

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

2024-2025

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WELCOME

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with guidelines for policies, procedures and core information that will be needed while you are enrolled as a graduate student in the

Mission Statement

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

Philosophy

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

The philosophy of the Department of Nursing is based on a holistic view of the person who has inherent worth, dignity, and human rights. The individual is recognized as a total

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

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

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

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

Purpose of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program

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

Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program Outcomes

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

1. Integrate a personal philosophy into nursing practice and

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program Outcomes

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

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

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program Outcomes

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

1. Incorporate science-based theories from nursing and other disciplines to develop, implement, and evaluate practice approaches that improve health care.
2. Utilize organizational and systems leadership to promote quality, cost effectiveness, and patient safety in the delivery of health care.
3. Demonstrate leadership in the application and critical evaluation of evidence-based practice to improve patient and health care outcomes.
4. Apply information systems/technology to monitor and improve patient care and health care delivery systems.
5. Consistent with Jesuit values, advocate for health care policies that comply with ethical principles (CJ) etues (or)-6 (a)

Competencies of the Nurse Practitioner

The graduate of the Family Nurse Practitioner program will demonstrate the following

Glossary of Terms

Faculty - the collective

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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APPEAL OF A COURSE GRADE

Students who wish to appeal a final grade in a course must make a written appeal to the instructor within five (5) business days of the date the course grade becomes available to the student from the University, explaining why the grade should be changed. If the instructor agrees that a change of grade is warranted, the student will be notified in writing and a Change of Grade form will be completed and submitted to the Dean. If the instructor finds that the grade is correct as originally submitted, the student will be notified in writing, specifically addressing the student's reason for the appeal. The instructor's response must take place within five (5) business days of the date the grade is changed.

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ANNUAL BACKGROUND CHECKS AND DRUG TESTING

Students enrolled in the graduate nursing program are required to submit the following prior to enrollment and annually.

- (1) Pennsylvania Child Abuse Background Check (Act 34) (PA s. 5902) (15 Pa.C.S. § 9603) (online) (3-year)

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY/ HIPAA

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

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

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

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

Students will not discuss patient information in public areas of an agency or in public areas of a hospital.

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

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

Essential Functions and Safety Standards for Admission, Progression, and Completion of Pre-Licensure and Nurse Practitioner Programs (I – V)	
Essential Functions	Related Examples

Essential Functions	Related Examples
<p>I_ General Abilities: In order to provide safe and effective nursing care, an applicant and/or student in the University of Scranton nursing program is expected to possess functional use of the senses of vision, touch, hearing, taste, and smell. All information received by the senses must be integrated, analyzed, and synthesized in a consistent and accurate manner. The applicant/student must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. In addition, the individual is expected to possess the ability to perceive pain, pressure, temperature, and</p>	

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

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

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

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

Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to immediately report the exposure incident to her/his preceptor and faculty course instructor, as certain interventions are most effective when initiated promptly. In addition, the student is expected to report the exposure incident according to the clinical agency's policy, and to seek access to post exposure evaluation and treatment as per the agency's policy when appropriate (e.g., hospital setting, agency's policy may include emergency treat

Testing

Bloodborne pathogens testing should be done at time of exposure and for specific intervals, thereafter, as recommended by the CDC. All testing should be based on initial risk evaluation by an agency representative of the exposure and student's immunity.

required to have student nurse practitioner liability insurance. All graduate nursing students enrolled in practicum courses utilizing affiliating agencies must upload evidence of their health

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IMMUNIZATION EXEMPTION POLICY

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

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate this process no later than May 1 to ensure documentation can be evaluated, and a determination can be made.

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

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

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

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

LICENSURE

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

PREGNANT STUDENT'S POLICY

It is the responsibility of the student to give written notice of her pregnancy to the Director of the Graduate Program when she has written confirmation of

SIGMA THETA TAU
IOTA OMEGA CHAPTER

I. **Objectives and Purpose**

Joining an honor society signifies one's commitment to excellence in his or her

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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

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

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

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

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

** During

STUDENT APPEAL POLICY

Criteria for Clinical Sites/Agencies

VERIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK

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

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

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

Administrative Assistants Graduate Programt URE

APPENDIX

(General Information)

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OVERVIEW OF GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM TRACKS

FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER TRACK

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

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

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

Each student is required to complete a clinical practicum. Faculty will identify and assign the student to a clinical setting and preceptor. During the clinical practicum, the student will provide advanced nursing care for individuals across the life span using obstetric/gynecological (women's health), pediatric (children's health), adult and geriatric During

DESCRIPTION OF PRECEPTOR ROLE FOR GRADUATE PROGRAM CLINICAL COMPONENT

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

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

The role of the preceptor includes:

- * Orienting the student to the clinical site
- * Facilitating a mutually respectful environment for learning
- * Being an expert role mo95 Td[(.9 (y)4 (bec).004 Ti)6 (r)7 (on2 T39.9 (m5 BDC 0.004 TcC 0

