The preceptor and clinical site selection will be based on the student's career goals. The preceptor must have a minimum of a master's degree in nursing.

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**SECTION IV**  
**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **Description of University Faculty Role**

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/clinical faculty through written communication, phone conversations, meetings and/or site visits about the student's course objectives and progress. The frequency of contact will vary according to the needs of the student, the clinical site, and the specialty. All students are visited and observed by a university faculty member a minimum of one time per semester at each clinical site.

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

## **Description of Graduate Student Role**

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 both the preceptor site and the faculty member in the event of illness/problems that prevent them from attending their assigned clinical day. Students are also 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 logs to their assigned faculty member/seminar leader.

Student maintenance of proper communication with both the University and the clinical faculty 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.

Specifically, for the ENL track: The executive nurse leadership practicum will be individually tailored to meet each student's career goals. The student will be placed with an expert role model, who in most instances will be a practicing nurse executive. The setting may vary according to the student's interests and objectives. Throughout this course, the student is expected to synthesize management and leadership principles into the nurse executive role.

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.

## Description of Preceptor Role

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

The preceptor is expected to provide written feedback of the student's progress each semester, utilizing tools provided by the University faculty. Ongoing and immediate informal feedback of student performance is helpful in addressing student strengths and weaknesses in decision making and skill development. If the preceptor has concerns about a student's performance or conduct at the clinical site, the preceptor should contact the graduate program director, the student's faculty instructor, or the chairperson of the Department of Nursing.

Communication is vital, and preceptors are encouraged to maintain active communication with either the graduate program director or the student's faculty instructor should question, or concerns arise. 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 attend on-campus student conferences and serve as guest lecturers.

Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for the chairperson of the Department of Nursing and director of the graduate nursing program can be found at the beginning of this Manual.

**APPENDIX**  
**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

<b><u>Course Descriptions</u></b>		<b><u>Credits</u></b>
<b>Nurs 510    <b>Advanced Physiology and Pathophysiology</b></b>	Utilizing principles from anatomy and physiology, this lecture course presents the pathophysiology underlying common disease entities across the life span, including clinical presentation and related laboratory data.	3
<b>Nurs 520    <b>Advanced Pharmacology</b></b>	Lectures focus on the principles of drug therapy, mechanisms of action, side effects, drug interactions, general concepts in the selection of pharmaceutical agents, and prescriptive authority.	3
<b>Nurs 530    <b>Advanced Clinical Assessment</b></b>	Lecture provides theory and skills needed to obtain comprehensive histories and to perform comprehensive physical examinations on clients throughout the life span. Course includes two hours per week lecture.	2
<b>Nurs 530L    <b>Advanced Clinical Assessment Lab</b></b>	Lab course on clinical application of comprehensive history and physical examination skills. Four hours per week on-campus laboratory.	1
<b>Nurs 541    <b>Family Health Promotion</b></b>	This lecture provides an introduction to primary health care by discussing concepts and theories related to family process development, health promotion, sociocultural aspects, and common health deviations across the life span.	2
<b>Nurs 542    <b>Family Clinical Practicum I</b></b>	Clinical application of principles discussed in Family Health Promotion as well as Advanced Family Clinical Assessment for clients across the life span. Students will be precepted at clinical sites during the last half of the semester.	1
<b>Nurs 551    <b>Health Problems in the Developing Family</b></b>	Lecture focuses on the epidemiology, differential diagnoses and management of acute and chronic health problems and illnesses of the developing family.	3
<b>Nurs 552    <b>Family Clinical Practicum II</b></b>	Clinical application of theoretical principles presented in health problems of the developing family. Emphasis is on the primary health care of women of childbearing age and children from infancy through adolescence. Students will be placed in primary care settings that provide opportunities to care for patients in these stages of life.	2
<b>Nurs 561    <b>Health Problems in the Established Family</b></b>	Lecture focuses on the epidemiology, differential diagnoses and management of acute and chronic health problems and illnesses of the established family.	3

- Nurs 562 Family Clinical Practicum III** 2  
 Clinical application of theoretical principles presented in health problems of the established family. Students will be in a variety of clinical settings that provide opportunities to work with clients in these stages of the life span.
- Nurs 571 Family Health Synthesis** 3  
 Lecture focuses on diagnosis and management of acute and chronic problems with emphasis on geriatric patients, and complex health issues and psychosocial disorders across the lifespan. In this final semester, students are expected to synthesize concepts from prior courses to manage more complex family health care problems.
- Nurs 572 Family Clinical Practicum IV** 2  
 Clinical application of synthesis of theoretical principles from health promotion, health problems, and supporting courses. Students will be in a variety of settings that will provide opportunities to utilize the roles of the nurse practitioner with families with more complex health problems.
- Nurs 591 Issues in Advanced Practice Nursing** 3  
 This web-based seminar provides students with the opportunity to analyze contemporary issues and trends as they relate to advanced practice nursing, including professional role development, legal and ethical issues, healthcare policy, cultural diversity, and alternative healthcare practices.
- Nurs 593 Research Methodology and Application** 3  
 Comprehensive coverage of the research process including problem formulation, ethics, theoretical framework, research design, sampling, instrument evaluation, data collection, and statistical analyses are presented. Emphasis is on evaluating theoretical foundations and scientific merit of nursing research, and application of evidence to practice.
- Nurs 597 Systems Leadership in Advanced Practice Nursing** 3  
 In this course students explore the role of the advanced practice nurse as a leader within healthcare systems. Concepts and theories related to planning, organizational dynamics, healthcare financing, and healthcare regulation will be emphasized. Models of quality improvement, ethical decision-making, and patient safety initiatives are also addressed.
- Nurs 598 Executive Nurse Leadership Practicum** 1  
 The executive nurse leadership practicum will be individually tailored to meet each student's career goals. The setting may vary per the student's interests and objectives. Throughout the course, the student is expected to synthesize management and leadership principles in the nurse executive role.