

SCHOOL OF NURSING



1780 E University Ave,
Las Cruces,
NM 88003

DNP Program

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DNP Program Student Handbook

2023-2024 Academic Year

School of Nursing

College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

New Mexico State University

Information in this handbook is subject to change without notice.

*The handbook is updated and distributed to all students
at the beginning of each academic year.*

Changes that occur during the academic year are communicated by email.

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the School of Nursing (SON) in the College of Health, Education and Social Transformation (CHEST) at New Mexico State University (NMSU). It is our sincere wish that you find personal and career satisfaction in your pursuit of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP).

This student handbook contains policies and procedures, and should be used in conjunction with the *NMSU Student Handbook* (available online at: [Las Cruces Academic Catalog < New Mexico State University \(nmsu.edu\)](#)) and the *Graduate Catalog* (available on-line at <http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/>). **For students enrolled in the DNP-NA Program, refer to the NMSU DNP-NA Student Handbook for policies and procedures related to that program.**

The information provided in this handbook is to assist students with academic program planning for the purpose of successfully meeting the School of Nursing and the Graduate School requirements for completing the DNP degree. This information supplements the information in the NMSU Graduate Catalog. Students are expected to know and follow the requirements described in these handbooks. This handbook is subject to updates and changes.

Please do not hesitate to consult with the Associate Director for the Graduate Programs, specialty track directors, program faculty or the graduate advisor if further information is needed. We are here to help you attain your goals.

SCHOOL OF NURSING MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of NMSU School of Nursing is to promote health and improve the quality of life in the people of New Mexico through nursing education, research, practice, and public service recognizing the state's multicultural heritage and dynamic border environment. The mission of the School of Nursing reflects a commitment to the mission of the university and the standards of professional nursing practice by demonstrating excellence in nursing education, research, practice, and public service.

The primary responsibility of the School of Nursing is to provide the highest quality professional nursing education including preparation for practice at the BSN, MSN and doctoral levels. The intent reflects a commitment to the attainment of excellence in practice by designing innovative and challenging educational experiences valuing diversity, providing evidence-based nursing care, and fostering lifelong learning for the professional nurse in a multicultural society.

ACCREDITATION

New Mexico State University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The last comprehensive visit for the Las Cruces and Grants campuses was in 2016-17 resulting in a recommendation of a ten-year review to be conducted in 2027-2028.

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master's degree program in nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice program, and post-graduate APRN certificate program at New Mexico State University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791.

SCHOOL OF NURSING COMMITMENTS

1. Provide a rigorous education to support a comprehensive core of knowledge and professional skills for students at baccalaureate and graduate levels that prepares them for professional practice roles.
2. Offer students educational opportunities that enable them to function in emerging nursing roles in health care including those in practice, leadership, management, and health promotion.
3. Recruit and retain students and faculty from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
4. Provide educational experiences that acknowledge, support and advance health care for vulnerable and disparate populations.
5. Promote, participate, and collaborate in scientific inquiry, clinical reasoning and judgment, research utilization, and evidence-based practice related to issues in health and nursing care.
6. Demonstrate leadership in identifying and addressing a range of health care issues in the local, regional, national, and global community.
7. Demonstrate and promote responsibility, safety, and accountability in nursing education, research, outreach, and practice.
8. Achieve competence in the use of technological and communication resources related to health care and the professional role.
9. Promote the highest ethical standards at all levels of nursing education, research, outreach, and practice.

(** Approved 12/2015)

DNP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)** is a 3-year, terminal professional degree in nursing that focuses on the application of scientific evidence to patient-centered care. Responsibilities of a nurse or nurse practitioner with a DNP degree include translating research in practice, evaluating evidence, applying research in decision-making, and implementing clinical innovations that change practice. Advanced practice nursing at the doctoral level is distinct from other disciplines in that it includes both direct care provided to patients by individual clinicians as well as indirect care in the form of policies, programs and protocols that are organized, monitored, and continuously improved upon by expert nurse clinicians.

The NMSU School of Nursing DNP degree program concentrations are delivered through distance education, which allows nurses and nurse practitioners to advance their careers while remaining in their communities. SON faculty have developed a curriculum that is designed to provide the graduate with a sound foundation for advanced practice nursing. In this curriculum, theory, evidenced-based practice and reflective practice experiences are integrated, just as they are in actual nursing practice. In addition, the program offers students the opportunity to study their individual interests through a selection of advanced practice clinical experiences. SON graduate students in the MSN-DNP and the BSN-DNP FNP and PMHNP Concentrations are registered as Global NMSU students and pay the NMSU graduate [NMSU Online tuition rate](#) (click on the current semester). Graduate students who are in the BSN-DNP NA Concentration are enrolled as Main Campus students and attend some courses in NMSU classrooms. Additional fees may be applied by the SON for clinical courses.

There are two avenues to pursue the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree at the NMSU SON: the **BSN to DNP option** and **MSN to DNP option**. The BSN-DNP option is for baccalaureate-prepared RNs and is offered in three specialty tracks: **Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) and Nurse Anesthesia (CRNA)**. Individuals successfully completing either of the above options will be prepared to take the national certification exam for the corresponding specialty area. Students wishing to complete both NP specialty tracks in order to become dual certified as a FNP and PMHNP would complete the DNP degree in one specialty and a certificate in the other.

Applicants with a Master's degree in nursing who have a current RN license are eligible to apply to the 5-semester Population Health Leadership MSN-DNP concentration.

Nurse practitioners (with a Master's or doctoral degree) who wish to take the certification exam in a different specialty area are eligible for the year-long **Post Graduate APRN certificate program**, which is offered for the **FNP and PMHNP specialties**. In some cases, these students elect to complete the MSN-DNP option and the certificate program concurrently.

Nurses with a Master's degree who are not licensed as an APRN and want to obtain an APRN license must complete the BSN-DNP option in order to complete the requirements for the FNP, PMHNP or CRNA track. Please contact the Graduate Advisor to determine which courses from the MSN degree may be transferrable.

Graduate Advisor: Anthony Castro, rcastro@nmsu.edu , 575-646-2772.

DNP PROGRAM EXPECTED PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The DNP expected program outcomes are based on the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's [Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Practice Nursing](#) (2006). Upon graduation from the NMSU DNP program, the graduate is expected to:

1. Integrate, synthesize, design and translate theory and research-based nursing and interdisciplinary knowledge to develop and evolve advanced practice nursing
2. Develop and evaluate care delivery ensuring quality health care and patient safety within an ethical framework
3. Design, deliver, direct and disseminate evidence-based practices.
4. Use information, systems/technology to select, use and evaluate programs of care, outcomes of care and care systems.
5. Advocate for health care practice/system changes through policy development, implementation and evaluation.
6. Employ effective communication, collaboration, consultative, and leadership skills to promote positive client and health organization outcomes
7. Integrate principles of clinical prevention, biostatistics, population health, and cultural competence into their advanced practice nursing role.
8. Implement the advanced practice nursing role in accordance with national standards.

DNP program outcomes are mapped to each course objective in the [DNP degree plan](#).

ADDITIONAL EXPECTED PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The BSN-DNP FNP and PMHNP Specialty Tracks prepare students as nurse practitioners. The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) have developed a series of nurse practitioner competencies that all programs in the United States must achieve. The [NONPF Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies](#) are achieved through the BSN-DNP and curricula at NMSU.

Nurse Practitioner graduates have knowledge, skills, and abilities that are essential to independent clinical practice. The NP Core Competencies are acquired through mentored patient care experiences with emphasis on **independent** and **interprofessional** practice; analytic skills for evaluating and providing **evidence-based, patient centered care** across settings; and advanced knowledge of the health care delivery system.

Doctoral prepared NPs apply knowledge of scientific foundations in practice for quality care. They are able to apply skills in technology and **information literacy**, and engage in practice inquiry to improve health outcomes, policy, and healthcare delivery. Areas of increased knowledge, skills, and expertise include advanced communication skills, collaboration, complex decision making, leadership, and the business of health care. The competencies elaborated here build upon previous work that identified knowledge and skills essential to DNP competencies (AACN 1996; AACN, 2006; NONPF & National Panel, 2006) and are consistent with the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine's report, *The Future of Nursing* (IOM, 2011). [NONPF 2012, page 1]

Each nurse practitioner specialty (FNP and PMHNP) has a set of competencies that students must meet prior to graduation. These competencies were developed by a national task force of nurse practitioner faculty and can be found in a 2013 document titled '[Population-Focused Nurse Practitioner Competencies](#)'. Competencies are mapped to the students' clinical evaluation tool in the nurse practitioner clinical courses.

ENROLLMENT OPTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

BSN-DNP Concentration

The BSN-DNP option is offered exclusively as a 3-year, full-time program of study. Students who are unable to progress in the full-time program reapply when they are able to attend the program full-time. BSN-DNP students are required to attend a **2-day program orientation** on the NMSU campus in Las Cruces NM at the start of Fall semester in their first year. BSN-DNP students are also required to attend a **three-four day clinical seminar** on the NMSU campus prior to their third year in the program. Students who are not able to attend these on campus events will not be able to progress in the program.

MSN-DNP Concentration

The MSN-DNP program is offered on both a full-time and a part-time basis. MSN-DNP students are required to attend a **2-day program orientation** on the NMSU campus in Las Cruces NM at the start of Fall semester in their first year.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AUTHORIZATION

New Mexico is a member of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and New Mexico State University is SARA institution. Members of SARA agree to honor the regulatory requirements of each member state. If you live in a state where SARA authorization is limited, we may not be able to accept your application. Please check the [SARA authorization map](#) if you are planning to apply to the NMSU School of Nursing and reside outside of New Mexico. For more information please visit the [NMSU Online website](#) and the [NMSU SARA website](#).

Please note that some Boards of Nursing regulate nurse practitioner education. Some states will not allow out-of-state programs with clinical practicum experiences to be offered in their jurisdictions, or have specific requirements. The NMSU School of Nursing is not responsible for nursing education program requirements imposed by states other than New Mexico. We reserve the right to choose not to submit applications for approval to conduct nursing education activities to out-of-state boards of nursing or other state agencies that will require substantial administrative time to complete and/or are cost prohibitive.

Please refer to the [National Council for State Boards of Nursing](#) and look up the requirements for the state where you reside and wish to conduct your clinical training. Note that much of the information on the NCSBN website pertains to pre-licensure programs (i.e., ADN/BSN). The SON graduate advisor may have more information about post licensure (i.e., APRN/nurse practitioner) distance education in your state.

Graduate Advisor: Anthony Castro, rcaastro@nmsu.edu , 575-646-2772

GENERAL SCHOOL OF NURSING INFORMATION AND POLICIES

SCHOOL OF NURSING GRADUATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

School of Nursing Director	Dr. Alexa Doig adoig@nmsu.edu 575-646-1668
Associate Director for Graduate Programs	Dr. Wanda Borges wjborges@nmsu.edu 575-646-3085
MSN-DNP Track Director (MSN-DNP Faculty Advisor)	Dr. Conni DeBlieck deblieck@nmsu.edu 575-646-5742
FNP Specialty Track Director (DNP & Certificate Faculty Advisor)	Dr. Elizabeth Kuchler ekuchler@nmsu.edu 575-646-3787
PMHNP Specialty Track Director (DNP & Certificate Faculty Advisor)	Dr. Shelly Noe shnoe@nmsu.edu 575-646-5864
Nurse Anesthesia Specialty Track Director	Dr. Madeline Chalenor E-mail Office Phone
Director of Clinical Placements	Dr. Linda Summers lsummers@nmsu.edu 575-646-3622
SON Graduate Advisor	Anthony Castro rcastro@nmsu.edu 575-646-2772
SON Graduate Program Coordinator	Elisabeth Cole coleel18@nmsu.edu 575-646-5616

SON DNP PROGRAM FACULTY (profiles on the [SON website](#)):

Bea Ade-Oshifogun, PhD, PMHNP	Lori Saiki PhD, RN
Randee Greenwald, PhD, RN	Justin White, DNP, PMHNP, LCSW
Thomas Hayth, DNP, FNP	Jacqueline Williams, PhD, PMHNP
Stephanie Lynch PhD, FNP, PMHNP	

COMPUTER AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students enrolled in a distance education program must have consistent and reliable access to a computer and the internet. Familiarity and proficiency with technology is the student's responsibility. Hardware, software and network limitations or issues are not acceptable reasons for late, missing or incorrect assignments. Both PC and Mac environments are supported at NMSU.

The following is a list of required computer technologies:

1. Access to a desktop or laptop computer with high speed internet connection;
2. A web browser that supports the [Canvas learning management system](#) and [Zoom](#), a videoconferencing platform;
3. A current version of **JAVA** (www.java.com);
4. Microsoft Office 2010 or higher (Word, Excel and PowerPoint) – NMSU students may download [Office 365](#) for free;
5. Adobe Reader (for opening PDF files at www.adobe.com);
6. Webcam and microphone/headset for videoconferencing.

Student must be proficient at the following computer skills:

1. Navigate and search the Internet
2. Use e-mail
3. Attach document files in an email
4. Download, sign, save and send files
5. Software: Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, Adobe Acrobat, Zoom

Please note that there may be other hardware, software and network limitations or issues that are not identified in this document.

NMSU's Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) Customer Service Center is equipped to answer your information technology (IT) questions.

Phone: 575-646-1840

E-mail: help@nmsu.edu.

Website: <https://inside.nmsu.edu/help/>

COMMUNICATION

The NMSU email system is the official communication avenue for the School of Nursing. Faculty, staff, and students have an email account (@nmsu.edu) on the University's centralized mail server. Web access to e-mail is available when you log in to [myNMSU](#). Email sent to our central server can also be redirected to any other existing email accounts on or off campus. Please email NMSU faculty and staff from your NMSU email account.

Setting boundaries

Clarifying our values, intentions and boundaries helps us send clear messages to people we interact without emotion. Being able to calmly state what is acceptable and unacceptable to us in a non-judgmental manner ensures that we are using our personal power to enforce boundaries that are important to us.

Here are the five steps to create a boundary statement with an example:

1. State the value being violated. "Speaking respectfully is important to me."
2. Point out how your value is being violated. "Calling me the 'b' word is disrespectful."
3. State how you feel using "I" statements, such as, "I feel hurt."
4. State what you are prepared to do. "If I am spoken to disrespectfully again I will leave."
5. Follow through if your boundary is violated. In the example above if disrespectful behavior continues, I would leave.

Adapted from: Morgan, Patricia. (2020). Protect your values with healthy boundaries: here's how. Retrieved on 09/30/20 from <https://www.solutionsforresilience.com/healthy-boundaries/>

Your faculty also have boundaries that they create based on their values. By contract, faculty must be available 40 hours a week which is typically defined as Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm except for Holidays during the semester. However, some faculty maintain a clinical practice during the week and aren't available to students during that time. If that is the case, they may be available on weekends and after hours to respond to students. However, you should not expect all faculty

to be available during these time frames.

Faculty are expected to communicate their availability and boundaries in the syllabus for each class. Follow the instructions that faculty give you for contacting them and understand that each faculty may have different times they are available.

ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION: BSN-DNP OPTION

Admission to the BSN-DNP program in the FNP, PMHNP and CRNA specialties is a competitive process.

Selection of candidates for the BSN-DNP NP specialties is based on the following criteria:

Minimum Requirements:

1. Successful admission to the NMSU Graduate School;
2. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree from a nationally accredited nursing program (CCNE or ACEN);
3. BSN cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better (or graduate degree GPA \geq 3.0).
4. Current unencumbered RN license from one of the 50 U.S. States or Territories.
5. Evidence of a statistics course at the undergraduate or graduate level.
6. After an initial review of applications, selected applicants will be invited to attend an interview with faculty (on campus or via video conferencing).

Admission decisions are based on:

- Nursing GPA (nursing courses only) and overall academic preparedness;
- Strength of references;
- Alignment of career goals with the DNP degree in the chosen specialty and applicant understanding of the DNP degree;
- Work and clinical experience (general and in chosen specialty area);
- Quality of writing in submitted documents;
- Responses to interview questions during interview.

BSN-DNP Admission Policies:

1. Candidates selected for admission will be required to notify the SON of their intent to attend the DNP program by the deadline in the admission letter.
2. BSN-DNP students are required to attend a **2-day program orientation** on the NMSU campus in Las Cruces NM at the start of Fall semester in their first year.
3. BSN-DNP students should attend the university's [New Graduate Student Orientation](#) or complete the online training prior to the SON's program orientation.
4. BSN-DNP students in their third year are required to attend a week-long clinical seminar on the NMSU campus. ***Failure to attend both two-day orientation the first year and the week-long seminar cannot progress in the program.**
5. BSN-DNP students will have to meet all of the SON's clinical clearance requirements (including criminal background check and toxicology screen) prior to enrolling in their first practicum course (NURS 6307 in Spring Year 1). Students who do not meet these requirements will not be allowed to enroll in that semester's courses, which will affect progression or may result in program dismissal (see Clinical Clearance Handbook).
6. The SON cannot defer admission to a subsequent year. Applicants who decline admission for any reason are required to re-apply during the next application cycle.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION: MSN-DNP DEGREE OPTION

Admission to the MSN-DNP program is a competitive process. Selection of candidates for the MSN-DNP option is based on the following criteria.

Minimum Requirements:

1. Successful admission to the NMSU Graduate School;
2. Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree from a nationally accredited nursing program;
3. MSN cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better.
4. Evidence of a statistics course at the undergraduate or graduate level (no time limit);
5. After an initial review of applications, selected applicants will be invited to attend an interview with faculty (on campus or via video conferencing).

Admission decisions are based on:

- MSN GPA and overall academic preparedness;
- Strength of references;
- Alignment of career goals with the DNP degree and applicant understanding of the DNP degree;
- General clinical/work experience and clinical experience;
- Quality of writing in submitted documents;
- Responses to interview questions during interview.

MSN-DNP Admission Policies:

1. Candidates selected for admission will be required to notify the SON of their intent to attend the DNP program by the deadline in the admission letter.
2. MSN-DNP students are required to attend a **2-day program orientation** at NMSU at the start of Fall semester in their first year.
3. MSN-DNP students will have to meet all of the SON's clinical clearance requirements (including criminal background check and toxicology screen) prior to enrolling in their first practicum course (Nurs 6307 - Spring semester of Year 1). Students who do not meet these requirements will not be allowed to enroll in that semester's courses, which will affect progression or may result in program dismissal.

4. MSN-DNP students should attend the university's [New Graduate Student Orientation](#) or complete the online training prior to the SON's program orientation.
5. The SON cannot defer admission to a subsequent year. Applicants who decline admission for any reason are required to re-apply during the next application cycle.
6. Students are required to obtain official documentation or a letter from their MSN program that clearly denotes the total number of supervised clinical hours completed at the advanced practice level. A gap analysis to determine the number of clinical hours required will be conducted upon admission by the DNP program director.

PETITIONING FOR EXCEPTIONS TO ADMISSION CRITERIA

Exceptions to any of the program admission criteria are considered on an individual basis and are at the discretion of the Graduate Committee and the Associate Director of Graduate Programs. Requests for exceptions are made in writing to the Associate Director of Graduate Programs. The SON Graduate Committee will consider the petition at a regularly scheduled meeting during the Spring or Fall semesters.

TRANSFER POLICIES

Students who were dismissed from a Master's degree, DNP degree or certificate program are generally not eligible to apply the NMSU SON graduate programs.

Students who have partially completed a DNP (or MSN) degree program at another school and left in good standing may be eligible to apply to the NMSU DNP program. Please contact the Graduate Advisor to determine eligibility.

Graduate Advisor: Anthony Castro, rcastro@nmsu.edu , 575-646-2772

ACADEMIC POLICIES

ADVISING

The formal academic advisor for BSN-DNP Concentrations is the Specialty Track Director (FNP, PMHNP, CRNA). The formal academic advisor for MSN-DNP students is the MSN-DNP Program Director. See page 12 for contact information. The student should contact their advisor for information related to procedures and requirements for degree planning, changes in the program of study, course advisement and transfer of credit from other institutions.

Students will also be assigned a chair for the DNP Project, who will be the primary advisor as the student develops and executes the required project. The student's project chair will sign off on the student's degree plan, however the Specialty Track Director must be consulted about any proposed changes to the degree plan or program requirements.

DEGREE PLAN/PROGRAM OF STUDY

NMSU official requirements for School of Nursing graduate programs include all the didactic and clinical requirements necessary for the awarding of the graduate degree and eligibility for certification and licensing (where applicable).

The School of Nursing has developed degree plan documents that outline the required sequence of courses and the total number of credits required for each [DNP specialty track](#).

After a student has completed 12 credits of graduate work beyond the Master's degree, or its equivalent, in residence at New Mexico State University, they should complete the "[Program of Study and Committee for Doctoral Students](#)" form as instructed. For courses already completed, grades must be listed. After completing and signing the form, forward it to the Graduate Advisor (Anthony Castro, rcaastro@nmsu.edu) who will collect the rest of the required signatures.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Courses taken via distance education are considered in-residence courses, provided they are a part of the student's approved plan of study. The requirements for the BSN to DNP option require three years of study (9 semesters) beyond the bachelor's degree. The MSN-DNP option requires 5 semesters of study beyond the Master's degree. Attendance at the week-long Clinical Seminar (Boot Camp) is part of the doctoral residency requirement for APRN students.

TRANSFER OF CREDIT

DNP Program

The DNP degree consists of a minimum number of graduate level didactic course credit hours as well as a minimum number of clinical hours. The total number of required credits is based on the specialty area and/or program and is outlined on the current [degree plans](#). For more information about NMSU policies on transfer credit, please visit the online [NMSU Graduate Catalog](#).

The transfer of graduate credit from other universities or programs is not automatic. **In general, MSN courses are not eligible for transfer or waiver in the MSN-DNP option.** However, exceptions to this rule may be petitioned. Students may seek approval for transfer credit or course waiver. All requests for credit transfer are subject to approval by the Specialty Track Director (or MSN-DNP Program Director for MSN-DNP students), Associate Director for Graduate Programs, CHEST Associate Dean and Dean of the Graduate School.

Only courses from an accredited institution in which a grade of B or better was earned may be considered for transfer or waiver. No credit toward a graduate degree may be earned through correspondence or through extension work for another institution. Courses taken at a college or university on the Quarter system will transfer to NMSU with a reduced number of credits, and therefore may not meet program credit requirements.

Immediately after initial enrolment in the Graduate School, students must submit forms to obtain formal permission to transfer graduate-level course work. Please contact the Graduate Advisor (Anthony Castro, rcastro@nmsu.edu , 575-646-2772) to obtain the correct form and for information about the process.

At least 50 percent of the course credit toward the DNP degree must be completed at New Mexico State University. For more information about NMSU policies on transfer credit, please visit the online [NMSU Graduate Catalog](#).

TIME LIMITATIONS FOR COMPLETION OF DEGREE

Students must complete all requirements for the degree, as outlined in the NMSU Graduate School Catalog, within five years following completion of the doctoral comprehensive exam. All coursework and the DNP Project final defense must be completed within seven years of the date the first doctoral credit is earned. Adhering to the SON's degree plan and the DNP project schedule helps ensure a steady progress towards degree completion.

Students will be dismissed from the DNP program for failure to progress if this time limit is exceeded. A petition for an extension may be submitted to the Graduate Advisor. The petition must be approved by the student's Specialty Track Director and the Associate Director for the Graduate Programs. If the petition is approved in the SON, it is then forwarded to the Graduate School for approval.

ABSENCES

Do not plan vacations during the semester. If you must miss a class session, assignment/exam or a clinical experience, please notify the course faculty and supervisor (e.g., preceptor) in advance, if possible. If there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious illness, injury, or personal emergency) that might require a prolonged absence, please contact the course faculty immediately and notify them as to the circumstances. The course faculty will notify your Specialty Track Director or the MSN-DNP Program Director, and if necessary, the Associate Director for Graduate Programs if a review of policy is required. It is at the discretion of the course faculty whether or not make-up work will be permitted.

Please note that advanced notification for planned absences may be necessary in the clinical setting to prepare clients and to arrange any backup coverage.

Leave of Absence

A student wishing to discontinue study for one or more semesters must submit a [Graduate School Leave of Absence form](#) to the SON Graduate Advisor. The request should include the beginning date and the anticipated ending date for the period of absence. LOAs must be approved by the student's advisor as appropriate (i.e., Specialty Track Director), the department head (i.e., SON Director) and the Graduate School.

A graduate student on leave of absence will be expected not to use university facilities and place no demands upon the university faculty and staff, and, therefore will pay no fees. Time spent in the "leave-of-absence" status will not be counted toward the advanced degree time limits.

A graduate student who fails to obtain a leave of absence from the Graduate School will be considered withdrawn from the university by the Graduate School. In order to resume studies after such absences, the student must go through the formal readmission process.

In deciding whether or not to grant a LOA to a student, the School of Nursing will take into consideration if faculty or other program resources will be available for students upon return to the program.

CHANGING SPECIALTY AREAS

Students may not switch between specialties within the DNP programs without the approval of the Graduate Programs Committee and the Associate Director for Graduate Programs. Students wishing to make a change must withdraw from their current specialty track and petition for readmission to the DNP program with a transfer into the requested track. Approval is also based on space available. The Graduate School must be notified of changes to the specialty track.

ACADEMIC RECORDS

Students may have access to their academic records maintained in the School of Nursing Student Advising Office. Students may request access to their file by making an appointment with their Specialty Track Director or the Graduate Advisor.

GRADING POLICIES AND GRADE REQUIREMENTS

SON Graduate Programs Grading Scale

A – 90% – 100%

B – 80% -89%

C – 70% -79%

D – 60%-69%

F – 60%

S (satisfactory) – > 80%

U (unsatisfactory) – < 79%

Each course syllabus contains specific information about how grades are calculated.

S/U Grading

Under S/U grading, the instructor assigns an S grade for satisfactory achievement of the course learning objectives (equivalent to the letter grade of B or higher) and a U grade for unsatisfactory performance in the class. U indicates that the student has stopped work or is doing work of unacceptable quality.

If a student accumulates a total of two U (unsatisfactory) grades in courses with S/U grading, the student will be placed on provisional status. If three U (unsatisfactory) grades are reported for any of these courses, the student will be dismissed from the program and Graduate School.

Receiving a U in any course will impact progression in the DNP Program.

Incomplete Grades

The letter grade of “I” (Incomplete) is assigned for passable work that could not be completed due to circumstances beyond the student’s control that develop after the last day to withdraw from the course. In no case is an “I” grade to be used to avoid the assigning of D, F, or U grades for failing work. The School of Nursing follows the [NMSU policy for Incomplete “I” grades](#). Receiving an “I” grade may affect student progression in the program. When making up an “I” grade, previously submitted coursework for grades in the course cannot be resubmitted. “I” grades need to be completed before the student may progress in the DNP or certificate program.

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

In accordance with NMSU Graduate School policies, DNP and certificate students must maintain at least a 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA). Students must earn a grade of B or better in all required courses in order to progress to the next semester. DNP coursework is leveled, therefore in most instances all courses assigned to each semester must be completed before progressing to the next semester.

A student who does not register for or withdraws from one course in the student’s degree plan will be placed on academic probation (see page 26). Not completing a course in the degree plan will result in substantial delays since many courses are pre-requisites for others. If the student does not register for or withdraws from more than one course during the same semester (or in a future semester) they must write a formal appeal to the SON Graduate Programs Committee to be considered eligible to return to the program to complete the required courses. If this appeal is denied, the student is eligible to re-apply to the program and re-interview with program faculty. If approved to return by the Graduate Programs Committee they will be placed at the appropriate level of the curriculum if there is space available.

CONDITIONS FOR READMISSION

DNP students who do not enroll in doctoral program courses for one (1) academic year (fall, spring, summer semesters) must make a formal request to the SON Graduate Programs Committee for readmission. If the request is granted, the student’s Specialty Track Director will, in consultation with the Associate Director for Graduate Programs, stipulate any coursework to be repeated. If during the student’s absence, the curriculum or admission standards have changed, the

student is expected to meet any new admission standards and/or fulfill the requirements of the current curriculum.

Students not in good standing with the NMSU SON or Graduate School (i.e., dismissed for academic reasons), who have not met current NMSU program requirements, or have committed academic or non-academic misconduct at the time they ceased coursework shall not be readmitted to the program.

ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE POLICY

Students who wish to appeal a decision or awarding of a grade by a faculty member must follow the student grievance procedure outlined in the [Graduate Student Academic Grievances \(Policy 5.14\)](#) in the *NMSU Student Handbook*.

It is recommended that students who wish to question a course or assignment grade exhaust informal procedures before enacting the formal appeal/grievance process. The informal process begins with discussing the issue/concern with the individual faculty member. If a resolution is not found, the student and faculty member can seek guidance from the DNP Program Director. Unresolved issues at this level may then be brought to the attention of the Associate Director for Graduate Programs.

Students who wish to formally appeal a decision or awarding of a grade by a faculty member are advised to contact the Associate Director for Graduate Programs or the SON Director for assistance with this process.

CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO PROGRESS

Academic Probation and Suspension

Academic standing is based on both the student's GPA in the program and cumulative GPA. Academic records of all graduate students are reviewed at the end of each semester. If a nursing graduate student earns a **C** grade in any course, they must repeat that course and cannot enroll in any subsequent course for which the course is a prerequisite. Therefore, students will not advance in the program until the "C" grade is addressed. A subsequent grade of **C** in a course or any two **C**'s across the DNP curriculum will result in dismissal from the program. In addition, a grade of **D**, **F**, or **U** in any course results in dismissal from the DNP program. See the [NMSU System Academic Regulations](#) under the heading of "Academic Probation and Suspension" for

policies specific to graduate students.

If the course for which the student earns a “C” grade in a NP didactic course, the clinical practicum course must be repeated even if the student had achieved satisfactory performance in the co-requisite course. Receiving an unsatisfactory grade may substantially affect student progress in the program (see Academic Progression). Re-enrollment is not automatic and is contingent upon space available in the courses. Thus, if the student falls out of course sequence, the student may have to wait until space is available in another cohort (see Conditions for Readmission).

Program Dismissal

Dismissal from the DNP program or Post Graduate APRN certificate program may result from the following:

1. The student earns two (2) C grades (in the same or different courses).
2. The student earns a grade of D or F in a single course or three U grades in the program (including failure to make progress in the DNP project resulting in a U grade).
3. Failure to enroll in classes (see page 25 – Academic Progression)
4. Serious academic misconduct as defined in [NMSU Student Academic Code of Conduct](#).
5. Unsafe or unprofessional conduct in clinical practice (see page 31 in handbook).
6. Any other violation of the [NMSU Student Academic Code of Conduct](#) or the [NMSU Standards for Student Social Conduct](#).

Dismissal Appeals

The School of Nursing uses the [NMSU grievances procedures](#) for appeals of program dismissal. Please contact the Associate Director of Graduate Programs for assistance with this process.

POLICIES CONCERNING SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

- All assigned papers and projects will be typed or word-processed and double-spaced.
- All students are required to use the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)* for all written papers (exception is DNP project final paper, which may use the chosen journal's style and reference format).
- Any assigned papers and projects will be considered late if they have not been presented to the course professor at the announced time and date due. Any late papers may have a penalty attached or may not be accepted. Students with extenuating circumstances are expected to contact the course faculty **prior** to the assignment deadline.
- Students are encouraged to use editors for their papers. Editing of student work by others is limited to assistance with grammar, punctuation, and style only; the substance of the paper must be the student's original work. If an editor is used, the course professor may require the draft of the paper at the point it is given to the editor when the final paper is submitted.
- Student papers for School of Nursing graduate courses must be submitted through a plagiarism analysis software application called Turnitin that is accessed through the Assignment tool in Canvas (see Use of Turnitin section).

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND PLAGIARISM

Students are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures related to academic integrity found in the NMSU Graduate Catalog and NMSU Student Handbook. For further information you may refer to the NMSU Student Handbook, specifically the [Student Academic Code of Conduct-Academic Integrity \(Policy 5.10\)](#). The School of Nursing follows the university's [Procedures to Respond to Allegations of Student Academic Misconduct \(Policy 5.11\)](#), including guidelines for sanctions.

Use of Turnitin

Student papers for School of Nursing graduate courses must be submitted through a plagiarism analysis software application called Turnitin that is accessed through the Assignment tool in Canvas. Students will be permitted to check their analysis prior to the final submission, therefore it is recommended that this check is conducted well before the assignment deadline. The analysis must indicate an overall source similarity content of 20% or less (without references and citations). Papers with a similarity index of greater than 20% will not be accepted or will receive a grade of zero. SON faculty reserve the right to submit any and all student work, including but not limited to course papers, discussions, presentations, written exams, and DNP project papers, to Turnitin or a similar plagiarism checker at the faculty member's discretion.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another person's work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one's own. Any ideas, words, pictures, or other intellectual content taken from another source must be acknowledged in a citation that gives credit to the source. The prohibition of plagiarism applies irrespective of the origin of the material, including the internet, another person's work, unpublished materials, or oral sources. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct.

A special case of plagiarism is the unacceptable practice of "self-plagiarism" in which an author will use segments of his/her own material (e.g., a paper from a previous course) in a new assignment without reference. **Unless given explicit permission from the course faculty, work from one course may not be submitted as work for another course.** The exception is using written work from course assignments in the DNP project papers or PowerPoint presentations.

Assignments and other types of submitted student work that contain plagiarism are not acceptable as scholastic work and will, at the very least, result in a zero for submitted work. The SON follows the university's definitions and policies in the [NMSU Student Code of Conduct](#). All incidences of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct (e.g., cheating, misrepresentation, etc.) identified by faculty or administrators will be reported to the NMSU Academic Conduct Officer who will provide guidance on consequences and sanctions.

ETHICS

All students in the School of Nursing are expected to behave with the highest of ethical standards. To guide the student along the path of ethical nursing practice, the SON uses the [*American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses*](#).

1. The nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.
4. The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and determines the appropriate delegation of tasks consistent with the nurse's obligation to provide optimum patient care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to preserve integrity and safety, to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse participates in establishing, maintaining, and improving healthcare environments and conditions of employment conducive to the provision of quality health care and consistent with the values of the profession through individual and collective action.
7. The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to practice, education, administration, and knowledge development.
8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public in promoting community, national, and international efforts to meet health needs.
9. The profession of nursing, as represented by associations and their members, is responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy.

American Nurses Association, *Code of Ethics* (2015)

The SON also expects all students to follow the [NMSU Student Code of Social Conduct](#).

Unprofessional Conduct Advisory:

When faculty encounter or observe unprofessional conduct by students, the faculty will notify the student and encourage a change in behavior. Should unprofessional conduct continue, faculty will consult with the Associate Director of Graduate Programs. After review, the Associate Director of Graduate Programs may issue an Unprofessional Conduct Advisory (UCA) to the student. The student will have the opportunity to provide a response to the identified instances of unprofessional conduct in writing. The student will meet with the faculty and the Associate Director of Graduate Programs to determine a plan for addressing the pattern of unprofessional conduct. Students who receive more than one UCA may be subject to probation or dismissal from the program.

DISTANCE EDUCATION/ONLINE LEARNING

The DNP degree program and the certificate program are distance education programs that use a variety of educational methodologies for the delivery of the didactic courses. Online learning, sometimes referred to as e-learning, is a form of distance education. Online courses are delivered over the internet and are accessed from a computer with an internet/web browser (e.g., Chrome, Safari, Fire Fox, etc.). All NMSU courses use [Canvas](#) as the learning management system for course delivery.

Online courses can be asynchronous or synchronous. Most distance education courses in the School of Nursing blend asynchronous and synchronous methods.

Definitions:

Asynchronous – no scheduled class sessions, however there are generally regularly scheduled deadlines and other requirements.

Synchronous – students meet with their faculty online at a specified time.

Online Course Policies

Distance education programs are ideal for students whose work schedule or family commitments do not allow them to attend classes on campus. Distance education can provide students with the opportunity to meet educational goals as an advanced practice registered nurse while remaining in your community. However, online learning requires self-discipline and motivation—you will be primarily responsible for their own learning!

Due to the amount of content and the complexity of concepts covered, online courses at the NMSU School of Nursing do not have flexible scheduling. The following are the School of Nursing course policies (additional policies are listed in each course syllabus):

1. Students are expected to meet deadlines for assignments, which may include papers, quizzes, exams, online discussions, group projects and learning experiences.
2. Students are required to participate in on-line discussions and activities on a regular basis.
3. Students are expected to participate in scheduled video discussions/meetings using video conferencing (Zoom) with their cameras on to verify engagement.

GRADUATION

To officially graduate from NMSU in their last semester, all work must be completed according to the deadlines on the [NMSU Graduate School calendar](#). In addition, the student must apply for graduation prior to that semester's deadline. Failure to apply for graduation will result in delays in degree posting. In some cases, the student may not graduate until the following semester, which can affect their ability to become employed as a nurse practitioner.

Application for Graduation

Graduate nursing students who successfully complete their plan of study/degree (and DNP project for DNP students) are eligible for graduation. Students apply for graduation through their [myNMSU](#) account during the [graduation application period during their last semester](#).

For more details, please review the [Graduate School's graduation information](#).

STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON SON COMMITTEES

Student representatives to the School of Nursing committees afford students the opportunity to influence school and program policies. The committees on which student members may serve are the Graduate Programs Committee and the Student Affairs Committee. Student members of a school committee must be in good academic standing. Student members may vote, but may not serve as a Committee Chair or secretary.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Students are included in the ongoing process of course and program evaluation. At the end of each semester, course and program evaluations are available in each course. Students are expected to provide feedback on all courses through the final course evaluation available via Canvas. Each year, representatives from the different graduate programs are invited to serve as student representatives on the SON Graduate Programs Committee. Graduates of the program are encouraged to participate in alumni surveys (sent upon graduation and within one year following graduation) and to keep the School of Nursing informed of licensing and certification status.

CLINICAL COURSE POLICIES

All DNP Students complete DNP Project Practicum hours in the NURS 6307 course during their DNP Project. Students must follow the General Clinical Practicum Policies when completing their DNP Project Practicum hours.

GENERAL CLINICAL PRACTICUM POLICIES

1. All SON clinical experiences are conducted with clinical affiliates only when there is an approved and signed affiliation agreement between NMSU and the clinical partner. A list of current affiliation agreements used in past semesters is posted on the DNP and Post-Graduate Certificate Virtual Advising Canvas course.
2. DNP Project Practicum hours are indirectly supervised by the Chair of the DNP Project Committee.
3. One credit is given for 64 hours of supervised clinical practicum.
4. For the DNP Project Practicum hours, the Chair of the DNP Project Committee has the responsibility of:
 - 1) approving the site for the DNP Project,
 - 2) providing orientation/consultation with site personnel as needed,
 - 3) providing indirect supervision, and providing feedback/determining the student's grade in the course.
5. DNP Project Practicum hours must be documented in Exxat using the Timesheet within 2 weeks of completion.

CLINICAL PRECEPTORS AND AFFILIATION AGREEMENTS

Students are responsible for identifying and contacting potential “preceptors” or site liaisons for their DNP Project Practicum courses and submitting the following:

- a completed Preceptor/Field Supervision Biographical Data Form
- a current (< 2 years old) resume/CV, if one is not already on file.

Preceptor biographical and resume/CV information will be reviewed by the Chair of the DNP Project Committee.

All SON practicum experiences are conducted with clinical affiliates only when there is an approved and signed affiliation agreement between NMSU and the clinical partner. To determine if there is a current affiliation agreement, students will review the SON Affiliation Agreement List posted on the DNP and Post-Graduate Certificate Virtual Advising Canvas course. If there is no affiliation agreement listed, the student will follow the process outlined below

1. Student submits Clinical Affiliation Information Form to the Director of the Program
2. Director of the Program will review and approve the new site and forward the Clinical Affiliation Information Form to the Staff person responsible for clinical affiliations to process the Memorandum Of Understanding.
3. The Staff person responsible for clinical affiliations will track the new agreement applications through each level of approval.
4. The student will be notified when the affiliation agreement has final approval.

Students should plan to initiate an affiliation agreement with an institution where none exists at least 3-6 months in advance of the start of the clinical course. Affiliation agreements have to be approved by the NMSU Office of General Counsel and often the agency’s legal department. Therefore, you should be anticipating your “next” semester’s clinical placement and **PLAN ahead**. Delay in establishing your clinical experience may delay your progression in the program. If the student does not obtain a clinical site with a current affiliation agreement and a preceptor prior to **Census Date** each semester as shown in the [NMSU Academic Calendar](#), the student will withdraw from the program on Census Date and may continue with the next cohort if space is available.

CLINICAL CLEARANCES

Prior to starting each practicum course, students will be required to meet all of the clinical clearance requirements for the School of Nursing (and the clinical agency if any additional items are required). All costs associated with these clearances are the responsibility of the student. Failure to complete clearance requirements will result in program dismissal. Positive toxicology results and/or criminal background checks that do not meet the NM Department of Health (DOH) clearance standards will result in an inability of the student to enroll in the clinical course and/or dismissal from the program. Clinical clearance requirements at specific clinical agencies may change during the academic year. Students will be required to meet any new requirements.

Clinical agencies require that each of these requirements is valid through the **end of an academic semester** (April 30, July 31, or November 30 respectively). It is the student's responsibility to assure documentation of all required clearances are received/uploaded by the required deadlines. The School of Nursing sends students information about how to obtain background checks and drug testing.

Background Check

Criminal background and fingerprinting checks are required **annually** for all students enrolled in clinical courses/practicum hours. These requirements are subject to change as federal, state and agency regulations change.

Drug Testing

In order for students to participate in clinical experiences at affiliated healthcare agencies, a 10-Panel drug screening test is required **annually**. Clinical agencies and the School of Nursing reserve the right to require random drug testing at any time. Pending return of the drug screening results from a random test, students may not be permitted to attend clinicals within the specific agency. Furthermore, if a student-caused delay in testing occurs (e.g., student fails to show up to a drug testing appointment), the student will not be able to attend their clinical practicum.

In the event of a "positive" test, the student may appeal the findings as outlined by the procedures for the drug testing company or specific health agency. A student with a substantiated "positive" drug test will be referred to the Associate Director for the Graduate Programs. A "positive" drug test may prevent the student from enrolling in the clinical course and may result in program dismissal. Falsification of drug testing will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

The School of Nursing is automatically sent a copy of your results, therefore, there is no need to forward your results to the nursing office.

Required Screening for Disease and Immunizations

It is essential that nursing graduate students do everything possible to prevent spreading communicable diseases to their patients and to the community. For this reason, the School of Nursing and the local health care agencies have established minimum guidelines for immunization for nurses and other health care workers.

If you need immunizations, you may obtain them from your primary care provider. If you are a full or part-time student at NMSU, you may obtain your immunizations from the [NMSU Aggie Health & Wellness Center](#) on the Las Cruces campus.

The following is a summary of the clinical clearance requirements:

REQUIREMENT	ACCEPTED	NOT ACCEPTED
Background check	Clear or minor offenses (e.g., traffic tickets). Students and faculty are screened through the NM DOH Criminal Caregivers program.	Major offenses against people (e.g., child abuse, drug trafficking).
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	American Heart Association (AHA) approved Basic Life Support (BLS) for health care providers.	American Red Cross (ARC) or other online only certifications.
Drug Testing	10 panel test on urine through www.CastleBranch.com . Students are screened at the beginning of the program and annually.	A screen with fewer than 10 substances. <u>Positive</u> results (without a validated medical reason, use of medical marijuana not permitted).
Hepatitis B	3 vaccines (usually the 2 nd is given 1 month later and the 3 rd is given 4-6 months later) of any of these brand names: Energix B, Recombivax HB, or Twinrix AND a <u>positive</u> titer of antibodies in the blood. Students can begin with 1 or 2 vaccines and then complete the series later.	Havarix A vaccine (this is for Hepatitis A). <u>Negative</u> or <u>Equivocal</u> titer requires revaccination of the series but not an additional titer. The student has presumptive immunity after the second series per CDC guidelines.
Influenza (flu)	Flu immunization (injected or intranasal) every winter (September through March).	Pneumonia vaccine (this is for a different organism). The injectable form can be given to pregnant women, but not the intranasal form. If the immunization is declined, then many agencies require personnel to wear a mask.

Measles (Rubeola) Mumps Rubella (German measles)	2 doses of the MMR vaccine that are at least 28 days apart (if born before 1957, then 1 dose) AND a <u>positive</u> titer to <u>each</u> virus. Note: Titers to all 3 are required.	<u>Negative</u> or <u>Equivocal</u> titer to <u>any</u> virus requires revaccination of the series but not an additional titer. The student has presumptive immunity after the second series per CDC guidelines. Note: Rubella vaccine should NOT be given to pregnant women (a provider note is needed).
Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (TDaP)	A vaccine (or booster) within the last 10 years containing Pertussis.	Tetanus and Diphtheria only
Tuberculosis (TB)	A 2-step TB Skin Test (TST, PPD, Mantoux) is required every 12 months that is <u>negative</u> (less than 15 millimeters of induration). The 2-step process is one skin test and reading followed by a second skin test and reading 7-21 days after the first test; OR a negative blood test (T-Spot TB test or QuantiFERON®-TB Gold); OR if person ever had a positive skin test result, then one <u>negative</u> chest x-ray AND a yearly <u>negative</u> screening of TB symptoms.	<u>Positive</u> skin test Note: people who had the BCG vaccine can have TB tests. <u>Positive</u> chest x-ray or symptom report. <u>Positive</u> blood test
Varicella (Chicken pox)	Adults: 2 vaccines that are at least 28 days apart; OR 1 vaccine given before 13 years of age; AND a <u>positive</u> titer	Reports from providers or from individuals that they have had the disease. <u>Negative</u> or <u>Equivocal</u> titer requires revaccination of the series but not an additional titer. The student has presumptive immunity after the second series per CDC guidelines. Varicella vaccine should NOT be given to pregnant women (a provider note is needed).
Clinical Agency Orientations	Students may need to complete agency orientations for fulfill other requirements.	No documentation of orientation completion.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

DNP and certificate students who are participating in school-sanctioned clinical experiences are covered by the New Mexico Risk Management Pool. It is not necessary to provide documentation of additional malpractice insurance for student clinical experiences. The NMSU coverage is only valid for participation in activities required for specific nursing courses and does not cover nursing or nurse practitioner activities performed beyond the requirements of the nursing program.

DNP COMPREHENSIVE AND FINAL EXAM POLICIES

In addition to completion of the required coursework and clinical practicum hours, NMSU Graduate School requirements for the DNP degree are as follows:

1. The comprehensive exam (with passing marks)
2. Completion of the DNP project (with passing marks)

The NMSU School of Nursing has defined the comprehensive exam as:

1. Proposal defense PowerPoint (or equivalent) presentation file (written component);
2. Executive Summary- 1-2 page narrative summary of the project proposal.
3. Literature review in narrative format that identifies the rationale for conducting the project, including description of the problem, choice of proposed intervention, program or other solution to the clinical problem identified, as well as the level of evidence (written component);
4. Meet with committee to get approval of the written components of the DNP Project Comprehensive Exam (oral component).
5. Orally present the DNP Project Proposal

In order to fulfill the requirements of the DNP degree, each student will develop, implement and evaluate a project that focuses on a clinical or health policy problem. The project must demonstrate the knowledge and skills acquired outlined in AACN's [Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice](#).

The NMSU School of Nursing has defined the DNP project as:

1. Institutional Review Board (IRB) application (cannot be submitted until after project proposal is approved by committee);
2. Execution of the approved project as outlined in the DNP proposal defense;
3. A professional poster that summarizes the project components, including outcomes and conclusions; OR
4. Oral (public) presentation of the project outcomes and conclusions (called the oral final exam);
5. A manuscript that summarizes the project components, including outcomes and conclusions.

Specific requirements for the DNP project are included in a document titled '*NMSU School of Nursing DNP Project Guidelines*', which is posted in the DNP and Post-Graduate Certificate Virtual Advising Canvas site.

DNP PROJECT COMMITTEE

The DNP project committee is formed for the purpose of guiding and advising the DNP student through comprehensive exam, project, and final defense/exam. The DNP project committee is also responsible for evaluating the student's work and determining the outcome of the 'exams'.

The DNP Project Committee consists of a minimum of two members. The DNP Committee will be chaired by a doctorally-prepared School of Nursing faculty member who is appointed by the Associate Director for Graduate Programs. The second member must be doctorally-prepared from the SON. Clinical site mentors are also encouraged to participate on the student's project committee as additional, non-voting members. A Graduate School Dean's Representative is not required to be on the DNP Project Committee. The project/capstone is not filed with the Graduate School.

SON Faculty with Graduate Faculty Status (profiles on the [SON website](#)):

Jochebed Bea Ade-Oshifogun, PhD,
PMHNP

Wanda J. Borges PhD, RN, ANP

Conni DeBlieck DNP, RN

Alexa Doig PhD, RN

Randee Greenwald PhD, FNP

Teresa Keller, PhD, RN

Elizabeth Kuchler DNP, FNP

Stephanie Lynch PhD, FNP, PMHNP

Shelly Noe DNP, PMHNP

Linda Summers PhD, FNP, PMHNP

Lori Saiki PhD, RN

Jacqueline Williams, PhD, PMHNP

To formalize the committee, the student lists all committee members on the [*Program of Study and Committee for Doctoral Students*](#) form and submits it to the SON Graduate Advisor. The School of Nursing Associate Director for Graduate Programs must approve committee membership.

DNP Project Chair's Responsibility

The project chair assumes primary responsibility for guiding the student through each phase of the DNP project including determining the topic and scope of the project, identifying additional project committee members, and providing feedback on the project proposal and final paper. In addition, the project chair will help the student identify timelines, assist the student in acquiring Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the DNP project, and provides guidance during the execution of the project. The project chair generally reviews written components of the project prior to sending them to other committee members.

Changes in DNP Project Committee Membership

Changes in the DNP project committee membership Change requests are to be made on the Program of Study and Committee for Doctoral Students form available at the [Graduate School](#). The Associate Director for Graduate Programs must approve all requests.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In the written and oral components of the comprehensive exam, DNP students must address the following: population health, theory, evidence-based practice, health care systems, and advanced practice nursing roles if in an APRN track.

The oral proposal defense date is scheduled by the SON Graduate Advisor.

The following requirements for the oral final project defense must be met:

- Members of the committee should receive the written components (PowerPoint presentation and Literature Review) at least two weeks prior to the defense date.
- All members of the committee review the written components and provide feedback/edits to the student and chair. The committee meets with the student who presents the Power-Point presentation. In the event of an emergency in which the chair cannot be present in person, the following protocol will be followed: vice-chair (a member of the committee appointed by the chair in consultation with the student) assumes responsibility of chair.

- After the presentation of the project proposal, the committee and student discuss the project and identify any changes or additional work to be done.
- The DNP Project Committee Chair and Members complete and sign the School of Nursing Report of the DNP Project Comprehensive Examination.

The student must satisfactorily demonstrate the attainment of the [*Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*](#).

Advancement to Candidacy

After the student has successfully completed the comprehensive exam, a completed and signed copy of the Report of the DNP Project Comprehensive Exam is submitted to the Associate Director of Graduate Programs for signature and then filed in the student's SON file. When the DNP student has a plan of study approved by the Graduate School, and has passed the DNP comprehensive exam, the student advances to candidacy and may list 'DNPC' after their name and other credentials.

DNP PROJECT

Conducting the DNP Project

After the project proposal has been approved by the project committee, the process of executing the project and collecting data may begin. If the student's project involves the use of primary or secondary data on human subjects, human study approval by the IRB must be obtained before data collection begins.

Specific requirements for the DNP project are included in a document titled '*NMSU School of Nursing DNP Project Guidelines*', which is posted in the graduate student Canvas course.

Human Subjects Approval

Before beginning data collection (or analysis of pre-existing data), the student must assure the protection of human rights by having the proposal reviewed and approved by the NMSU Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Every student project must be assessed by the IRB to conform to **45 CFR 46: The Federal Regulations Governing Human Experimentation**, or determined to be

exempt from those regulations according to criteria set forth in the regulations.

Prior to submitting a proposal to the IRB each investigator must complete the self-study modules on the topic of responsible conduct of human subjects research available free of charge through the [CITI Program](#). The project chair (identified in the IRB application as the faculty advisor) is ultimately responsible for the accuracy of the information provided on any IRB application and will be required to approve the IRB application after it is submitted by the student. The time the IRB takes to approve a project varies with the type of project (exempt vs. expedited vs. full board review).

Students are required to close all projects with the IRB prior to graduation by submitting a final report.

More information about completing the IRB application is included in a document titled '*NMSU School of Nursing DNP Project Guidelines*' and a series of instructional videos, which are posted in the graduate student Canvas course.

FINAL PROJECT DEFENSE/EXAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Once the DNP project is completed and outcome data is collected and analyzed, the student is required to develop a professional poster or a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the project components, including outcomes and conclusions. A manuscript that summarizes the project components, including outcomes and conclusions is also required. The oral defense of the project outcomes and conclusions is the final component of the DNP project and is open to the public (faculty, students, family members, community members, etc). These components are considered the 'final exam' by the Graduate School.

Students must have the final manuscript approved by the chair of the committee by the dates listed below for each semester before proceeding to the final presentation.

Fall - October 15

Spring - March 25

Summer - July 1

The final project defense date is scheduled by the SON Graduate Advisor. The SON Graduate Advisor emails a public announcement of the presentation to the faculty in the School of Nursing ten days prior to the defense date.

The following requirements for the oral final project defense must be met:

- The student must be enrolled in a minimum of one (1) credit related to the DNP project during the semester that they are defending.
- Members of the committee should receive the project manuscript that the chair approved at least 2 weeks prior to the defense date. A committee member may recommend postponing the defense if the manuscript does not meet expectations. The final decision about whether or not to proceed is made by the project chair, in consultation with the student.
- All members of the committee must be present at the presentation. In rare cases, one (and only one) committee member may be present via videoconferencing. In the event of an emergency in which the chair cannot be present in person, the following protocol will be followed: vice-chair (a member of the committee appointed by the chair in consultation with the student) assumes responsibility of chair.
- After the public presentation of the project, the student and the audience are asked to leave the room while the committee discusses the project, identifies any changes or additional work to be done, and determines the outcome of the project final presentation. The student is then invited back into the room and is informed of the outcome (see below).

The student must satisfactorily pass both components of the 'final exam' and must demonstrate the attainment of the [*Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*](#). The student's DNP project committee determines the outcomes of the final presentation and signs the School of Nursing Report of the DNP Project Final Defense.

The committee discusses with the student any changes or additional work to be done and establishes a time by which such changes or additions are to be submitted. If the changes or additions are minor, committee members will usually, as a matter of convenience, sign the Report of the DNP Project Final Defense. The

chairperson, however, will not sign, date, or submit either form until all changes or additions have been submitted and determined to be acceptable.

If major changes or additions to the DNP project are required, a date will be established for their presentation and defense. Neither the chair nor the members will sign and date the forms with a recommendation of approval until these major changes or additions have been presented and the entire project (paper and presentation) are determined to be satisfactory by the DNP Project Committee.

After the student has successfully completed the DNP Project Final Exam, a completed and signed copy of the Report of the DNP Project Final Exam is submitted to the Associate Director of Graduate Programs and the Director of the School of Nursing for signatures and then filed in the student's SON file and forwarded to the Graduate School. Students cannot graduate from the School of Nursing DNP Program without successfully completing the DNP Project Final Exam.

ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

DISABILITY ACCESS SERVICES

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers issues relating to disability and accommodations. If a student has questions or needs an accommodation in the classroom (all medical information is treated confidentially), contact:

Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

Corbett Center, Rm. 244

Phone: (575) 646-6840

E-mail: sas@nmsu.edu

Website: <https://sas.nmsu.edu/>

Student Responsibilities:

1. Register with SAS and obtain accommodation documents early in the semester.
2. Deliver the completed accommodation and testing form(s) to the instructor(s) within the first two weeks of beginning of classes (or within one week of the date services are to commence).
3. Retrieve the signed form(s) from faculty and return to SAS within five (5) days of receipt from faculty at least one week before any scheduled exam, and
4. Contact the SAS Office if the services/accommodations requested are not being provided, not meeting your needs, or if additional accommodations are needed. Do not wait until you receive a failing grade. Retroactive accommodations cannot be considered.

Faculty Responsibilities:

1. Sign the ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM and TESTING ACCOMMODATION FORM (when presented), retain a copy and return the original to the student within five (5) working days of receipt;
2. Contact SAS immediately if there are any questions or disputes regarding accommodation(s), disruptive behavior, etc.; and
3. Refer the students to SAS for any additional accommodations;

DISCRIMINATION

NMSU policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation and protected veterans status.

Furthermore, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment and retaliation. For more information on discrimination issues, Title IX or NMSU's complaint process contact:

Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), O'Loughlin House

Phone: (575) 646-3635

E-mail: equity@nmsu.edu

Website: <https://equity.nmsu.edu>

OTHER NMSU RESOURCES

NMSU Police Department	(575)-646-3311/ www.nmsupolice.com
NMSU Police Victim Services	(575)-646-3424
NMSU Counseling Center	(575)-646-2731
NMSU Dean of Students	(575)-646-1722
For Any On campus Emergencies	911

WRITING CENTER

Students are encouraged to use the Writing Center to improve their writing skills and the quality of their papers <https://writingcenter.nmsu.edu/>.

STUDENT SERVICES

NMSU offers a variety of support and services for students. A listing of services is available online at: <https://studentaffairs.nmsu.edu/index.html>

CHILDREN IN THE ACADEMIC WORKPLACE

New Mexico State University is a thriving center of education and research which encourages supervised events on campus for children as well as adults.

However, the ability to concentrate for extended periods of time is a prerequisite within a healthy academic environment. Students, staff, faculty, and administrators can expect to attend and teach class, or complete work or research in laboratories, libraries, offices, and other workplaces with a minimum of distractions or interruptions. Consequently, the following regulations have been established, and will be enforced by the appropriate dean or administrative supervisor, to ensure that an appropriate academic environment is maintained.

1. Children visiting campus must be closely supervised by an adult at all times.
2. Children will be prohibited from entering dangerous settings such as labs and equipment rooms without the approval of the appropriate dean or administrative supervisor.
3. Children may not attend a class in session without the prior approval of the class instructor. Children under the care of the instructor may not attend class without the prior approval of the immediate supervisor.
4. Children may, on rare occasions and with the approval of the supervisor, accompany a parent to the workplace. However, the expectation is that parents will make alternate arrangements for the care of their children during normal working hours.
5. Children taking part in programs and/or special events on campus are expected to abide by the rules and regulations established by the program or event sponsors.