Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Student Handbook

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Doctor of Nursing Practice Program
College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS)
Island Hall-317
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC)
https://www.tamucc.edu/nursing-and-health-sciences

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SECTION I

MESSAGE FROM DR. CHRISTINA MURPHEY, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR NURSING

Welcome to the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi! This handbook is a document developed for students to reflect on the mission of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences as well as information on the two track options offered (the Nurse Practitioner (NP) track; and the Executive Leadership (ExL) track).

This handbook is designed to serve as a resource for your questions about the graduate programs. It is a companion for the University Catalog of the entry year and the overarching Graduate Student Handbook. The Doctoral Student Handbook from the Office of Graduate Studies provides university-wide information relative to student resources, academic policies, financial assistance, information on coursework requirements, advising, professional organizations, and policies and procedures.

Students will also use this handbook in conjunction with the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS) website and current degree planners to facilitate progression in their respective program option within the DNP degree.

VISION

Enriching lives, advancing healthcare, one Islander at a time.

MISSION

The TAMUCC College of Nursing and Health Sciences is committed to promoting a learner-centered and caring environment that facilitates student success and engagement in a global context. Delivering nationally recognized, evidence-based educational programs that serve a diverse student population, the college sets clinical standards of excellence in healthcare and actively advances scholarly research and leadership. The activities are fostered in a collaborative, inter-professional, and multicultural learning community.

SECTION II

FACULTY & STAFF

Academic Program Coordinator:

Heather DeGrande, PhD, RN, CCRN-K, Associate Professor, Office: Island Hall 333,
Phone (361) 825-3696, heather.degrande@tamucc.edu

Nursing Practice Interim Department Chair:

Cynthia DeLanie EdD, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor and Interim Department Chair, Department of Nursing Practice, Office: Island Hall 344, Phone: (361) 825.2476, cynthia.delanie@tamucc.edu

Faculty:

CONHS Faculty Directory

Staff:

Administrative Assistant:

Kirsten Meza, CONHS Department of Nursing Practice Administrative Assistant
Phone (361) 825- 2613, email: Kirsten.meza@tamucc.edu

Advising:

Last Names A-M
Angelica M. Santillan, Senior Academic Advisor, Phone (361) 825-3453, email: angelica.santillan@tamucc.edu

Last Names N – Z
Kristin Wilson, Academic Advisor II, Phone (361) 825-3453, email: kristin.wilson@tamucc.edu

CONHS Student Success Office:

Megan L. Kramr, Student Success Coordinator
Phone (361) 825-2569, megan.kramr@tamucc.edu

Ushma Saraf, Student Success Administrative Assistant
Phone (361) 825-2799, ushma.saraf@tamucc.edu

Bryana Cazarez, Data Entry Specialist
Phone (361) 825-3408, byrana.cazarez@tamucc.edu

SECTION III

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Program Description

The purpose of the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) DNP program is to provide Master of Science-prepared 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 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 into 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 TAMU-CC provides numerous opportunities to examine the unique health needs of Hispanic and other cultures. The unique needs of the community in Texas will be met within the design of the DNP curriculum. The knowledge acquired through program courses and the implementation of the DNP Scholarly Project is transferable to a variety of settings and provides a foundation for nursing practice at the highest level.

Accreditation

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing/the master's degree program in nursing/Doctor of Nursing Practice program, and/the post-graduate APRN certificate program at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (http://www.ccneaccreditation.org)

Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi is accredited by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS -SOC)

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

DNP Program Goals and 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.

Program Options

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 or equivalent 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.

SECTION IV

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

Program Admission

Admission information and deadlines can be found on the website: https://www.tamucc.edu/nursing-and-health-sciences/nursing-practice/index.php under programs of study.

The DNP Program uses a rolling admission process (applications are reviewed upon receipt or when there are an adequate number of applicants for review). We encourage students to apply early. This will allow enough time to also apply for and qualify for federal student aid and scholarships. Applications will not be reviewed until all required materials have been submitted and received. Cohorts start in Spring semesters each year.

The college reserves the right to defer admission in the case of low enrollment. Students will be notified and given options if a selected track is not offered.

To apply for admission, students should complete application requirements as outlined in the posted Application Requirements section of the DNP webpage: https://www.tamucc.edu/programs/graduate-programs/nursing-practice-dnp.php

The following program requirements apply to all nursing graduate students upon admission and throughout the program of study. Students must:

1. Provide evidence they hold a current unencumbered license(s) to practice nursing in the state of Texas throughout the program. Applicants' license and disciplinary status will be verified through a primary source verification: https://txbn.boardsofnursing.org/licenselookup and https://www.nursys.com/. Evidence of current unencumbered license will be verified throughout the enrollment period of the student.
2. 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 Entry Specialist for additional information about these requirements.
3. Hold current American Heart Association CPR certification or Red Cross Healthcare Provider CPR. Documentation must be uploaded to the data repository.
4. 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.
5. 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 requirements. Occasionally, an agency will require students to 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.

6. 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.

The Texas Department of State Health Services has specific immunization requirements for students enrolled in health profession programs, the 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 clinical practice experience may have stricter requirements than the state minimum standards. Students will have to meet agency requirements to gain access to these agencies.

Academic Advising for DNP Students

Academic advisement for students enrolled in the nursing programs at TAMU-CC is provided by the Graduate Nursing Student Academic Advisor(s), DNP Committee Chair, and DNP Program Coordinator

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.

CONHS Graduate Advisor

- The advisor will assist students with class registration issues, course sequencing, graduation procedures, academic progression, navigating the Office of Graduate Studies' procedures, and utilizing existing university facilities, such as financial aid.
- Each DNP student is responsible for meeting or holding 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 CONHS Graduate Advisor performs course inventories before graduation, and students should be guided by this review of graduation requirements.

DNP Scholarly Project Committee Chair

- The DNP Coordinator, in coordination with the department chair and students, assigns each student a DNP Chair before the third semester of the DNP program. The DNP Chair

should be a full-time CONHS TAMU-CC faculty member and will remain an advisor to the student through graduation, unless the student requests a change or a change is necessary due to a change in faculty circumstances.

- Advising responsibilities for the DNP Chair include:
    - Assist students in navigating program requirements to ensure successful progression.
    - Support students in seeking guidance from an appropriate content expert, as needed.
    - Overseeing and approving accurate and timely logging of clinical hours and portfolio by the student.
    - Overseeing and participating in the evaluation of the DNP Scholarly Project Proposal and Final Defense presentations.

DNP Academic Program Coordinator

- The DNP Academic 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 practice experience oversight, and compliance with national accreditation and certification standards.
- The DNP Academic Program Coordinator is responsible for administering the policies related to the DNP program and supporting students as they progress through the program.
- The DNP Academic Program Coordinator will collaborate with the student's DNP Committee Chair and Committee members as needed to support student success in the DNP Scholarly Project Proposal and Final presentations.
- It is recommended that students 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 CONHS Graduate Academic Advisor, the DNP Academic Program Coordinator, Department Chair, and Associate Dean for Nursing, following chain of command as needed, in the event academic difficulties occur that may impact program progression.

Progression

Admission to the CONHS DNP program is highly competitive. Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress and follow the prescribed degree plan. Students who deviate from the established degree plan, including those who experience a course failure or withdraw, may be considered for re-sequencing on a case-by-case basis. Re-sequencing is not guaranteed and is contingent upon program approval, available space, and a review of the circumstances surrounding the student's academic performance, including any ethical or professional concerns. Re-sequencing will delay program completion and graduation timelines.

Students are not permitted to progress in the curriculum with a course failure and must successfully repeat the failed course before advancing in the program. Approval to progress following a course failure is contingent upon review and approval by the program. In accordance with CONHS policy, students who incur two course failures will be dismissed from the DNP program.

Degree Plan

Degree plan development will be documented on the student's online Degree Planner by the academic advisor. Students should reach out to their academic advisor before the end of the 1st semester to document the degree plan.

Course Delivery & Sequencing

- 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.
- Students may choose to meet with faculty or other campus resources to support their learning.
- Students will be expected to attend periodic campus events. Students will be notified event dates and details requiring on-campus presence. Students are expected to discuss any barriers to participation in these events with the DNP Program Coordinator.
- To progress, students must meet the prerequisites for each course. Course prerequisites are based on the sequencing of course content. Students who do not meet these requirements risk not successfully completing a course or slowing the degree progression.
- Courses are sequenced per calendar year so students should consult the DNP Program Coordinator and the Graduate Academic Advisor if they are unable to follow the current degree plan. An alternate degree plan may be approved depending on space availability.
- Students can find the course sequence in the Degree Planner for individual plans.

All students must meet the standards for minimal performance and progression established by TAMU-CC. See catalog section on Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements . Students must also adhere to the Graduate Student Handbook.

Courses within each graduate nursing program are offered in a designated sequence. Students who withdraw from a course or fail to enroll in an eligible semester will disrupt their planned program of study, delay progression toward degree completion, and extend their expected graduation date. Reentry into the course sequence may be dependent upon course availability and space limitations. Therefore, students should consult the Graduate Nursing Academic Advisor and/or the appropriate Graduate Nursing Program Coordinator before withdrawing from a course or interrupting enrollment.

To ensure academic integrity and reduce conflicts of interest in graduate nursing programs , for TAMU-CC CONHS faculty and staff seeking graduate nursing education can not enroll in TAMU-CC CONHS programs.

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

Each semester, student progression is evaluated by the department's Admissions and Progression Committee (APC) in coordination with the DNP Chair and DNP Program Coordinator based on the successful achievement of program milestones. Holds may be placed by the DNP Coordinator to ensure compliance with program milestones. Milestones, as documented in the DNP Student and Chair Guide, include successful completion of the following:

- Chair and committee meeting attendance per chair guidance.
- Project Proposal Report and Presentation Evaluation
- Comprehensive Exam
- Conducting DNP Scholarly Project
- DNP Final Scholarly Project Report and Defense Evaluation
- DNP Student Portfolio in the designated electronic platform
- Clinical Practice Hours completion and timely logging in the designated electronic platform

All students must meet the standards for minimal performance and progression established by TAMU-CC Office of Graduate Studies.

If a student earns a grade of C, D, or F, or if the student seeks a W, the student:

- Must repeat a course in which a grade of C or lower was earned
- Must repeat a course in which a W was sought.
- 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 applied.

If the student:

- Earns a grade of C, D, or F in the same course twice
- Earns a second grade of C or below in any program course, regardless of GPA.
- Seeks a W in the same or any program course twice unless approved by the CONHS APC in coordination with the program coordinator and department chair *.

The student is placed on enforced withdrawal (see below).

*The student cannot progress to the next course after withdrawing from two courses in the program unless approved by the CONHS APC with oversight for academic progression. A plan to complete the program must be submitted to the committee before a progression decision can be made. Admission to courses that require completion will depend on space availability and program sequencing.

Progression Requirements Related to the DNP Comprehensive Exam, Scholarly Project Proposal Defense, Project Implementation, and Final DNP Scholarly Project Defense

The DNP Comprehensive Examination, DNP Scholarly Project Proposal Defense, and preparation of the IRB application are completed during NURS 6308. The DNP Scholarly Project Defense occurs in the final semester. This section outlines the progression through these milestones.

More information on program requirements related to these milestones and committee formation can be found in Section V, DNP Program Specific Requirements.

Note:

- Students must successfully complete the DNP Comprehensive Examination to earn a passing grade in NURS 6308.
- Students must successfully defend their DNP Scholarly Project Proposal to earn a passing grade in NURS 6308.

DNP Scholarly Project Proposal Defense

- The DNP Scholarly Project Proposal Defense (hearing) is conducted during NURS 6308.

- A complete copy of the project proposal must be provided to all committee members, including the Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR), at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled defense date.
- The defense must be scheduled using Form D: Doctoral Project Proposal Hearing Request Form – DNP.
- Submission of Form D signifies the committee's preliminary approval of the proposal and readiness for the defense. Form D should not be signed if substantial revisions, additional study, or major changes to the proposal are still required.
- One dissenting committee vote constitutes an unsuccessful defense.
- Students should refer to Progression policies (Section IV) following an unsuccessful defense.

Project Implementation and Program Progression

- Students may not begin implementation of the DNP Scholarly Project or progress to the project implementation phase until they have successfully passed both the DNP Comprehensive Examination and the DNP Scholarly Project Proposal Defense in NURS 6308.
- Although preparation and submission of Institutional Review Board (IRB) materials are completed as part of the NURS 6308 course requirements, IRB approval is required before any project implementation activities involving participants, data collection, or access to protected data may begin.

DNP Scholarly Project Defense

- The final DNP Scholarly Project Defense is conducted during the student's final semester of NURS 6195 and focuses exclusively on the completed scholarly project.
- Students must successfully defend their DNP Scholarly Project to satisfy program requirements for degree completion.
- The DNP Scholarly Project Defense must be scheduled no later than four (4) weeks prior to the anticipated graduation date.

Scheduling the Defense

- A complete copy of the final project manuscript must be provided to all committee members, including the Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR), at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled defense date.
- The defense must be scheduled using Form E: Agreement to Schedule the Dissertation/Project Defense & Final Examination.
- Submission of Form E signifies the committee's preliminary approval of the project and readiness for the defense. Form E should not be signed if substantial revisions, additional study, or major changes to the project are still required.

Final Defense Outcomes

- The committee chair, committee members, and the Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) are voting members of the defense committee.
- One dissenting vote constitutes an unsuccessful defense.
- Students may be required to complete revisions following the defense. Students whose defense is approved pending minor revisions may remain eligible for graduation,

provided all required revisions are completed and approved by the committee within established university deadlines (see Graduation Requirements below).

- Students who do not successfully defend their project will not meet program completion requirements and will be required to enroll in an additional semester of NURS 6195 until a successful defense is achieved and all degree requirements have been satisfied.

Final Project Submission

- Following a successful project defense and completion of all revisions required by the committee, students must submit the final approved DNP Scholarly Project manuscript in accordance with Graduate Education requirements and by published submission deadlines.
- In addition, students will develop a scholarly manuscript suitable for publication as part of NURS 6321 and NURS 6331. This manuscript is distinct from the final DNP Scholarly Project manuscript submitted to the Office of Graduate Education and must be submitted to the student's faculty chair by the end of the semester as a course requirement.

Culminating Event/Exit Requirements for Graduation

The DNP program 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 TAMU-CC.

Exit Requirements

- 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 obtained through the student portal, S.A.I.L.
- 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
- Graduate studies documentation completed per university registrar deadlines.

- 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 S.A.I.L.

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 will result in an alternate degree plan and delay program completion.
- The design, implementation, and defense of a DNP Scholarly Project. Students may need to retake NURS 6195 to complete the requirements for the DNP Scholarly Project report.
- 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 6195 to complete practice hour requirements.
- If any of the above criteria are not met, students should meet with their DNP Chair and or the DNP Academic Program Coordinator to discuss options.

More information about Commencement can be found here:
https://www.tamucc.edu/commencement/index.php

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

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 is described in Article III of the Student Code of Conduct. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the university catalog and the *Student Code of Conduct*, which explain standards for academic integrity and academic honesty. Information on Academic Misconduct is available here.

Enforced Withdrawal

A student may be subject to enforced withdrawal from the DNP Program when continued enrollment is inconsistent with university graduate academic requirements.

Grounds for enforced withdrawal include:

- Failure to maintain graduate academic good standing as defined by the TAMU-CC Graduate Catalog.
- GPA falling below 3.0 and failure to return to good standing within the timeframe prescribed by University Policy.
- Earning a grade of C, D, or F in the same course twice
- Earning a second grade of C or below in any program course, regardless of GPA.

- Seeking a W in the same or any program course twice unless approved by the CONHS APC in coordination with the program coordinator and department chair.

Students subject to enforced withdrawal may be eligible for future enrollment consistent with University and program requirements.

Dismissal

The TAMU-CC College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS) is committed to maintaining rigorous academic standards, patient safety, and professional integrity within the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. Dismissal from the program is a serious action that may occur for academic, professional conduct, compliance, or safety-related reasons.

Note: This dismissal policy is independent from the University's Student Grade Appeal Procedure. The CONHS adheres to the University's Student Grade Appeal Procedure.

Standard Dismissal

Standard dismissal can be academic, compliance, professional, or student misconduct related.

Standard dismissal is applicable in the following situations:

Academic

- Failure to meet program milestones as outlined in the DNP Student and Chair Guide within the established timeframe, as documented by the CONHS Admissions and Progression Committee (APC).

Compliance

- Failure to maintain a current, unencumbered Texas or multi-state RN or APRN license throughout enrollment.
- Failure to maintain required immunizations, CPR certification, drug screening, or criminal background check compliance.
- Revocation, suspension, or restriction of nursing licensure by the Texas Board of Nursing (TxBON) or any other licensing authority.
- Failure to meet any agency-specific requirements for access to clinical practice sites that cannot be waived.

Professional Misconduct

- Professional misconduct includes behavior inconsistent with the ethical, professional, clinical, and leadership standards expected of doctoral nursing students and licensed registered nurses. These standards are distinct from and may exist in addition to conduct governed by the University's Student Code of Conduct.
- Professional misconduct includes, but is not limited to:
- Violation of the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics (https://codeofethics.ana.org/home).

- Unauthorized disclosure of protected health information (PHI) in violation of HIPAA
- Violation of agency or clinical site policies resulting in removal from a practice experience site
- Social media conduct that violates patient confidentiality and/or, professional standards. Refer to the ANA Social Media Guide.
- Threatening, harassing, discriminatory, or otherwise unprofessional behavior toward patients, preceptors, clinical personnel, faculty, staff, peers, or community partners.

Student Misconduct

Student misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, fabrication, falsification of data, or unauthorized use of AI tools in the completion of coursework or the DNP Scholarly Project (see Student Academic Misconduct Procedure) and (Student Code of Conduct)
- Falsification of clinical practice hours or portfolio documentation (Student Code of Conduct and https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex._occ._code_section_301.452).
- Threatening, harassing, or discriminatory behavior toward students, faculty, or staff as defined by the Student Code of Conduct.

Some cases of student misconduct will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for review, otherwise , the full due process review procedure below is followed.

Interim Removal

Interim removal is an administrative action taken when the College determines that a student's continued participation may present an imminent risk to patient safety, public safety, or the learning environment.

Interim Removal is applicable when:

- Imminent patient or community safety risk
- Loss or suspension of nursing licensure
- Egregious professional or ethical violations (e.g., patient abuse, PHI breach, fraud)
- Interim removal is not a final determination and does not constitute dismissal from the program.

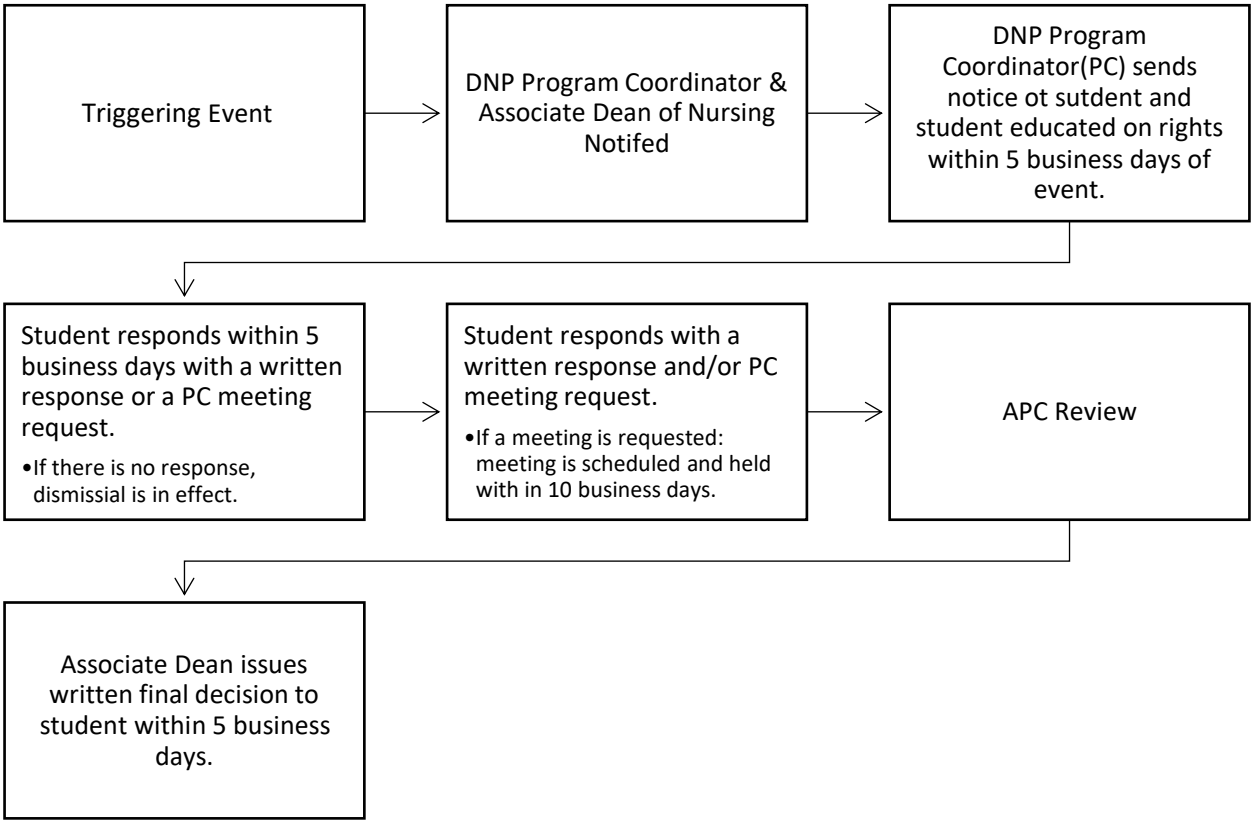
Students placed on interim removal retain all due process rights described below.

Resolution of Interim Removal

- If allegations are not substantiated, the student will be reinstated to the program.
- The College will make reasonable efforts to facilitate completion of missed clinical, practicum, or academic requirements, subject to course availability, clinical placement availability, and program progression requirements.

Due Process Review Procedure

The following procedure governs all dismissal actions. The steps are sequential and must be documented in writing at each stage.



Written Notice of Intent to Dismiss

The DNP Program Coordinator, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Nursing, will issue a written Notice of Intent to Dismiss to the student's official TAMU-CC Islander email address. The notice will include:

- The specific ground(s) for the proposed dismissal, with reference to the applicable handbook section(s)
- A summary of the relevant facts or conduct at issue
- The student's right to submit a written response
- The deadline for the student's written response (5 business days)
- The student's right to request a meeting with the PC

- Contact information for the CONHS Graduate Academic Advisor and the Dean of Students' Office.

Student Response and Meeting

Within 5 business days of receiving the Notice, the student may submit a written response addressing the ground(s) stated in the Notice and/or request a meeting with the DNP Program Coordinator and/or Associate Dean for Nursing. A meeting will be scheduled within 10 business days of the student's response, if requested. The student may be accompanied by a support advisor of their choosing. The advisor may not speak on the student's behalf or represent the student in a legal capacity during the meeting, but the student may confer with the advisor during the meeting.

APC Review and Recommendation

- Following receipt of the student's written response and/or completion of any requested meeting, the Admissions and Progression Committee (APC) will review the documentation and provide a recommendation to the Associate Dean for Nursing.
- The APC recommendation is advisory. Final authority regarding dismissal rests with the Associate Dean for Nursing.

Final Decision

Following review of the student's written response and/or meeting, the Associate Dean for Nursing will issue a written Final Decision within 5 business days. The decision letter will state whether dismissal is upheld, modified, or rescinded with rationale; and be copied to the DNP Program Coordinator, the student's DNP Committee Chair (if assigned), and the CONHS Graduate Academic Advisor.

Student Right to Appeal

All students dismissed on academic or compliance grounds retain the right to appeal. A student who wishes to appeal must submit a written appeal to the Dean of the CONHS within 5 business days of receiving the Final Decision letter. The appeal must include:

- The student's full name, program, and student ID
- A clear statement of the grounds for the appeal (see permissible grounds below)
- Supporting documentation
- Permissible Grounds for Appeal

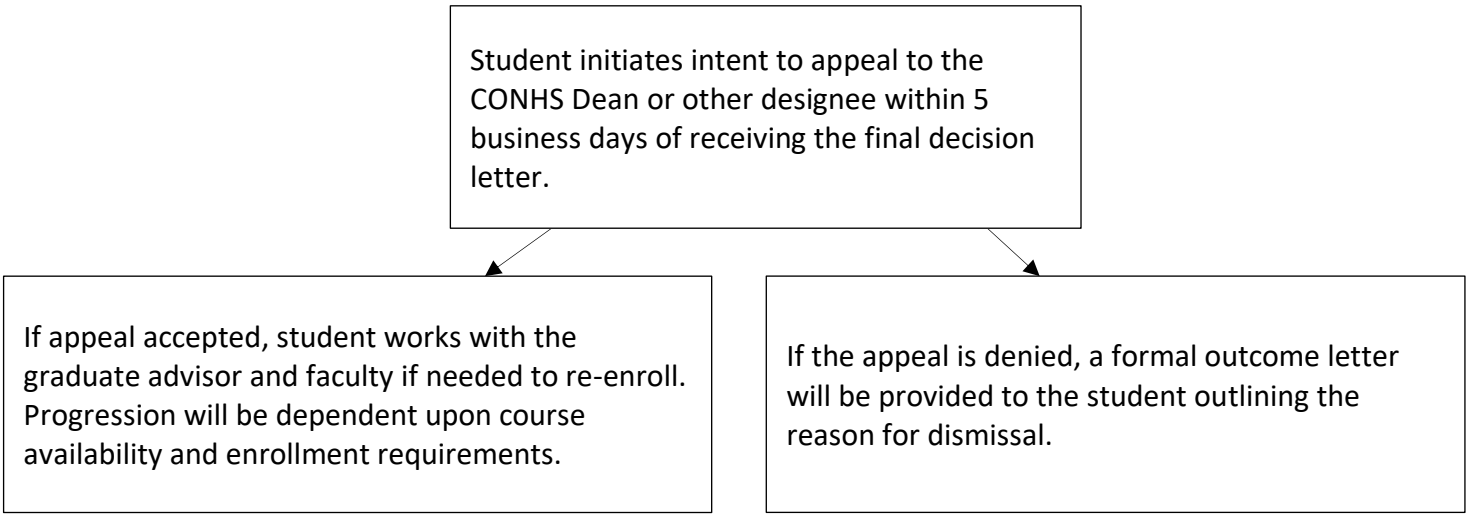
An appeal will only be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

- Procedural error: the dismissal procedure was not followed as described in this policy
- New supporting documentation: relevant information not reasonably available at the time of the original decision that would materially affect the outcome
- Disproportionate outcome: the dismissal sanction is clearly disproportionate to the established conduct

Disagreement with the decision alone, or dissatisfaction with the outcome, does not constitute grounds for appeal.

Appeal Review

The Dean of CONHS (or a designee who was not involved in the original decision) will review the appeal and may review the written record, request additional information, and/or meet with individuals as necessary before issuing a written decision within 15 business days. The Dean's decision constitutes the final institutional decision within the CONHS.



Documentation and Records

All documentation related to a dismissal action including the Notice of Intent to Dismiss, the student's response, meeting notes, the Final Decision, and any appeal records will be maintained in the student's file in accordance with FERPA and University record retention policies. The CONHS Graduate Academic Advisor is responsible for maintaining these records.

University Grievance Process

- The dismissal appeal process is separate from the University's grievance process.
- Students who wish to file a University grievance may do so through the Compliance Office using the applicable grievance procedures and forms.
- Information regarding grievance procedures is available through the Compliance Office: (https://www.tamucc.edu/institutional-excellence/compliance/services/complaints/index.php)

College of Nursing and Health Sciences Student Grade Appeal Process

The CONHS adheres to the University's Student Grade Appeal Procedure.

SECTION V

DNP PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Full Degree information can be located in the catalog:
https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/nursing-health-sciences/doctoral/nursing-dnp/

Course Delivery

- Each DNP course can be accessed in a unique LMS shell through the TAMU-CC link. Course materials are organized within the shell using the CONHS template (syllabus, course schedule, course-specific lessons). Links to support services, including the library, tutorials, Zoom presentations, and the 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.
- Coursework 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 group conferencing, as well as the learning tools embedded in the learning management system (such as chats, discussions, and assignment management) to support student learning.
- Students are expected to maintain Internet access so they can regularly participate in class activities.
- The TAMU-CC IT Help Desk maintains student support services seven days a week and can be reached by email or phone. Students should contact the IT Help services when they cannot access the course shell. Additionally, students should contact the course faculty as soon as possible when they have long-term access problems that will interfere with their use of the LMS to access course materials.
- Each course will contain 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 a variety of methodologies. 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 to help students evaluate their understanding of lesson material.
- Several 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.

DNP Course Faculty

Course faculty are TAMU-CC CONHS faculty members responsible for the instruction, facilitation, evaluation, and oversight of student learning within assigned courses in the DNP program. Course faculty possess expertise in their respective content areas and are committed to supporting students in achieving course and program learning outcomes.

The faculty–student relationship is founded on mutual professionalism, respect, accountability, and shared responsibility for learning. Course faculty serve as educators, mentors, and professional role models who provide instruction, guidance, feedback, and academic support to facilitate student success. Faculty members balance responsibilities related to teaching, scholarship, service, clinical practice, and university engagement in addition to supporting students.

Students are expected to communicate professionally, actively engage in course activities, comply with course requirements and deadlines, be self–directed, take initiative with faculty-student communication and appointments, and seek assistance or clarification in a timely manner. Students are responsible for reviewing course materials, monitoring university communications, and managing their academic responsibilities to ensure timely completion of coursework.

Course faculty will make reasonable efforts to respond to student inquiries, evaluate assignments, and provide timely feedback. However, faculty members are not expected to be available on a 24/7 basis. Students should allow reasonable time for responses to emails, requests for meetings, discussion board questions, and assignment submissions. Course-specific expectations regarding communication, availability, office hours, grading, and response times will be outlined in the course syllabus.

Faculty reserve the right to establish and maintain professional boundaries that support an effective learning environment. Mutual respect, professional communication, and adherence to university and program policies are essential to fostering a positive educational experience and promoting student success throughout the DNP program.

Students should recognize that faculty availability may vary during university holidays, semester breaks, summer terms, weekends, and periods of approved leave or professional travel. Communication and feedback timelines may be adjusted accordingly. Except in emergency situations involving university operations, students should not expect responses outside normal university business hours. Respect for faculty work schedules, university holidays, and academic breaks contributes to a professional learning environment and supports healthy boundaries for both students and faculty.

Written Assignment Requirements

- Because this is a doctoral program, student performance will be assessed primarily through application activities, including the design, implementation, and defense 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 required to purchase a copy of the current Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association and avoid relying solely 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 and format the DNP Scholarly Project. Students should become familiar with this framework as early in the program as possible.

DNP Scholarly Project

Students must complete a DNP Scholarly Project to meet program requirements. The DNP Scholarly 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. 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. The DNP Scholarly Project requires the student to design, implement, and evaluate the effect of the change in practice on patients, patient populations, or health systems. Project outcomes should include improvement in the quality and cost-effectiveness of care.

Examples of potential DNP Scholarly 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 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) to have the guideline reviewed by experts; this adds more rigor when students are not able to implement.

The DNP project should not be generalizable research.

The student, with the course faculty and the DNP Committee Chair's support, is responsible for the selection of the DNP Scholarly Project focus. Students are expected to focus their DNP Scholarly Project on a health care issue or clinical problem. Students are expected to articulate potential problems during orientation and early in the program.

These two processes are utilized to match the student, projected DNP Scholarly Project, and CONHS faculty for the DNP program and scholarly project. Students will maintain communication with the CONHS faculty, DNP Chair, and DNP Project Advisor as they complete the project.

It is critical for students to establish the project focus early as successful completion aligns with programmatic sequencing. See Section IV above.

Students should not deviate from the original and approved project focus unless unexpected events occur. In the event of extenuating circumstances related to project completion and feasibility, students should be prepared to rapidly identify an alternative topic by the second semester. Faculty and the DNP chair may assist students in the process, but are not required to identify a site/topic. If an alternative is not determined within program sequencing, the student will be required to take a Leave of Absence, which will impact progression to graduation.

If the clinical site becomes unavailable, students will be required to find another site, which may require revisiting previous milestones, such as the organizational assessment and literature review.

Throughout the DNP program, students will demonstrate expert nursing leadership behaviors and professional collaboration in completing the DNP Scholarly Project. The culminating products include but are not limited to a DNP Scholarly Project Report, Defense Presentation, DNP Scholarly Project Poster, and an activity through which the student disseminates the results of the DNP Scholarly Project. See the DNP LMS Organization Site.

Students, in consultation with their DNP Chair and Committee Members, are responsible for writing the DNP Scholarly Project Proposal, preparing, and submitting IRB proposals as

indicated, completing the DNP Scholarly Project Report, and preparing a Project Executive Summary for the DNP Portfolio in addition all students are required to successfully defend their DNP Scholarly Project to the DNP Chair and Committee Members. All committee members must attend and evaluate the defense and proposal presentations using the assigned rubrics. Each DNP student will be responsible for initiating the electronic submission of the proposal and Final Scholarly Project evaluations which will route to the DNP Chair and Committee Members attending the presentations as well as the required Office of Graduate Studies documents.

DNP Scholarly Project Committee

The DNP Scholarly Project is guided by the DNP Scholarly Project Committee. The committee consists of the DNP Chair, DNP Scholarly Project Co-Chair, Advisor, or Content Expert, and the Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR). All members of the committee must meet the qualifications to serve on a terminal degree committee as outlined in University Procedure 12.99.99.c0.03.

The DNP discipline-specific members of the committee are assigned in coordination with the DNP Academic Program Coordinator, the Department Chair, and the Associate Dean for Nursing. All efforts are made to match scholarly expertise with students' interests.

In some cases, the DNP student may require an external Advisor or Content Expert usually at the project site. These cases will be considered with the DNP Academic Program Coordinator on a case-by-case basis.

In the event, members of the committee can no longer serve, the DNP program coordinator must be notified to initiate the process of replacement.

The GFR is assigned by the Office of Graduate Studies prior to the proposal semester.

DNP Scholarly Project Committee Chair

The DNP Chair is a full time, TAMU-CC CONHS tenure-track faculty member who generally 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 serves as a mentor, academic advisor, and scholarly project supervisor throughout the student's program of study. The student–chair relationship is founded on mutual professionalism, respect, and shared responsibility. The DNP Chair is committed to providing guidance, feedback, and support to facilitate student success; however, faculty members balance responsibilities related to teaching, scholarship, service, clinical practice, and university engagement in addition to mentoring and advising students. Students are expected to communicate professionally, be self–directed, take initiative with faculty-student communication and appointments, maintain regular contact with their Chair, and plan project activities and timelines to allow adequate time for draft review, approvals, and correspondence. While the DNP Chair will make reasonable efforts to respond to student

inquiries and provide timely feedback, faculty are not expected to be available on a 24/7 basis, and students should allow reasonable time for responses to emails, meeting requests, and project-related documents. The student-chair dyad should agree to mutual communication needs early in the relationship.

Students should recognize that faculty availability may be affected by university holidays, semester breaks, summer terms, travel related to professional activities, and other university responsibilities. Except in emergency situations involving university operations, students should not expect immediate responses outside normal university business hours. Respect for established university holidays, academic breaks, and faculty work schedules is an important component of maintaining a professional student–chair relationship.

Other responsibilities of the DNP Chair include:

- The DNP Chair not only assists the student as an academic advisor in completion of their program but also has the following responsibilities in assisting the student to complete the DNP Scholarly Project.
- Overseeing and approving accurate and timely logging clinical hours and portfolio by the student.
- Communicating with the student's scholarly project facilitator to ensure student and project are progressing as expected and to troubleshoot problems.
- Overseeing and evaluating the DNP Scholarly Project Proposal Presentation and Report and the Final Defense Presentation and Report.

DNP Scholarly Project Co-Chair, Advisor, or Content Expert Committee Member

The DNP Co-Chair, Advisor, and/or Content Expert committee member may be assigned before or during the third semester as a part of the committee formation process or may be selected in coordination with the student and the committee chair.

Co-Chair:

The DNP Project Co-Chair is a full-time TAMU-CC CONHS faculty member who generally is considered an expert in the student's area of scholarly effort. The required qualification of the co-chair is broadly outlined in University Procedure 12.99.99.c0.03.The CONHS uses this role as a mentoring opportunity for new faculty and fixed-term faculty interested in serving as Chair on DNP Committees. In this case, the chair serves as a mentor.

Project Advisor:

The DNP Project Advisor provides guidance and support in the development of the scholarly proposal and final project defense. The advisor works closely 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 and defense. The project advisor should be well versed in DNP scholarly project plans, development, and dissemination. As such, the project advisor need not be an expert in the scholarly topic.

Content Expert:

The DNP Content Expert if needed, is an expert in the field of inquiry and will support the completion of the DNP Scholarly Project. This person is intended to provide specialized expertise to support students with content-specific support, insights, and/or networking opportunities. The DNP Content Expert serves to fill content gaps in the event the DNP Committee Chair's scholarly work does not entirely match the student's scholarly topic.

Students may select the 3rd committee member as outlined in the University Catalog in consultation with their DNP Chair and if needed the DNP Academic Program Coordinator. The 3rd member must meet the qualifications outlined in University Procedure 12.99.99.c0.03.

Other Potential Committee Roles:

In some cases, the DNP student may require an additional content expert committee member or an external Advisor or Content Expert usually at the project site. These cases will be considered with the DNP Academic Program Coordinator on a case-by-case basis.

Form C:

Once the student has been assigned committee members, students should submit FORM C: Doctoral Dissertation/Project Advisory Committee. Form C must be completed at least 8 weeks before the project proposal (Fall semester before NURS 6308 - DNP Project Proposal).

Graduate Faculty Representative

The Office of Graduate Education will assign a full-time, tenure-track TAMU-CC faculty member from outside the CONHS to serve as the Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) on the student's project team upon receipt of Form C.

The roles and responsibilities of the GFR are outlined in the University Catalog and the Graduate Student Handbook. Overall, the GFR is responsible for:

- Reviewing documents sent by students before the defense meetings.
  Attending all defense meetings.
- Evaluating the rigor from an outside disciplinary perspective, while understanding the disciplinary differences around the DNP degree is as a practice degree. It is the chair's responsibility to educate the GFR on these differences if needed.
- Ensuring fair treatment of the student.
- Upon completion of the student's DNP proposal presentation and evaluation of the proposal report and the Final DNP Scholarly Project defense and final report evaluation the GFR as a member of the student's DNP Committee, will be asked to sign the evaluation documenting attendance and complete the evaluation if desired, by signing the CONHS DNP evaluation rubrics.

DNP Practice Experiences

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. 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. Students are required to obtain a Letter of Support from Clinical Practice organizations.

DNP students may apply up to 500 hours from their respective MSN program. Students seeking this option must obtain the Practice Hours Verification Form (located in the DNP LMS Organization) from their respective MSN program. This 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 enter the program with less than 500 practice hours from their MSN should meet with their DNP Chair and the DNP Academic 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 which can be found in the DNP LMS Organization Site.

- Practice experiences should be completed under the guidance of the student's DNP Chair and DNP Academic Program Coordinator with the organization 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 Scholarly Project and program objectives. The facilitator will assist students in obtaining the Letter of Support from appropriate organization leadership.
- Each semester, prior to initiating the 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 Scholarly Project Committee Chair (in consultation with the DNP Scholarly Project Committee, as needed) must approve all practice experiences and ensure timely documentation in the clinical experience platform
- Practice experiences may be completed in the student's practice/work organization 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 practice hours can be delineated.
- 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 TAMU-CC. 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 in this account will be used to create their Student Portfolio.
- Students are responsible for timely documentation of activities in the clinical experience platform using the template provided and housed in the DNP LMS Organization Site. 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, the AACN 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 LMS Organization Site, as 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 Scholarly 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.
- Students engaged in practice experiences are expected to:
    - Maintain necessary RN licensure, ACLS, BCLS or PALS certification throughout the program and 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. Students are required to wear their nametag to indicate the student is acting in the role of a TAMU-CC DNP student.
    - Nametags should be obtained from the University SandDollar$ Office and may be purchased during DNP Student Orientation Day.
    - Communicate regularly with individuals directly involved in practice experiences. These individuals include course faculty, DNP Chair, or facilitator and any other relevant member of the team.
    - Record required information in the DNP practice experience log.

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 Scholarly Project will represent evidence of program completion. The portfolio will be completed in the last semester of the program as part of coursework.

Social Media

Social media has become very popular for public communication. The student is referred to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) White Paper on Social Media 2024 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.

Institutional Review Board

Students are expected to protect human participants and disseminate the results of their DNP Scholarly Project through manuscript submission and professional presentations. Therefore, students, in consultation with their DNP Chair, should plan to submit their project protocol to the TAMU-CC Institutional Review Board (IRB) early. The IRB protocol must be approved before a project involving human subjects can be implemented. Most submissions should seek a not-for-human-subjects determination. The agency in which the DNP Scholarly Project is being completed may also require that its IRB review the protocol prior to implementation. TAMU-CC IRB will serve as the primary IRB and additional sites can accept to rely on the TAMU-CC IRB protocol if they choose.

Manuscript Author Guidelines

In the final semester, students will be required to prepare a manuscript for publication and submit to their chair for review prior to submission for publication. Students should follow the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors authorship guidelines. Listing of student's DNP Committee members is required for final DNP report, proposal and DNP Scholarly Project. Additionally, presentation of the scholary project at DNP Day are graduation requirements. Presentation at other venues is encouraged.

Proctored Test Procedure

The TAMU-CC CONHS strives to create an environment that supports the University standards for academic integrity. The College may administer tests either at secure testing sites or using specific exam software, at the program's discretion. 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.

Curricular Changes

The DNP curriculum was designed to support student acquisition of principles and competencies essential to 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 for Nursing, working with the DNP Program Coordinator and Graduate Academic Advisor, will notify students of impending changes as soon as possible.

Student Records

Student records are electronically maintained by the Graduate Academic Advisor in the College. The Open Record Policy is followed, and students can review their own records.

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, 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.

Section VI

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Professional Honor Societies

- The chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing (Sigma) at TAMU-CC is Eta Omicron Chapter. Sigma 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 organization that promotes the best in nursing.
    - Sigma offers several funding opportunities for students pursuing doctoral education. Opportunities for funding will be posted in the DNP Organization LMS site as they become available.
    - TAMU-CC students who meet the eligibility criteria for membership as outlined in Sigma Theta Tau are eligible to join induction into Eta Omicron, TAMU-CC's founding chapter. Eligible students receive invitations to join the chapter r via their Islander email account. Formal induction ceremonies are held twice annually.
- The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi is 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.

Professional Organizations

- 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. (requires institutional membership).
- 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 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties. The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) is specifically devoted to promoting high quality nurse practitioner (NP) education. Today, the organization represents a global network of NP educators.
- 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.
- 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. Please refer to the listing of affiliates in your area of the state.

This list is not exhaustive.

DNP LMS Organization Site

Current DNP User Guides, Documents, Tools and Resources such as the ones identified in this Handbook are housed in the DNP LMS Organization.

DNP Day

In the fall semesters, students are required to attend DNP Day. Graduating students present their work via Poster Presentation. Matriculating students attend the poster session and attend several workshops geared toward the DNP Scholarly Project. This is a great networking opportunity to show case work of the graduating class and for matriculating students to see what the final product looks like.

Program/College Awards

- Outstanding Student Award: Every graduation cycle, graduate faculty can select an outstanding student per track: NP or ExL track.
- Outstanding Evidence-Based Project Award: In the fall semesters, DNP Scholarly Project student posters are evaluated at DNP Day by faculty and guests. Each poster is evaluated via a rubric. The winner is awarded the Outstanding Evidence-Based Project Award. One award is available per track.

Awards are announced at the CONHS Recognition Ceremony usually held the day before graduation ceremonies.

Conferences to Attend

Attending or presenting at annual leadership, education, or nurse practitioner associate conferences is encouraged. The university may provide limited travel funds for conference presentations or subsidize travel to regional conferences.

Section VII

GENERAL GRADUATE EDUCATION INFORMATION

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.

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 through Apply Texas. For more information about the application process, visit the Application Process page or see the Graduate Admissions section of the catalog.

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

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. You should be aware that unapproved leaves in a fall or spring semester will result in having to re-apply to your program.

In addition, terminal degree students who have established graduate committees who are not continuously enrolled and do not have an approved Leave of Absence are subject to having their committee dissolved. The Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) will be released. If the student reapplies and is readmitted, a new committee form will be required and a new GFR will be appointed.

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 Registrar's Office 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 CONHS Graduate Advisor and the respective Academic Program Coordinator.

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. Credit that is more than seven years old will not be counted towards a master's degree. Exceptions will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as submission of a revalidation plan. Credits earned at another university are not eligible for an exception. Written approval from the major department chairperson, the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the Provost are required. See the revalidation process below.

Revalidation of Courses Beyond Degree Time Limit

In order to revalidate dated courses, students should carefully attend to 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.

Texas 99 Hour Rule (concerns doctoral hours)

The Texas State Legislature 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 a number of cases there is still the possibility of a programmatic or individual exemption from the rule. For more information, contact your Program Coordinator.

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:

Office of Graduate Education
Office of Student Financial Assistance
Office of International Education
Scholarships
GROW