Doctor of Nursing Practice Student Handbook

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Doctor in Nursing Practice Program College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS)

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This document is intended to serve as a guide for students and faculty of the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi College of Nursing and Health Sciences DNP program. It is a dynamic document that will be updated as appropriate for the evolution of the program.

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A. Program Overview

- The purpose of the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi DNP program is to provide master' degreed nurses with advanced preparation that will lead to the acquisition of knowledge and skills essential for reducing the incidence and impact of preventable disease and injury within their communities, improving administration of delivery systems, policymaking, and design or expansion of healthcare programs. The A&M University-Corpus Christi College of Nursing and Health Sciences' (CONHS) extensive network of healthcare providers, agencies, and veteran's services provides rich practice experiences to enhance the DNP student's knowledge and skills. These skills are essential in the development of experts responsible for translating evidence to practice.
- The curriculum has been designed to meet the diverse needs of the nursing community in South Texas. Emphasis is placed on preparing experts to facilitate quality health care delivery within multicultural communities. The geographic region served by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi provides numerous opportunities to examine the unique health needs of Hispanic and other cultures. Diverse needs of the community in South Texas will be met within the design of the DNP curriculum. The knowledge acquired through program courses and the implementation of the DNP project is transferable to a variety of settings and provides a foundation for nursing practice at the highest level.

B. DNP Program Student Learning Outcomes:

- Course activities, practice experiences and student-directed learning are expected to support each student's development of competencies required for practice as clinical and system leaders in diverse healthcare organizations. After completion of the program students are expected to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:
- Integrate nursing science knowledge from the biophysical, psychosocial,

analytical, and organizational sciences and ethics as the basis for practice.

- Provide culturally relevant health promotion and disease prevention initiatives based on epidemiological, bio-statistical, environmental, and other scientific evidence for diverse populations
- Demonstrate visionary organizational leadership by designing and implementing efficient, effective practice and policy models
- Apply advanced levels of clinical scholarship, systems thinking and analytical methods in evidence-based management and practice.
- Translate and disseminate knowledge to transform management and practice.
- Leverage information systems and patient care technology for the improvement and transformation of health care.
- Analyze, develop, and advocate for healthcare policies to improve healthcare systems across diverse constituencies.
- Collaborate inter-professionally to improve patient and population outcomes through practice, education, and leadership.
  - These outcomes are consistent with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Practice Nursing.

V. Application requirements for DNP Students

- Students are required upon admission to the program to submit documents confirming their licensure and compliance with Texas Administrative Code requirements for students enrolled in health profession programs.
- Nursing License. Students must provide evidence they hold a current unencumbered license to practice nursing in the state of Texas throughout the program. The evidence shall be submitted to the CONHS through the student's account in the data repository system maintained by the College. Students should upload a copy of the Texas Board of Nursing license verification document available through the Texas Board of Nursing. The period covered by the license must be included on the document provided to the College. Students should contact the CONHS Data Manager for additional information about these requirements.
- Prerequisite Courses. All DNP students are required to have successfully completed a graduate level research course as well as a graduate-level inferential statistics course. The statistics course can be completed prior to admission OR before completing 18 semester hours of DNP course work. Students are responsible to document completion of these courses via a transcript that is submitted to the Graduate Nursing Academic Advisor. Credit earned for the research or inferential statistics courses does not count for credit in the DNP program.
- Immunization Requirements. The Texas Department of State Health Services has specific immunization requirements for students enrolled in

health profession programs, CONHS follows the: [Texas Administrative Code](#), Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 97, Subchapter B, Rule 97.64 and Rule 97.65 [Texas Education Code](#) in allowing for exceptions to the immunization requirements. Some agencies where students may choose to complete practice experiences may have stricter requirements than the state minimum standards. Students will have to meet agency requirements to gain access to these agencies. Students are expected to provide evidence they have met the requirements for immunizations by uploading relevant documents to their account in the data repository maintained by the College. The data repository includes automated email messages to notify students when their immunizations have expired. Students must update immunizations while enrolled in the program as needed. Students should contact the CONHS Data Manager for additional information about these requirements.

- CPR Certification. Students must hold current American Heart Association CPR Type C certification or Red Cross Healthcare Provider CPR A copy of the student's current American Heart Association Health Care Providers card is required annually
- Drug Screen Results. Students must complete a 10 panel non-chain of custody urine drug screen upon admission to the DNP program. The results of the screen must be submitted to the CONHS through the data repository maintained by the CONHS. Some agencies may require additional drug screens.
- Student criminal background checks. Students are required to complete a criminal background check after admission to the program. Generally, the background check is completed within the first semester of the program to meet the admission requirement. Occasionally an agency will require students complete another background check if the time between admission and a practice experience within the agency exceeds their time for background checks. The additional background check will be a condition of the student's access to the agency and cannot be waived by the College.
- Professional Liability Insurance: Students are required to purchase professional liability coverage through the University. Fees for this coverage are included in the fees paid at the time of registration at the beginning of each academic year.

VI. <u>Academic Advising for DNP Students</u>

- Academic advisement for students enrolled in the nursing programs at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is provided by the Graduate Nursing Student Academic Advisor, DNP Chair, DNP Program Coordinator, and the Associate Dean of Academic Programs.
- Each student is responsible for awareness and successful completion of all

degree requirements. The following individuals will facilitate student progress in accomplishing the DNP program student learning outcomes.

1. *Graduate Nursing Student Academic Advisor*
   - The advisor will assist students with class registration issues, course sequencing, graduation procedures, academic progression, navigating College of Graduate Studies' procedures and utilizing existing university facilities, such as financial aid.

   - Each DNP student is responsible to meet or hold a phone conference with the Graduate Nursing Academic Advisor prior to or during each registration period. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the student of current offerings in the nursing program and to review the student's progress in the degree plan.
   - Students should consult the Graduate Nursing Academic Advisor when events affect their ability to complete courses, progress through the program or interfere with registration.
   - The Academic Advisor performs course inventories before graduation and students should be guided by this review of graduation requirements.

2. *DNP Chair*
   - The DNP Coordinator assigns each student a DNP Chair during the first semester of the DNP program. The DNP Chair is a full time, TAMUCC tenure-track faculty member who is considered an expert in the student's area of scholarly effort (or will support the student in finding such an expert) and will remain an advisor to the student through graduation unless a change is sought by the student or is necessary due to a change in faculty circumstances.
   - Advising responsibilities for the DNP Chair include:
   - Assisting students in planning their course of study, selecting courses congruent with their nursing degree plan and career goals, and monitoring successful completion of the DNP Program and Project.
   - Overseeing and approving accurate completion of Typhon clinical hours and portfolio by the student.

3. *DNP Program Coordinator*
   - The DNP Program Coordinator is entrusted with the overall leadership of the DNP program. This individual is responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of the DNP program, including curriculum, clinical experience oversight, and compliance with national accreditation and certification standards. The DNP Program Coordinator is responsible for administering the policies related to the DNP program and supporting students as they progress through the program.

4. *Associate Dean of Academic Programs*
- The Associate Dean of Academic Programs is administratively responsible for ensuring the highest quality of academic programs and student services and will support students to foster an environment that endorses student achievement.
- Students should seek assistance from course faculty as soon as they determine they are having difficulties in meeting course requirements, achieving course student learning outcomes, or meeting program student learning outcomes. Students are expected to contact course faculty, the Graduate Academic Advisor, the DNP Program Coordinator and Associate Dean of Academic Programs, in that order, in the event academic difficulties occur that may impact program progression.

VII. <u>Degree Requirements</u>

A. <u>DNP Tracks</u>
- The DNP Program includes two specialty tracks: (1) the Nurse Practitioner (NP) track; and (2) the Executive Leadership (ExL) track.
- The NP track curriculum is designed for students who have earned their Master of Science Degree in Nursing and hold a current unencumbered license with authority to practice as a Nurse Practitioner in the state of Texas, and national certification as a nurse practitioner. Students are assumed to have the knowledge and experience used in advanced nursing practice as the underlying foundation for further learning.
- The ExL track curriculum is designed for students who have earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree and who hold a current unencumbered license with authority to practice as a registered nurse in the state of Texas. Equivalent degrees include Master of Business Administration, Master of Healthcare Administration, or Master of Public Administration.

VIII. <u>Exit Requirements</u>
- The DNP curriculum is 40 semester credit hours. Course activities are both didactic and experiential. The didactic component of courses is delivered through the web-based, learning management system (LMS) at TAMUCC.

A. <u>Graduation</u>
- A DNP student may receive a degree upon satisfying the requirements of the catalog under which the student enrolled in the program, provided the catalog is no more than seven years old when the degree is conferred, and the University still offers programs and required curriculum described in that catalog. A student may petition to graduate under a subsequent catalog under which credit was earned because of a preference to meet newer degree

requirements. DNP students have a maximum of seven years to complete the program, from the first semester start date.

- Students intending to have a degree conferred must notify their academic advisor.
- Students who plan to participate in a graduation exercise and/or receive a diploma must complete an application for graduation by the deadline indicated in the Academic Calendar.
- An application for graduation must be obtained and processed through the student's academic advisor. Students must also complete a Doctoral Student Checklist, completing all requirements by the provided deadline, specific to DNP students, prior to graduation. [Doctoral Student Checklist DNP](#)
- Students participating in the graduation exercise will also be required to obtain an appropriate cap and gown. The application for graduation is not transferable to a subsequent semester. If a student does not graduate, the application will be canceled. A new application must be obtained and processed through the student's academic advisor.
- Graduation requirements include the satisfactory completion of:
- All courses (with a final grade of B or better). Courses not passed with at least a B may result in an alternate degree plan and delay program completion.
- The design, implementation, and evaluation of a DNP project.
- Students may need to retake NURS 6311 or NURS 6395 to complete project report requirements.
- The preparation of a professional portfolio documenting a total of 1000 hours in post-baccalaureate practice experiences. (The practice experience hours may include up to 500 clinical hours completed in a student's accredited MSN program).
- Students may need to retake NURS 6395 to complete practice hour requirements.
- If any of the above criteria are not met, students should meet with their DNP Chair to discuss options.

B. **<u>DNP Project</u>**

- Students must complete a DNP Project to meet program requirements. The DNP Project is used to demonstrate the student's ability to translate scientific evidence for clinical practice. Each student is expected to identify a potential change in practice that targets a practice or health problem not satisfactorily managed through current standards of care or healthcare system organization. The DNP Project requires the student design, implement, and evaluate the effect of the change in practice on patients, patient populations, or health systems. Project outcomes should include improvement in quality and cost-effectiveness of care. The DNP Project Proposal Rubric can be used to guide the development of project proposal.

C. **Clinical Practice**
- Students enrolled in the DNP program are required to complete up to 1,000 hours of post- baccalaureate practice experiences (often classified as clinical practice) during the program (AACN DNP Essentials). A practice experience is an experiential learning activity completed under the guidance of content experts in a relevant setting through which the student acquires and applies knowledge, skills, and attitudes that expand a student's professional framework.

D. **DNP Portfolio**
- The DNP Portfolio is a compilation of practice experience details, artifacts and other evidence demonstrating the student's development of advanced competencies throughout the DNP program. No two portfolios will be identical because the documents representing each student's experience will vary depending on specific learning activities completed during the program. The complete portfolio must be created in the DNP clinical experiences log platform and with the DNP Project will represent evidence of program completion. The portfolio will be reviewed by the student's Practicum course faculty, the DNP Chair, and the DNP Program Coordinator.

IX. <u>Curriculum</u>

A. **Course Delivery**
- Courses are delivered in a sequence that promotes the student's development of skills in the design of health services not acquired through master-level nursing programs.
- Courses are arranged to support working registered nurses through a part-time program that can be completed in their home communities.
- Students will be required to travel to agencies they select for practice experiences.
- They may choose to meet faculty or other resources on the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi campus to facilitate their learning.
- Students will be expected to attend periodic events on campus. Students will be notified of dates of events requiring on campus presence at least one semester in advance. Students are expected to discuss barriers to participation in any of these events with the DNP Program Coordinator.

B. **Course Sequence**
- Students should consult the course faculty immediately when they encounter problems that may interfere with the successful completion of a course in any semester.
- To progress, students must meet prerequisites for individual courses. Course

prerequisites are based on sequencing of course content. Students who do not meet these requirements risk not successfully completing a course or slowing the degree progression.

- Courses will be taught once a calendar year so students should consult the DNP Program Coordinator if they are unable to follow the current degree plan. An alternate degree plan may be approved.
- Students can find course sequence in the Degree Planner for individual plans.

C. **Progression**

- Students are referred to the University Graduate Catalog and to course prerequisites to determine if they may progress in the degree, particularly after experiencing academic difficulty. Advice and counseling are discussed in Academic Advising section. Students who have failed or withdrawn from a course need to speak with the DNP Program Coordinator to determine their eligibility to progress further in the program.

X. <u>Ethical Standards</u>

A. <u>Standards for Student Behavior</u>

- The education of the students at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi College of Nursing and Health Sciences is based on the concept that integrity, a sense of responsibility and self-discipline are inherent to the profession of nursing. The responsibility of the individual student to sustain high ethical standards is parallel to the concept that the professional nurse must be accountable for professional standards in the practice of nursing (published in the Texas Administrative Code, Texas Board of Nursing, Standards of Nursing Practice, and amended November 15, 2007). The continuation and enhancement of ethical standards within the academic community and nursing profession are the individual responsibility of each student and faculty member. Mutual respect and trustworthiness between the faculty and students promotes optimal learning.

B. <u>Academic Honesty and Professional Integrity Policy</u>

- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi strives to protect its educational community and to maintain social discipline among its students and student organizations. The University endeavors to foster the development of students who are ethically sensitive and responsible community members. Since students serve as representatives of the A&M- Corpus Christi campus community, inappropriate behavior, whether occurring on or off campus, will be investigated and adjudicated in a manner pursuant with the institution's educational and community development goals. Consistent with this purpose, reasonable efforts will be made to foster the personal and social development of those students who are found responsible for violations of university regulations and local, state, or federal law. The Texas A&M University-

Corpus Christi. Student Code of Conduct is available on-line: http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/studentcofc.html.

- Honesty is defined as truthfulness and integrity. Academic dishonesty is broadly defined as an act that functions to give a student unfair scholastic advantage. More specifically academic dishonesty is presenting any one or all course assignments as the student's original work when it/they are not, unless indicated by documented approval of the professor or pre-approved group work assignments. Course assignments include but are not limited to examinations, written assignments, quizzes, research projects and oral presentations.
- Article III of the Student Code of Conduct addresses academic honesty. Specific violations of the Student Code of Conduct include, but are not limited to:
- University Catalog: Students are responsible for the policies contained within the catalog. The Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Catalog is available at: http://catalog.tamucc.edu/.
- University Student Handbook: The Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi Student Handbook is available at: http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/handbook.html
- College of Graduate Studies Doctoral Student Handbook: The Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi Doctoral Student Handbook is available from the College of Graduate Studies at: http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/current_students/assets/doctoral_handbook.pdf

C. **Academic Misconduct**

- Engaging in an act that violates the standards of the academic integrity policy as described in the Student Code of Conduct and Procedure for Academic Misconduct Cases. Any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct.
- Additionally, possessing, using, buying, stealing, transporting, selling, or soliciting in whole or in part items including, but not limited to the contents of an un-administered test, test key, homework solutions or possession at any time of current or previous test materials without the instructor's permission will be considered academic misconduct.

D. **Academic Integrity and Honesty**

- It is expected that University students will demonstrate a high level of maturity, self- direction, and ability to manage their own affairs. Students are viewed as individuals who possess the qualities of worth, dignity, and the capacity for self-direction in personal behavior. University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of

academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to a penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is intentionally, knowingly, or carelessly presenting the work of another as one's own). Please see the following sites for additional information:
- [University Student Handbook](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Cases](#)

E. **Cheating**
- Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise.

Examples:
- Copying from another student's paper or receiving unauthorized assistance during a quiz, test, or examination.
- Using books, notes or other devices (e.g., calculators, cell phones, or computers) when these are not authorized.
- The acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff.
- Unauthorized collaboration on exams.
- Selling, giving, or exchanging completed exams to a student who has not yet taken the test.

F. **Plagiarism**
- Intentionally and knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own except for information that is generally accepted as common knowledge.

Examples:
- Using another's work from print, web, or other sources without acknowledging the source.
- Quoting from a source without citation.
- Using facts, figures, graphs, charts, or information without acknowledgement of the source.
- Using a past assignment, the student has completed as a portion of a new assignments, without providing citation. Please note that without instructor permission this is also considered a multiple submission violation.

G. **Multiple Submissions**
- Submission of substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization from the instructors for which the student submits the work.

Examples:
- Submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without instructor permission.

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- Making minor revisions in a credited paper or report (including oral presentations) and submitting it again as if it were new work.

H. **Collusion**

- Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another individual in progressing forward on academic assignments.

Examples:
- Knowingly allowing another to copy from one's paper during an examination or test.
- Distributing test questions or substantive information about the material to be tested before a scheduled exercise.
- Deliberately furnishing false information regarding an academic integrity investigation.
- Working with another student on a take home test or homework assignments without permission from the instructor.
- Discussing the contents of a completed exam or other assignments with a student who will take the exam or complete the assignment in the future.

I. **Fabrication, Falsification, or Misrepresentation**

- Intentional altering or investing of any information or citation that is used in assessing academic work.

Examples:
- Inventing, counterfeiting, or omitting data and/or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- Falsely citing the source of information.
- Altering the record of or reporting false information about the practice experiences.
- Altering grade reports or other academic records.

J. **Professional Integrity**

- Students enrolled in the College of Nursing at Texas A&M University-CC are expected to demonstrate professional integrity in academic and practice areas. Professional conduct should be guided by the following: university, college of nursing, hospital, agency and community guidelines, rules, regulations, and laws related to behavior as determined by these entities.
- Conduct Guidelines. For specific University Code of Conduct,
- For the Texas Board of Nursing student conduct guidelines, see the Nurse Practice Act available and the guidelines for Unprofessional Conduct

K. **Violations of Professional Integrity**

- According to the College of Nursing, violations of professional integrity

(unprofessional conduct) include those identified by the University Student Code of Conduct, College of Nursing, and the assigned clinical area such as hospital, agency, and community.

XI. **DNP Program**

A. **Course Activities**

- Each DNP course can be accessed in a unique LMS shell through the A&M University-Corpus Christi link. Course materials are organized within the shell using the College of Nursing and Health Sciences template (syllabus, course schedule, course-specific lessons). Links to support services including the library, ODELT (Office of Distance & Educational Learning Technology) tutorials, and IT Help Desk are available in each shell. All course-related communication including documentation of grades, clarification of assignments, and discussions should occur in the course shell.
- Generally, in-person, face-to-face activities between faculty and classmates will not be required to complete course-specific assignments.
- Course work consists of a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities that support student learning. Faculty may use a variety of web-based technologies such as YouTube videos or WebEx group conferencing as well as the learning tools embedded in the learning management system (such as chats, discussions, assignment management) to support student learning.
- Students are expected to maintain access to the Internet so that they can regularly participate in class activities. The Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi IT Help Desk maintains student support services seven days a week and can be reached by email or phone. Students should contact the ITHelp services when they cannot access the course shell. Additionally, students should contact the course faculty as soon as possible when they have long-term problems that will interfere with their access to course materials through the LMS. Each course should present a class schedule, which will delineate deadlines for assignments and provide a framework for establishing a work plan to complete course requirements. Most courses include lessons presented through a text format. These lessons generally include references to material on sites outside of the course made available through links. The lessons supplement the required readings. Self-assessments are often used as activities for students to evaluate their understanding of the information covered in lessons.
- Most courses will include activities completed in practice settings through practice experiences. These activities provide appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate their ability to implement the principles covered in a course and complete the practice hours required for the program. Students are expected to complete course assignments in a timely manner.

B. **Written Assignment Requirements**
- Because this is a doctoral program, student performance will be assessed primarily through application activities that include the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions that support quality health care. All assignments submitted to faculty must be submitted in the current APA format unless specifically instructed for that assignment. Any deviation from this requirement will be explicitly stated in a course syllabus.
- Students are strongly advised to purchase a copy of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association and avoid relying only on electronic templates.
- Using only electronic aids for APA formatting may create problems because electronic templates do not always work correctly when documents are transmitted electronically. SQUIRE 2.0 (Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence) will be used to document the DNP Project. Students should become familiar with this framework as early in the program as possible.

C. **DNP Project**

- The DNP Project provides students opportunities to examine structures and processes encountered in clinical practice that interfere with the effectiveness of health services. Activities completed in courses should provide student insight into practice problems and stimulate the design of interventions that improve services through the application of research-based evidence to practice settings. Examples of potential DNP Projects translating research into practice application include but are not limited to:
- Quality improvement (care processes, patient outcomes).
- Implement and evaluate evidence-based practice guidelines.
- Analyze policy: develop, implement, evaluate, or revise policy.
- Design and use databases to retrieve information for decision making, planning, and/or evaluation.
- Conduct financial analyses to compare care models and potential cost savings, etc.
- Implement and evaluate innovative uses of technology to enhance/evaluate care.
- Design and evaluate new models of care.
- Design and evaluate programs.
- Provide leadership of inter-professional and or intra-professional collaborative projects to implement policy, evaluate care models, transitions, etc.
- Collaborate with researchers to answer clinical questions.
- Collaborate on legislative change using evidence.
- Work with lay and or professional coalitions to develop, implement or

evaluate health programs (such as health promotion and disease prevention programs for vulnerable patients, groups, or communities).

- Write the project as a guideline and use the GLIA Framework (Guideline Implementability Appraisal) have the guideline reviewed by experts; adds more rigor when students are not able to implement

- The student, with faculty support, is responsible for the selection of the DNP Project focus. Students are expected to focus their DNP Project on the health care issue or clinical problem identified in the application essay and admission interview or early in the program. These two processes are utilized to match the student, projected DNP Project, and CONHS faculty for the DNP program and project. Students will maintain communication with the CONHS faculty, DNP Chair and DNP Project Advisor as they complete the project. If required, the DNP Chair and Project Advisor will assist students in the rapid identification of an alternate topic. It is critical students establish the project focus early in the program as successful completion will likely require four of five program semesters. Throughout the DNP program, students will demonstrate expert nursing leadership behaviors and professional collaboration in completing the DNP Project. The culminating products include but are not limited to a DNP Project Report and Presentation and an activity through which the student disseminates the results of the DNP Project. See the DNP Organization in the LMS for .

- Students, in consultation with their Chair, are responsible for writing the DNP Project Proposal, preparing, and submitting IRB proposals as indicated, completing the DNP Project Report, and preparing a Project Executive Summary for the DNP Portfolio.

- [SQUIRE 2.0](#) (Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence) will be used to document the DNP Project. Students should become familiar with this framework as early in the program as possible.

D. **DNP Project Committee/Team**
- The DNP Project is directed by a DNP Team who works with the student to create relevant protocols that enhance the delivery of quality health services and improve health outcomes for diverse patient populations. The team consists of a minimum of three members, the DNP Chair, DNP Project Advisor or Content Expert, and the Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR). An additional member of the team, a Content Expert, is optional. Content Experts will obtain a Special Appointment to Graduate Faculty in the College of Graduate Studies for one year.

1. *DNP Chair*
- The DNP Coordinator assigns each student a DNP Chair at the time of admission to the DNP program. The DNP Chair is a full time, TAMUCC tenure-track faculty member who is considered an expert in the student's

area of scholarly effort (or will support the student in finding such an expert) and will remain an advisor to the student through graduation unless a change is sought by the student or is necessary due to a change in faculty circumstances.

- The DNP Chair not only assists the student as a primary academic advisor in completion of their program but also has the following responsibilities in assisting the student to complete the DNP project:
- Leading the DNP Team to guide the focus and methods of the DNP project from planning through evaluation.
- Assisting students to create Personal Practice Objectives (PPOs) to ensure clinical activities fulfill DNP Essentials.
- Overseeing and approving accurate completion of Typhon clinical hours and portfolio by the student.
- Communicating with the student's Preceptor or Facilitator to ensure student and project are progressing as expected and to troubleshoot problems.
- Working with the DNP Team to evaluate the proposal and the finished project.

2. *DNP Project Advisor or DNP Content Expert*

- Each student in collaboration wit their chair will choose either a DNP Project Advisor or DNP Content Expert.

- The DNP Project Advisor is a full time, TAMUCC tenure-track faculty member who will provide expertise as the student identifies experiences relevant to the DNP project. The Project Advisor will work with the student's Chair, as needed, to guide the focus and methods of the project and assist in evaluation of the proposal and finished project report. The Project Advisor should be an expert in the DNP Project area of focus and should assist the student and Chair as needed. Students must select their DNP Project Advisor in the third semester of their first program year.

- The DNP Content Advisor is a content expert who will support the completion of the DNP Project. This person is intended to provide specialized expertise to support students with content specific support, insights and/or networking opportunities. The Content Expert is not a TAMUCC Tenure Track faculty but must hold a doctoral degree and work within the guidelines of the TAMUCC CONHS DNP program. The DNP Coordinator/Chair must request "Special Appointment to Graduate Faculty" for this individual through the College of Graduate Studies. Once the Content Expert has obtained graduate faculty status, he/she will participate in evaluation of the student's final proposal and project report. This member of

the student's DNP team must be selected by the end of the third semester of the first program year.

5. *Graduate Faculty Representative*
   - The Dean of the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) will assign a full-time, tenure track TAMUCC faculty member from outside the CONHS to serve as the Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) on the student's project team. The GFR will share in the DNP Committee's responsibility to assist in guiding the student as they complete their DNP project and pursue the degree. The primary role of the GFR however, is as a representative of the Graduate Faculty, to serve the interests of both the student and the University, according to the policies of the Graduate Faculty/University to ensure that the standards established for a doctoral degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi are maintained. Upon completion of the student's final DNP project presentation and final report evaluation, the GFR will submit a Graduate Faculty Representative Report (found on the College of Graduate Studies Doctoral Forms website) to the Graduate Dean commenting on the process. In doing so, the GFR affirms that the University process has appropriate/sensible rigor and integrity. The GFR will be assigned to the DNP Team during Fall 2 semester.

E. **DNP Practice Experiences**
   - DNP students are required to obtain the hours verification form from their respective MSN program. This form is a formal record of the clinical hours obtained in the student's master's program. Up to 500 hours may be applied to the DNP Practice experience requirement of 1000 hours.
   - Students who come to the program with less than 500 practice hours from their MSN should meet with their DNP Chair and the DNP Program Coordinator to determine a plan for successfully completing the required 1,000 practice hours. Refer to the Clinical Practice Hours Tool for examples of additional practice hours.
   - Practice experiences should be completed under the guidance of the student's DNP Chair and facilitator. Facilitators are professionals who provide access to sites and resources but do not provide supervision for student practice. Students should identify facilitators in their community who will help them access resources, key stakeholders, and opportunities in which the student can complete the work relevant to their DNP project and program objectives
   - Each semester, prior to initiating each practice experience, students are expected to review the program student learning outcomes they plan to achieve from the practice experience. The student should consult their DNP Chair when delineating these outcomes.
   - The DNP Chair will consult with course-specific faculty when the

experiences are directly related to a course.

- The DNP Chair (in consultation with the DNP Project Advisor, as needed) must approve all practice experiences.
- Practice experiences may be completed in the student's practice site if the experience provides an opportunity to achieve learning objectives and avoids conflict of interest with the employer. Students completing hours in their workplace should work closely with their DNP Chair and employer so work hours can be delineated from practice hours.
- Students will record and describe all time spent in clinical practice experiences and document elements relevant to program completion in the clinical experience platform used at TAMUCC. The student is responsible for a one-time fee to create an account that will be used throughout the DNP program. The information students enter this account will be used to create their Student Portfolio.
- Students are responsible for documenting activities completed in every practice experience in clinical experience platform using the template provided and housed in the DNP Organization site in the LMS. These practice experiences can be direct or indirect patient care events, observational experiences, interviews, relevant community events, minutes/agendas from professional meetings, or any other activity that contributes to the students understanding of DNP practice. The record should contain the specific program student learning outcomes, DNP essentials and/or AONL and NONPH competencies which students delineated for the experience and explanations as to how they demonstrated their achievement of those outcomes through experiential activities.
- Students should use the Clinic Practice Hours Tool, which can be found in the DNP Student and Chair Guide posted on the DNP Organization Site in the LMS, a benchmark to evaluate their progress with practice experience hours to conclude with 1000 practice hours. Hours built into the program are listed per semester and course and in running total through progression of the program. Students requiring additional Leadership Hours should log those in the clinical experience platform as Leadership Hours. MSN hours and Leadership Hours should not exceed 500 hours.
- Practice experiences can be
- Synthesis experiences completed within courses that contribute (a) to meeting the DNP Essentials and (b) to the design of the DNP project and contribute to a student's further development as an expert.
- Immersion experiences in which students engage in activities specific to patient populations relevant to their project.
- Behavioral Expectations for Practice Experiences
- Students engaged in practice experiences are expected to:
- Maintain necessary RN licensure, ACLS, BCLS or PALS certification for completion of clinical experiences and all immunization and testing

requirements.
- Follow program requirements for establishing partnerships with clinical agencies that support learning experiences.
- Maintain a professional appearance when engaged in practice experiences. Professional appearance includes avoiding extremes in style of clothing and no exposed tattoos or body piercings. Wear a nametag that indicates student is acting in the role of a Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Doctor of Nursing Practice student.
  - Nametags may be obtained at DNP Student Orientation, at any local office supply store or online, and should include the student's name, credentials, and identify them as a TAMUCC CONHS DNP Student
  - Communicate regularly with individuals directly involved in practice experiences. These individuals include course faculty, DNP Chair, preceptor or facilitator and any other relevant member of the team.
  - Record required information in the DNP practice experience log.

F. **Institutional Review Board**
  - Students are expected to protect human participants and disseminate the results of their DNP Project through manuscript submission or professional presentations. Therefore, students, in consultation with their DNP Chair, should plan early submission of their project protocol to the TAMUCC Institutional Review Board (IRB). During the DNP Proposal course, the instructor will familiarize students in how to complete the "Not Human Subjects Research Request" form located on the TAMUCC Research Compliance website. The form includes completion of a Quality Improvement Project Template summarizing the project protocol. Students will complete these forms, in consultation with their DNP Chair, who will be listed as the "Faculty Lead." Within the IRB, the protocol will be listed under the DNP Chair's name and the student's name. When completed and approved by the DNP Proposal Course faculty and the DNP Chair, the forms are to be submitted to irb@tamucc.edu. The IRB protocol must be approved before a project involving human subjects can be implemented. The agency in which you are completing the project may also require that its IRB review the protocol prior to implementation.

G. **Manuscript Author Guidelines**
  - Students who choose to disseminate their work through manuscript publication submission or oral/poster presentation at a professional conference are encouraged to do so and must follow the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors authorship guidelines.

H. **Proctored Test Procedure**
  - The A&M University-Corpus Christi College of Nursing and Health Sciences

strives to create an environment that supports the University standards for academic integrity. The College administers tests in the DNP program either at secure testing sites or using specific exam software (e.g., Examity), dependent on the program's choice. If a testing site is used, students can select a test site near their home from a list of approved sites: any testing fees (for either the testing site or the testing software) will be paid by the student directly to the test site or the software administrator.

- To facilitate the use of test sites, course faculty work together to establish a test schedule for the academic semester. Students are expected to adjust their work schedules so that they can take the test when it is scheduled. Each course syllabus will outline the testing procedure in detail and delineate the class policy for rescheduling tests. Each faculty member has discretion to establish the course policy for rescheduling test dates.

I. **Curricular Changes**
- The DNP curriculum was designed to support student acquisition of principles and competencies essential to the professional practice at its highest level. The CONHS reserves the right to modify the curriculum when professional standards for doctoral education in nursing indicate a change is needed. The Associate Dean of Academic Programs, working with the DNP Program Coordinator, will notify students of impending changes as soon as possible.

J. **Student Records**
- Student records are maintained by the Academic Advisor in the College. The Open Record Policy is followed, and students can review their own records. Records must remain in the CONHS for the review. They cannot be taken outside the College.
- All nursing students are responsible for updating official changes in names and contact information (mailing address, phone number, email address) in the appropriate student database. They are also responsible for notifying the Graduate Nursing Academic Advisor, College of Graduate Studies and Registrar's of these changes. Students may not receive important information that affects progression through the program or eligibility for graduation if contact information is not current.

K. **Grading Scale**
- The CONHS letter grading scales for all programs consist of the following:
- A - 90 to 100
- B - 83 to 89
- C - 75 to 82
- D - 74 to 67
- F- 66 and Below

L. **College of Nursing and Health Sciences Student Grade Appeal Process**

- The College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS) adheres to the [University's Student Grade Appeal Procedure](#) found in Procedure Section 13.02.99.c0.03.

M. **Progression, Retention, and Dismissal**

- Each semester, student progression is evaluated by the DNP Chair based on the program milestones. Holds may be placed by the DNP Coordinator to ensure compliance with program milestones.
- All students must meet the standards for minimal performance and progression established by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Office of Graduate Studies.
- If a student earns a grade of C, D, F, or W, the student:
- Must repeat a course in which a grade of C or lower or W (Withdrawal) was earned.
- May be placed on scholastic probation if the GPA falls below 3.0 because of the C, D, F, or W.
- Will be removed from scholastic probation in accordance with university policy. See Scholastic Probation and Enforced Withdrawal in the graduate catalog.
- May not progress to courses for which that course is a prerequisite when a grade of C, D, F, W, or I (Incomplete) was earned.
- If the student earns a second C or below in the program, the student cannot progress further and is required to withdraw from the program even when the GPA does not fall below 3.0.
- The student cannot progress to next course after withdrawing from two courses in the program unless approved by the APG Committee. A plan to complete the program must be submitted to the Committee before a progression decision can be made. Admission to courses that need to be completed will depend on space availability.
- The student may be dismissed from the program without previous warning for unsafe and/or unprofessional behavior identified by college administrators and faculty. The conduct of nursing students should meet ethical standards as defined by the [American Nurses Association (ANA) in the Code of Ethics.](#) Personal integrity is reflected in professional judgments. Consequently, the College reserves the right to dismiss students from the program for unprofessional or unsafe behavior. See College of Nursing and Health Sciences Student Handbook for examples.
- Please refer to the [University Policy Procedure Section 13.02.99.c0.03](#) on the University website for general assumptions, the strict timeline that must be followed and the overall student appeals process.
- The CONHS faculty in the classroom environment and clinical area should

encourage discussion, inquiry, and expression. Student performance, however, should be evaluated solely on an academic basis and the Standards of Care upheld in the rules and regulations of the Texas Board of Nursing.

- Faculty are responsible for documenting objectives in the syllabus, setting standards for each course, and making clear the means of evaluation for purposes of grading students. Students are responsible for class attendance and/or online participation, for learning the content of any course of study and for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled. Students who violate academic integrity and regulations (see current University Catalog and Student Handbook) or demonstrate disruptive behavior will be held accountable by faculty and may have their grades adjusted accordingly.
- Student Grade Appeal Procedure does not apply to grades that may be affected by academic misconduct or dishonesty cases. Academic misconduct is defined in the University Student Handbook Article III, Section I, the procedure is outlined in University Procedure 13.02.99.c0.04.
- The University and the CONHS has the duty and corollary disciplinary power to maintain standards of scholarship and conduct for students who attend classes. Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation.
- A student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus—equitable evaluation procedures or appropriate grading—may appeal the final grade given in the course.
- If an appeal is not processed in a timely manner in accordance with the procedures, the student may proceed to the next level. If the student does not follow the timeline for the appeal, the grade appeal will be dismissed by the CONHS. This dismissal report will be documented in the student's record and sent to the Provost of the University.
  - Grade Appeal Procedure and Timeline:
- The student will present the matter of grievance, in writing, to the faculty through the appropriate Department Chair using the Student Grade Appeal Packet.
- The College of Nursing and Health Sciences will maintain a log providing a record of all grade appeals. The CONHS will collect and maintain all files documenting the individual appeals. These records will be housed in the Dean's suite and will be retained for a period consistent with the Texas A&M System Records Retention Policy. Logs and records will be available upon request to demonstrate compliance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation standards.

N. **Social Media**

- Social media has become very popular in the public's life to communicate. The student is referred to the [National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) White Paper on Social Media 2011](#) for guidance in the use of social media in nursing. The DNP student will be held accountable to professional standards related to confidentiality in all activities related to program requirements.

O. **Unacceptable Behavior**
- The following are considered unacceptable behaviors:
- Falsification of Data - Dishonesty in reporting results, ranging from sheer fabrication of data, improper adjustment of results and gross negligence in collecting and analyzing data, to selective reporting or omission of conflicting data for deceptive purposes.
- Aiding and Abetting Dishonesty - Providing material, information, or assistance to another person with the knowledge or reasonable expectation that the material, information, or assistance will be used to commit an act that would be prohibited by this Code or that is prohibited by law or another applicable code of conduct.
- Unsafe Practice: Any action or inaction on the part of the student, which threatens the client's physical well-being or fails to protect self and others from harm.
- Failure to Communicate: Any action or inaction on the part of the student in which communication patterns threaten the emotional well-being of the client. This area of concern includes but is not limited to the following omissions or commissions of behavior that result in failure to:
  - Report changes in clients' conditions.
  - Document findings.
  - Use verbal and nonverbal communication that demonstrates respect, understanding, and caring.
  - Avoid abusive, threatening, patronizing, or familiar communication patterns.
  - Maintain client confidentiality.
  - Verify written procedure(s) to clients.

P. **Nurse-Patient Relationships**
- The students at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi are expected to exhibit behavior appropriate to the profession of nursing. Students must assume personal responsibility for being in physical and mental condition to give safe nursing care and for the knowledge and skills necessary to give this care. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - To provide nursing care in a predictably unsafe or harmful manner.
  - To disrespect the privacy of a client.
  - To falsify patient records or fabricate patient experiences.

- To fail to report omission of, or error in, treatments or medications.

Q. **Safety Precautions**

- Fundamental Principles of Infection Prevention as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (cdc.gov) should be used consistently for ALL patients by students and health care services personnel in various settings, including laboratory courses requiring exposure to blood using disposable equipment. Standard Precautions represent the minimum infection prevention measures that apply to all patient care, regardless of suspected or confirmed infection status of the patient, in any setting where healthcare is delivered. These evidence-based practices are designed to both protect healthcare personnel and prevent the spread of infections among patients. Standard Precautions replaces earlier guidance relating to Universal Precautions and Body Substance Isolation.
- Standard Precautions include:
- Hand hygiene - Appropriate hand hygiene shall be performed before and after examining each patient. Hands and other skin surfaces shall be washed immediately and thoroughly if contaminated with blood or other body fluids. Hands shall be washed after gloves are removed.
- Use of personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, gowns, facemasks), depending on the anticipated exposure - All health-care workers shall routinely use appropriate barrier precaution to prevent skin and mucous-membrane exposure when contact with blood or other body fluids or any person is anticipated. Gloves shall be worn for touching blood and bloody fluids, mucous membranes, or non- intact skin of all persons, handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or bloody fluids, and for performing venipuncture and other vascular access procedures. Gloves shall be changed after contact with each patient.
- Masks and protective eyewear or face shields shall be worn during procedures that are likely to generate droplets of blood or other body fluids to prevent exposure of mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Gown or aprons shall be worn during procedures that are likely to generate splashes of blood or other body fluids.
- Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette - To prevent contact with mouth and oral secretions during patient resuscitation health care workers should use mouthpiece, resuscitation bag, and other ventilation devices to prevent contact with mouth and oral secretions.
- All healthcare workers shall take precautions to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels, and other sharp instruments; during disposal of used needles; and when handling sharp instruments after procedures. To prevent needle-stick injuries, used needles shall not be recapped, purposely bent, or broken by hand, removed from disposable syringes, or otherwise manipulated by hand. After they are used, disposable syringes and needles, scalpel blades, and other sharp items shall be placed in puncture-resistant containers for

disposal; the puncture-resistant containers shall be located as close as practical to the use area.

- Health-care workers who have exudative lesions or weeping dermatitis should refrain from all direct patient care and from handling patient-care equipment until the condition resolves. Students should discuss this situation with their preceptors and course faculty so arrangements can be made to make up time missed in the experience. Students must notify their preceptors when they are cannot meet scheduled appointments.

R. **Accreditation**
- The BSN, MSN, post-graduate APRN certificate, and DNP at Texas A&M-Corpus
- The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530
Washington, DC 20036-1120
Phone: (202) 887-6791
Fax: (202) 887-8476
- Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi is accredited by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
- The CONHS nursing programs are approved by the Texas Board of Nursing
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite #3-460, Austin, TX 78701-3944
  Phone: (512) 305-7400
    Fax: (512) 305-7401

S. **DNP Student Resources**

1. *Nursing Learning Resource Center:*
   - The Nursing Learning Resource Center (NLRC) is composed of various rooms available to students. These are located on the second floor of Island Hall. The hours of availability are posted each semester. Staff available to assist you includes a Lab Manager/Coordinator and Research/Computer Graduate Students.
   - Students enrolled in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program may want to use the NLRC resources to implement their DNP project. The Project advisor will be able to assess the extent to which the Resource Center may fit the Project design and then guide the student in accessing the NLRC resources.

2. *DynaMed Plus:*
   - A clinical reference tool that clinicians go to for answers to clinical questions. Content is written by a world-class team of physicians and researchers who synthesize the evidence and provide objective analysis. DynaMed Plus topics are based on clinical evidence and the content is updated multiple times each day to ensure clinicians have the information they need to make decisions at

the point of care. It includes robust features like overviews and recommendations, graphics and images, precise search results every time, expert reviewers, specialty content and mobile access.

3. *Graduate Nursing Research Lab:*
   - The CONHS created a Nursing Research Lab to support scholarship activities conducted by faculty and doctoral students. Students may have access to space when it is available.

T. **Student and Professional Organizations Student Organizations**
   - Sigma Theta Tau International/Eta Omicron Chapter at TAMU-CC. The Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing is the only international honor society for nursing and is a member of the Association of College Honor Societies. The society recognizes achievement of superior quality, fosters high professional standards, encourages creative work, and recognizes the development of leadership qualities. The organization strengthens the individual's commitment to the ideals and purposes of professional nursing. Sigma Theta Tau is a scholarly professional nursing that promotes the best in nursing.
   - TAMUCC students who meet the eligibility criteria for membership as outlined in Sigma Theta Tau are eligible to join induction into Eta Omicron, TAMUCC's founding chapter. Eligible students receive invitations to join the chapter in their final semester via their Islander email account. A formal induction ceremony is held each spring and fall. You can receive updates about TAMUCC's Eta Omicron chapter from the chapter's Facebook page which is updated often with upcoming events and pictures from ceremonies and contact information.
   - Phi Kappa Phi. The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi—the nation's oldest all-discipline honor society — established its Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi chapter in 2014. The A&M University–Corpus Christi chapter is the 328th chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, which was founded in 1897 at the University of Maine. Graduate Students who meet the eligibility criteria will be invited by the chapter to join Phi Kappa Phi (no nomination letters needed). Graduate students must have completed 18 credit hours and rank in the top 10% of their class.

U. **Professional Organizations**

   - [Texas Nurses Association (TNA).](#) TNA along with the ANA empowers nurses to advance the profession. TNA speaks out on crucial nursing issues such as workplace advocacy. Membership in TNA and ANA enables you to become a full participant in defining your profession now and into the future. Many of TNA's activities occur at the local — or district — level.
   - [American Nurses Association (ANA).](#) The American Nurses Association

(ANA) is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.4 million registered nurses. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, bolstering the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating on health care issues that affect nurses and the public. ANA is at the forefront of improving the quality of health care for all.

- [Texas Nurse Practitioners (TNP).](#) The primary mission of TNP is to serve as a voice of Texas Nurse Practitioners dedicated to improving patient access to quality health care. A registered nurse currently enrolled in the first year of a NP program is eligible for free membership. Free Student Members may have a voice in discussions and may serve as non-elected committee chairs or members but may not vote or serve as officers. Free Membership is for one year and can be renewed at the student membership rate after the first year. Students are encouraged to investigate and/or join other affiliates within their local communities. Please refer to the listing of affiliates in your area of the state.
- The American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). The AANP is the national organization for nurse practitioners. Specific information for post-master's student membership is also available and may be of particular interest to you if you are an NP in TAMUCC's DNP program.
- American Organization of Nurse Leaders (AONL). The American Organization of Nurse Leaders provides leadership, professional development, advocacy, and research to advance nursing practice and patient care, promote nursing leadership excellence and shape public policy for health care nationwide. AONL is a subsidiary of the [American Hospital Association](#)
- [National League for Nursing](#) For more than 100 years the NLN has been the premier organization for nurse faculty, schools of nursing, and leaders in nursing education. Currently the NLN is comprised of 40,000 individual and 1,200 institutional members representing all types of nursing programs from LPN/LVN through doctorate education.
- [American Association of Colleges of Nursing](#) (AACN). AACN is the national voice for baccalaureate and graduate nursing education. AACN works to establish quality standards for nursing education; assists schools in implementing those standards; influences the nursing profession to improve health care; and promotes public support for professional nursing education, research, and practice.
- [American Colleges of Healthcare Executives](#). The American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) is an international association of healthcare executives often including high-level hospital administrators, CEOs, nursing executives, etc. Multiple local chapters exist throughout Texas.

V. **DNP LMS Organization Site**

- Current DNP User Guides, Documents, Tools and Resources housed in the DNP Organization [DNP Organization Bb](#)
- This section of the handbook includes standardized information about rules and policies pertaining to graduate education at Texas A&M University. It is not intended to be comprehensive. You are strongly encouraged to read the sections of the catalog pertaining to graduate students, which will provide more detail and additional topics that may impact you. You will also find information about your program.

W. **Graduate Admissions**
- To be admitted to a program of graduate study, an applicant must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or an equivalent foreign institution. *(Note: The requirement to hold a bachelor's degree does not apply to students enrolling in the RN-MSN option in nursing.)* Decisions concerning admission to graduate study are based on all admission criteria. To be considered for a graduate program, a minimum last 60-hour GPA of 2.5 is required. Some programs may have higher GPA requirements; review specific program information in the graduate catalog or elsewhere in this handbook. All applications must be made via the following web site: http://gradschool.tamucc.edu. For complete information, see the Catalog, [Graduate Admissions section.](#)
- [Graduate](#) students should be aware of their enrollment status, as it may impact financial aid, veteran's benefits, or other important aspects of graduate life. In addition, international students have specific requirements about enrollment status. Enrollment status for graduate students is as follows:
- Full-time graduate student
- Fall or spring term = 9 hours
- Combined summer terms = 6 hours
- Three-quarter-time graduate student
- Fall or spring term = 7 hours
- Combined summer terms = 5 hours
- Half-time graduate student:
- Fall or spring term = 5 hours
- Combined summer terms = 3 hours

X. **Continuous Enrollment**
- Unless on an approved leave of absence (see below), students in terminal degree programs must be enrolled continuously for at least 3 semester credit hours each fall and spring semester and pay designated tuition and fees. Individual programs may have additional credit hour requirements or may require students to continuously register in courses for a minimum of two consecutive terms which may include summer. See specific program information in the graduate catalog or elsewhere in this handbook for

additional requirements for your program. Students should be aware that unapproved leaves in a fall or spring semester may result in the student being required to re-apply to their program.

Y. **Leave of Absence**
- Students experiencing life changing or catastrophic events should consult with their program coordinator and/or department chair and request a Leave of Absence in writing from the College of Graduate Studies using the Request for Leave of Absence form. A student who is in good standing may petition for a leave of absence of no more than two full academic terms. The maximum number of leave of absence requests permitted in a program is two. A request for a leave of absence requires approval in advance by the faculty advisor, Program Coordinator, College Dean, and Graduate Dean. If the Graduate Dean approves the petition, the registration requirement is set aside during the period of the leave. Students should be aware that leaves of absences require suspension of all activities associated pursuit of the degree. See the catalog for more information.

Z. **Maximum Course Load**
- Graduate students may not register for more than 12 hours in a regular semester, 6 hours in a single session of summer school, or 12 hours in the combined summer session (not including Maymester) without the approval of the appropriate college dean. See the Maximum Course Load section in the catalog.

AA. **Repetition of a Course**
- There are specific policies about repeating courses for higher grades, including the provision that graduate students may retake a maximum of two courses during graduate study at the University. Each course may be repeated only once. Some courses may be repeated for multiple credit if those courses are so designated in the course description and approved by the faculty or program advisor as designated by their college. Complete catalog information may be found in the Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog.

BB. **Time Limit to Degree**
- The requirements for the DNP degree at Texas A&M University must be completed within seven years subsequent to admission to the program. The seven-year period begins the first semester of enrollment and is calculated from the date of degree conferral.

CC. **Revalidation of Courses Beyond Degree Time Limit**

- In order to revalidate dated courses, students should carefully attend information in the catalog (see Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog. Revalidation requests should be made using the Revalidation Request Form.
- If your program has shorter time-to-degree limits, it may impact recency of credit and other timelines. See program information in this handbook or seek information from your Program Coordinator.
- Academic Requirements for Graduate Work
- *Good Standing.* Graduate Students, including degree-seeking, certificate-seeking, and non-degree-seeking students are considered in "good academic standing" if they maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on all graduate course work and earn a grade of S (Satisfactory), IP (In Progress, or CR (Credit) on all course work that does not affect GPA. A higher GPA may be required by some programs. In such cases, the higher standard will be substituted for 3.0 in all other matters related to good academic standing. A complete discussion of academic requirements including but not limited to scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal may be found in the Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog. For information regarding the effect of scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal, see the Financial Assistance Suspension Policy in the Tuition, Fees, & Financial Assistance section of the catalog.

DD. Texas 99 Hour Rule (concerns doctoral hours)

- The Texas State Legislator enacted a rule that provides that students at all state universities with over 99 doctoral hours may be subject to the payment of nonresident tuition. A student will generally be able to study at TAMU-CC full-time for five complete academic years, including summers, before being affected by the 99-hour rule. For students staying beyond five years, in several cases there is still the possibility of a programmatic or individual exemption from the rule. For more information, contact your Program Coordinator.

EE. Academic Integrity

- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, which include but are not limited to illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, plagiarism, or collusion in any of these behaviors. All students should familiarize themselves with the full Academic Integrity Policy as well as the processes and procedures used to address violations thereof. You can find additional information in the Academic Integrity section of the catalog. Students can also access University Rules and Procedures 13.02.99.C0.04: Student

Academic Misconduct Cases.

FF. **Additional Information**
- Information, policies, and procedures about tuition, fees, financial assistance, scholarships, and other topics important to graduate students can be found in the catalog. In addition to the catalog, web pages for offices and services on campus provide expanded information, forms, and contact names/phone numbers. Some of those webpages include the following:
  - College of Graduate Studies
  - Office of Student Financial Assistance
  - Office of International Education
  - Scholarships
  - GROW
  - Assistantships