

SCHOOL OF NURSING



1780 E University Ave,
Las Cruces,
NM 88003

Part 1
DNP–Nurse
Anesthesiology
Program
Student Handbook

2025-2026

School of Nursing
College of Health, Education, and Social Transformation

NMSU DNP–Nurse Anesthesiology
(DNP-NA) Program
Resident Handbook Addendum

Part 1 –Program-Specific Policies and Resources

Academic Year 2026–2027

Students/residents are responsible for complying with the policies and procedures contained in the current published version of the Student Handbook. Policies may be revised during a student's enrollment in response to changes in University requirements, accreditation standards, regulatory requirements, or program needs. Students will be notified of substantive changes and are expected to comply with revised policies from their stated effective date. Policy changes that occur during the academic year are communicated by email.

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FORWARD

Part 1 and Part 2 of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Nurse Anesthesiology Resident (NAR) Handbook Addendums provides guidance to Nurse Anesthesiology Residents (NARs), faculty, and staff regarding program expectations, policies, and procedures.

NARs must use these handbook addendums in conjunction with the DNP Program and Certificate Student Handbook, the [NMSU Student Handbook](#), and the [Graduate Catalog](#). In the event of conflicting information, the policies outlined in this Handbook Addendum supersede those in the DNP Handbook.

These handbook addendums support NARs in meeting academic, clinical, and professional standards required for entry into nurse anesthesiology practice.

The Nurse Anesthesiology Program (NAP) reviews and updates these handbook addendums regularly to ensure compliance with Council on Accreditation (COA) standards, university policies, and current best practices.

HOW TO USE THESE HANDBOOK ADDENDUMS

Part 1 and Part 2 of the DNP-NA Program Resident Handbook Addendums organize policies and expectations by topic. NARs are expected to:

- Read and understand all handbook content
- Comply with all academic, clinical, and professional requirements
- Monitor updates and policy changes

NARs should consult these handbook addendums as the primary resource for program guidance. Questions not addressed within these documents should be directed to program leadership.

Faculty and staff use these handbook addendums to guide instruction, evaluation, and program operations.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

For the purposes of these handbook addendums, the following terms apply:

- **NAR (Nurse Anesthesiology Resident):** An individual enrolled in the NAP. Note that the university categorizes all individuals enrolled in a graduate program as students. The term *Nurse Anesthesiology Resident* is defined by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs.
 - **First-Year NAR:** An enrollee in the first year of the program engaged primarily in didactic coursework and foundational learning experiences.
 - **Junior NAR:** A second-year enrollee participating in clinical rotations and developing anesthesia knowledge and clinical competencies.
 - **Senior NAR:** A third-year enrollee participating in advanced clinical rotations and demonstrating readiness for entry into professional practice.
- **NAP (Nurse Anesthesiology Program):** The academic and clinical program that prepares residents for entry into nurse anesthesiology practice.
- **COA (Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs):** The accredited body that establishes standards for nurse anesthesia education.
- **Clinical Site:** An approved healthcare facility where NARs complete Clinical Residency (CR) experiences.
- **Faculty:** Individuals responsible for teaching, supervising, mentoring, and evaluating NARs.
- **Clinical Faculty:** Faculty members who supervise and evaluate NARs in clinical residency and facilitate integration of Principle of Anesthesia (POA) into clinical practice.
- **Program Director (PD):** The individual responsible for overall program leadership and ensuring compliance with COA standards and institutional requirements.
- **Assistant Program Director (APD):** Supports the Program Director in program leadership, with primary responsibility for oversight of clinical education and ensuring Clinical Residency (CR) compliance.
- **Clinical Program Administrator:** Collaborates with the APD to coordinate clinical placements and serves as the primary point of communication between the NAP and the clinical sites regarding program requirements.
- **Clinical Coordinator (CC):** A clinical site-based leader who coordinates with clinical faculty to support course requirements, facilitates clinical scheduling, and promotes NAR's clinical progression.
- **Clinical Preceptor:** A credentialed CRNA or physician anesthesiologist who provides direct clinical supervision and instruction to nurse anesthesia residents.

- **Principles of Anesthesia (POA):** The foundational didactic coursework that provides the theoretical knowledge necessary for safe and effective anesthesia practice.
- **Clinical Residency (CR):** A structured, supervised clinical training experience in which NARs apply didactic knowledge and develop clinical competence.
- **Formative Evaluations:** Provide timely, constructive feedback that promotes learning, develops clinical competence, identifies areas requiring improvement, and guides resident progression throughout the curriculum. Examples include Daily Clinical Evaluations, preceptor feedback, and simulation debriefs, etc.
- **Summative Evaluations:** Provides the basis for decisions regarding course grades, progression, remediation, graduation eligibility, and program completion. Examples include End-of-Semester Clinical Evaluations, comprehensive examinations, etc.

SECTION 1: PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS

NURSE ANESTHESIOLOGY PROGRAM MISSION, VISION, AND CULTURE

Mission

We are committed to educating future healthcare leaders for independent practice in nurse anesthesia. We recruit and develop individuals from diverse backgrounds who reflect the communities they serve and who will act as change agents to improve healthcare quality, with a focus on rural, borderland, and other underserved populations in New Mexico and surrounding regions.

Vision

To expand and transform access to high-quality healthcare for rural and underserved populations through excellence in nurse anesthesia education, practice, and leadership.

Culture

Our culture is grounded in excellence, professionalism, and compassion. We are dedicated to developing nurse anesthetists who are not only highly skilled clinicians but also well-rounded professionals with strong communication abilities, emotional intelligence, and a commitment to lifelong growth.

DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE -NURSE ANESTHESIOLOGY (DNP-NA) PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The NAP prepares NARs to become full-scope anesthesia providers, with an emphasis on serving rural and underserved populations. The program delivers a rigorous, full-time, three-year curriculum that integrates Principles of Anesthesia (POA) with progressive Clinical Residency (CR) experience to support the development of clinical competence.

The curriculum is designed in alignment with the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA) entry-into-practice competencies and requires sequential progression to ensure mastery of knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors. Graduates are prepared to provide safe, ethical, and evidence-based anesthesia of care to diverse patient populations across their lifespan.

Upon successful program completion, graduates are eligible to apply for the National Certification Examination (NCE) administered by the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA), a requirement for entry into professional

practice as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). Throughout the program, NARs must maintain active, unencumbered RN licensure in all states where clinical education occurs, either through individual state licenses or a multistate (compact) license.

ACCREDITATION

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master's degree program in nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice program and post-graduate APRN certificates at New Mexico State University (NMSU) are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791. The NMSU Doctor of Nursing Practice-Nurse Anesthesiology Program (DNP-NA) received initial accreditation from the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Education Programs (COA) on November 9, 2023, with the inaugural cohort beginning in January 2024. The NAP maintains accreditation through the COA and demonstrates ongoing compliance with accreditation standards through continuous evaluation and quality improvement.

NURSE ANESTHESIOLOGY EXPECTED PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The DNP-NA curriculum incorporates the NMSU DNP Expected Program Outcomes as outlined in the NMSU DNP and Certificate Student Handbook.

The NAP prepares NARs to deliver safe, high-quality anesthesia care, meet Council on Accreditation (COA) competencies, successfully complete the National Certification Examination (NCE), and practice across diverse healthcare settings.

The NAP monitors the following program outcomes:

- Maintain COA accreditation
- Achieve an 80% first-time NCE pass rate
- Maintain an attrition rate of $\leq 10\%$
- Monitor graduate employment within six months of program completion

NURSE ANESTHESIOLOGY RESIDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The NAR integrates basic sciences and Principles of Anesthesia (POA) into clinical Residency (CR) and demonstrates competency in:

- **Patient Safety:** vigilance, equipment checks, and prevention of complications
- **Peri Anesthesia Management:** comprehensive assessment, individualized culturally competent care across the lifespan, anesthesia delivery, and certification maintenance

- **Critical Thinking:** evidence-based decision making, care planning, complication management, data interpretation, and use of healthcare technology
- **Communication:** professional and effective interprofessional communication, crucial conversations, timely responsiveness (within 48 hours), accurate documentation, and safer transfer of care
- **Leadership:** reflective thinking, systems leadership, and interprofessional collaboration
- **Professional Role:** adherence to the AANA Code of Ethics, legal and accountable practice, advocacy, scholarship, quality improvement, and patient outcomes evaluation

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The administrative structure of the School of Nursing (SON) and its graduate programs is available on the SON website under the “About Us” menu.

- **School of Nursing Director:** Serves as the chief nurse executive and administrative leader of the SON, with overall responsibility for faculty, staff, and academic programs. The Director provides strategic leadership, oversees budgetary and operational functions, and manages departmental-level resident appeals.
- **Associate Director for Graduate Programs:** Oversees the academic coordination of master’s and doctoral programs, including post-graduate APRN certificates. This role ensures implementation of SON, college, university, regulatory, and accreditation policies and requirements.
- **DNP-NA Specialty Track Program Director (PD):** Provides strategic, academic, and operational leadership for the NAP. The PD ensures compliance with Council on Accreditation (COA) standards, maintains curriculum quality, and serves as the primary resource for NAR advising, concerns, and grievances.
- **DNP-NA Specialty Track Assistant Program Director (APD):** Supports the PD in program administration, with primary responsibility for oversight of clinical education. The APD collaborates with clinical coordinators and faculty to ensure compliance with COA clinical requirements and supports NAR advising and progression.

ACADEMIC ADVISING, FACULTY MENTORING, AND STUDENT SUPPORT

The DNP-NA Program provides academic advising, faculty mentoring, and access to student support resources to promote academic success, clinical progression, professional development, and successful completion of Program requirements.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

In accordance with School of Nursing policy, the Nurse Anesthesia Specialty Track Director/Program Director (PD) serves as the NAR's formal academic advisor and provides guidance related to academic standing, progression, Program requirements, and graduation.

The School of Nursing Graduate Advisor assists NARs with University and School of Nursing processes, including registration, degree planning, and graduate program requirements.

FACULTY MENTORING

Faculty mentoring is a shared responsibility of DNP-NA faculty. NARs may seek guidance from the PD, Assistant Program Director (APD), Faculty of Record (FOR), or other DNP-NA faculty based on their individual needs.

Faculty mentoring includes ongoing formal and informal feedback and may occur through meetings, course interactions, clinical evaluation reviews, electronic communication, or other faculty-NAR interactions.

NARs in satisfactory academic and clinical standing are not required to complete a separate formal advising meeting each semester. Advising or mentoring may be requested by the NAR at any time or initiated by faculty when additional support is indicated.

Faculty will initiate additional advising when concerns are identified related to academic performance, clinical progression, SEE/NCE readiness, professionalism, or other Program requirements.

CLINICAL PROGRESSION

Clinical performance and progression are reviewed through the Program's established formative and summative evaluation processes. Clinical evaluation meetings and other documented performance discussions may serve as advising interactions and do not require duplicate advising documentation.

NAR RESPONSIBILITIES

NARs are responsible for monitoring their academic and clinical progression, reviewing and incorporating feedback, seeking assistance when needed, participating in faculty-initiated advising, and completing required academic support, remediation, or follow-up activities.

WELLNESS AND STUDENT SUPPORT

The DNP-NA Program recognizes the importance of wellness, resilience, peer support, and professional connection throughout nurse anesthesia education.

NARs are encouraged to participate in Program and cohort activities that promote connection and well-being and to seek support early when personal or academic circumstances may affect their success.

Faculty may provide guidance and refer NARs to appropriate NMSU academic, accessibility, counseling, health, wellness, or other student support resources. Participation in wellness activities and use of support services are voluntary unless otherwise required by university policy.

NARs are not required to disclose private health or personal information to Program faculty beyond information necessary to address academic or Program requirements.

DOCUMENTATION

Formal advising will be documented when it addresses a significant academic, clinical, professional, or progression concern; establishes required actions or follow-up; or is associated with remediation or corrective action.

Existing Program documentation, including clinical evaluations, remediation plans, Academic Improvement Plans, or other official records, may serve as documentation of the advising interaction. **Duplicate advising documentation is not required.**

ACADEMIC SUCCESS POLICY

This policy outlines academic support measures, examination performance interventions, and disability accommodation processes designed to foster NAR success while ensuring achievement of program competencies and professional standards.

The DNP-NAP is committed to supporting NAR success and promoting academic excellence. NARs who score below **84%** on any examination must complete the **Post-Exam Reflection Tool** within **two business days** of the final posting of examination scores and meet with their Faculty of Record to review the reflection and develop strategies for improvement.

PROGRAM COMMITMENT TO NARS AND PATIENTS

RESIDENTS' RIGHTS

In addition to the SON Commitments, NARs have the right to expect high-quality educational experiences that prepare them to:

- Achieve program learning outcomes;
- Meet the COA Graduate Standards for the Practice Doctorate; doctoral standards;
- Meet eligibility requirements for the National Certification Examination (NCE)
- Integrate didactic knowledge into clinical practice
- Provide anesthesia care to diverse patient populations across a range of procedures
- Progress toward safe, independent clinical practice with appropriate supervision
- Promote patient safety, comfort, and ethical care
- Develop professional values consistent with ethical and moral standards
- Successfully complete all program requirements, including the DNP Project

NARs also have the right to expect that:

- Program roles, expectations, rights, and responsibilities are clearly defined and upheld
- Educational and clinical experiences are not exploitative
- Progress is evaluated at least each semester using fair, objective, and evidence-based methods, with timely feedback from program leadership
- Academic and clinical decisions are based on valid and reliable evaluation data
- Fair and objective appeal processes are available to contest program decisions

RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

NARs are accountable for:

- Maintaining high standards in the preparation, completion, and performance of all didactic and clinical assignments;
- Complying with all policies and procedures of the DNP-NA Program, School of Nursing (SON), New Mexico State University (NMSU), and affiliated clinical sites;
- Fulfilling all professional, ethical, and legal obligations, including financial responsibilities related to educational loans;
- Monitoring and using their official NMSU email account and the Remind App for all program communications, as it serves as the primary method of notification. Responses to program communications must be made within 48 hours (Note: Course-specific questions should be directed to the instructor via Canvas);
- Maintaining accurate and current contact information with the DNP-NA Program, NMSU, and the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA);
- Submitting required documentation in a timely manner, including case logs, licensure, certifications (ACLS, BLS, PALS), clinical clearance requirements including health and immunization records, and other program-required materials.

PATIENT RIGHTS

Patients have the right to:

- Be informed of who will administer their anesthesia, who will supervise the anesthetic, and the relationship between those providers, without deception or misrepresentation;
- Receive anesthesia provided by NARs under appropriate supervision by a CRNA and/or physician anesthesiologist;
- Expect that the level of supervision is based on patient risk, procedure complexity, and the NAR's level of education and competence;
- Be assured that a CRNA and/or anesthesiologist is immediately available in all anesthetizing locations where NARs are providing care;
- Receive care from providers who are mentally and physically fit for duty and not impaired by fatigue, substances, or other conditions;
- Be informed by the surgeon or responsible provider about anesthetic management and any related complications;
- Receive services with fair and equitable costs for both NAR and supervisory care;
- Decline participation as a teaching patient or be designated as a non-teaching patient without restriction.

SECTION 2: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND CONDUCT

This section establishes the professional, ethical, academic, and behavioral standards expected of all NARs and outlines the responsibilities required to maintain the integrity of the profession, ensure patient safety, and support successful progression in the DNP-NA Program.

NARs are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct in all academic, simulation, clinical, research, and professional activities. NARs must comply with the NMSU School of Nursing policies, the **AANA Code of Ethics for the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist**, the **AANA Standards for Nurse Anesthesia Practice**, the **ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses**, applicable laws and regulations, and all university and clinical site policies.

As future nurse anesthesiologists, NARs are accountable to patients, the profession, and the public through a commitment to lifelong learning, professional development, quality improvement, ethical practice, and adherence to standards that promote safe, equitable, and culturally responsive care. NARs are expected to integrate principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural humility into all aspects of professional practice and advocacy.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NARs must consistently demonstrate behaviors expected of entry-level nurse anesthesiology professionals, including:

- Honesty, integrity, accountability, and ethical decision-making.
- Respect for patients, families, peers, faculty, staff, preceptors, and healthcare team members.
- Maintenance of patient dignity, privacy, and confidentiality.
- Professional communication, teamwork, emotional maturity, and adaptability.
- Responsibility for all clinical decisions and actions.
- Compliance with safety protocols, infection prevention standards, and clinical site requirements.
- Prompt reporting of errors, incidents, and patient safety concerns.
- Physical, emotional, and professional fitness for duty in academic and clinical settings.

NARs must arrive prepared, participate fully in all required activities, complete assignments on time, respond constructively to feedback, and demonstrate continuous improvement in academic and clinical performance.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The DNP-NA Program maintains a zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. NARs must uphold the highest standards of integrity in all didactic, simulation, clinical, scholarly, and research activities.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating or unauthorized assistance.
- Plagiarism.
- Unauthorized collaboration.
- Unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI)
- Falsification or fabrication of records, documents, or data.
- Misuse of testing materials or examination content.
- Falsification of clinical experiences, clinical evaluations, case logs, timesheets, or attendance records.

NARs are responsible for complying with all testing security requirements, submitting original work, and accurately documenting all academic and clinical activities.

PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE AND DRESS

NARs must maintain a professional appearance consistent with healthcare standards, infection prevention guidelines, and program expectations.

In classroom and simulation settings: NARs must wear business casual or approved program attire that is clean, neat, and appropriate for a professional learning environment.

In clinical settings: NARs must comply with both program and clinical site dress code requirements, including the use of approved scrubs, identification badges, personal protective equipment, and appropriate footwear. Hair must be professionally groomed and secured as required for patient safety and infection prevention. NARs must wear either an NMSU-issued surgical cap or a disposable surgical cap in anesthetizing locations. Personal surgical caps are not permitted.

Failure to comply with dress code requirements may result in removal from the learning environment until compliance is achieved.

CONDUCT IN ACADEMIC, CLINICAL, AND ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENTS

Professional standards apply in all classrooms, simulation laboratories, clinical facilities, university-sponsored activities, and electronic communications.

NARs must:

- Conduct themselves professionally in all interactions.
- Follow university, program, and clinical site policies.
- Use social media and electronic communications responsibly.
- Protect patient privacy and confidential information at all times.
- Refrain from posting protected health information, identifiable patient information, or inappropriate content related to clinical experiences.
- Avoid engaging in academic or clinical activities while impaired by illness, fatigue, substances, or any condition that could compromise patient safety, judgment, or professional performance.

VIOLATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

Examples of unprofessional conduct include, but are not limited to, dishonesty, unsafe practice, violation of confidentiality, disruptive behavior, failure to follow policies, academic misconduct, falsification of records, or any behavior that compromises patient safety or the learning environment.

Failure to comply with the standards outlined in this section may result in corrective action, including a Letter of Counseling, Performance Improvement Plan, probation, suspension, or dismissal from the DNP-NA Program in accordance with program policies and due process procedures.

SECTION 3: DIDACTIC CURRICULUM & STRUCTURE

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The DNP-NAP at NMSU prepares registered nurses for doctoral-level practice as CRNAs. The program is delivered as a full-time, 3-year curriculum that requires continuous, sequential progression and includes foundational science courses, anesthesiology-specific coursework, and doctoral (DNP) studies.

The curriculum integrates:

- Foundational sciences, including anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, chemistry, and physics
- Principles and practice of nurse anesthesiology
- Evidence-based practice and research
- Leadership, healthcare systems, and health policy
- Doctoral-level scholarship through completion of the DNP Project

The curriculum is intentionally designed to prepare NARs to deliver safe, high-quality, evidence-based anesthesia care and achieve:

- COA entry-into-practice competencies
- Eligibility requirements established by the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthesiologists (NBCRNA) for the National Certification Examination (NCE)
- Program-specific resident learning outcomes

Guided by adult-learning theory, the curriculum emphasizes self-directed learning, critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and the application of evidence-based knowledge to clinical practice. To support successful achievement of these outcomes, NARs are required to attend and actively participate in all program-related activities, including orientations, didactic coursework, clinical training, intensive clinical experiences (e.g., boot camps), examinations, and other required program components. Failure to meet attendance requirements may result in delayed progression or inability to advance in the program.

CURRICULUM PROGRESSION AND DIDACTIC COURSE SEQUENCE

The DNP-NA curriculum is designed to promote progressive learning and competency development, advancing from foundational scientific knowledge to advanced nurse anesthesiology practice and professional role preparation. Didactic courses are delivered in a prescribed sequence that supports the integration and application of knowledge across all phases of the program. NARs must complete all courses successfully and in the established order and may not deviate from the approved plan of study.

The curriculum is organized into three developmental phases:

Phase I: Foundational and Scientific Knowledge (Year 1)

During the first year, NARs establish the scientific and scholarly foundation necessary for advanced anesthesia practice through coursework in:

- Advanced anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology
- Chemistry/physics principles
- Pharmacology
- Health assessment
- Basic anesthesia principles, equipment, and monitoring
- Core DNP courses including nursing informatics and health policy

Phase II: Applied Anesthesia Concepts (Year 2)

Building on foundational knowledge, NARs apply scientific principles to increasingly complex anesthesia practice through coursework and learning experiences focused on:

- Core DNP courses including evidence-based practice and scholarly inquiry
- Advanced anesthesia techniques
- Specialty anesthesia populations and procedures (e.g., obstetric, pediatric, and cardiothoracic anesthesia)
- Clinical decision-making and anesthesia planning
- Simulation-based and case-based learning
- Initiation of the DNP Project

Phase III: Synthesis and Professional Practice (Year 3)

In the final year, NARs refine advanced clinical judgment and prepare for transition to independent practice through:

- Complex anesthetic case management
- Systems-based practice, leadership, and professional role development
- Completion of the DNP Project
- National Certification Examination (NCE) and Self-Evaluation Examination (SEE) preparation

Throughout the curriculum, DNP core courses, simulation, laboratory experiences, and case-based learning activities are integrated to reinforce competency development and support the horizontal and vertical integration of content across semesters.

Courses are offered once annually. Failure to successfully complete a required course prevents progression in the curriculum and may result in dismissal from the program in accordance with program progression policies.

INTEGRATION OF DIDACTIC AND CLINICAL EDUCATION

The DNP-NA Program intentionally integrates didactic instruction with clinical experiences to facilitate the application of knowledge, development of clinical reasoning, and attainment of professional competencies. Throughout the curriculum, educational experiences are designed to promote the translation of foundational and advanced anesthesia concepts into safe, evidence-based clinical practice.

Faculty support the integration of didactic and clinical learning through a variety of instructional strategies, including:

- Case-based learning and anesthesia management planning
- Clinical correlation assignments embedded within didactic courses
- Simulation-based learning experiences
- Progressive alignment of didactic content with clinical practice to support the application of newly acquired knowledge and skills

Simulation serves as a key component of the curriculum and provides NARs with opportunities to develop technical skills, clinical judgment, communication, teamwork, and crisis resource management in a safe and controlled learning environment prior to patient care encounters. Simulation modalities include:

- Task-trainer-based skill development
- Airway management and regional anesthesia workshops
- Ultrasound-guided procedural training
- High-fidelity operating room and perioperative scenarios
- Standardized patient encounters
- Virtual and augmented reality learning experiences

These experiences allow NARs to deliberately practice clinical skills, integrate didactic knowledge with patient care decision-making, and demonstrate competency before performing procedures in the clinical setting. The progressive integration of classroom, simulation, and clinical learning experiences promotes the development of competent, safe, and practice-ready nurse anesthesiologists.

PROGRAM EVALUATION METHODS

The DNP-NA Program uses multiple assessment and evaluation methods to measure Nurse Anesthesiology Resident (NAR) achievement, evaluate curriculum effectiveness, and monitor program outcomes. Assessment processes are designed to ensure that NARs demonstrate progressive competency development and are prepared to meet program, accreditation, and certification requirements.

Didactic evaluation methods include:

- Written examinations and quizzes
- Case studies and anesthesia management plans
- Simulation-based performance assessments
- Written assignments, projects, and presentations
- Self-assessments, reflective learning activities, and formative evaluations

Program evaluation measures (see Part 2 of the Handbook for details) include:

- Formative Clinical Evaluations
- NAR Clinical Self-Evaluations
- Clinical Coordinator Summative Evaluation
- Faculty Summative Evaluation
- End-of-Semester Evaluation Review
- Clinical Site Survey
- Clinical Preceptor/Instructor Survey
- Terminal Evaluation
- Graduation/Program Exit Survey

Program leadership and faculty regularly review assessment and evaluation data to identify strengths, opportunities for improvement, and trends in NAR performance. Findings are used to support continuous quality improvement and inform curriculum, teaching, and programmatic decisions.

These outcomes provide important indicators of program quality and effectiveness and assist the program in meeting Council on Accreditation (COA) standards, maintaining accountability, and ensuring graduates are prepared for safe, competent entry into nurse anesthesiology practice.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The DNP-NA Program maintains a systematic Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to promote program effectiveness, support NAR success, and ensure compliance with accreditation standards. Quality improvement activities are guided by the program's Systematic Program Evaluation (SPE) Plan, which provides a structured framework for ongoing assessment, analysis, and evidence-based decision-making.

Through the SPE Plan, the program regularly evaluates:

- Curriculum effectiveness
- NAR learning outcomes
- Faculty performance and development
- Program outcome measures and accreditation benchmarks

Faculty and program leadership routinely review evaluation data, identify areas for improvement, and implement changes to enhance program quality. In addition, selected program components and accreditation requirements, including distance education standards and other regulatory expectations, are reviewed according to a scheduled evaluation cycle. Findings and recommendations are discussed during program and faculty meetings and documented as part of the CQI process.

Data used to support continuous quality improvement includes:

- NAR, graduate, and stakeholder survey results
- Course and program evaluations
- Faculty and advisory committee feedback
- Clinical partner and preceptor feedback
- NAR performance and progression data
- Self-Evaluation Examination (SEE) performance
- National Certification Examination (NCE) outcomes
- Attrition, completion, and employment data

The program uses these data to identify trends, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instructional strategies, and guide evidence-based improvements in curriculum design, teaching and learning practices, clinical education, and NAR support services. Through this ongoing process, the program fosters a culture of continuous improvement and accountability while ensuring graduates are prepared to meet professional, certification, and accreditation expectations.

SECTION 4: DIDACTIC EDUCATION POLICIES

Didactic education provides the foundational knowledge and academic framework necessary for NAR success in professional practice. The policies outlined in this section establish expectations for attendance, academic performance, assessment, and NAR progression. These guidelines are designed to promote a consistent, high-quality educational experience while ensuring compliance with program, institutional, and accreditation standards.

GRADING POLICY

This grading policy reflects the program's commitment to maintaining rigorous academic standards and ensuring graduates demonstrate the knowledge and competencies required for safe and effective nurse anesthesiology practice.

The DNP-NA Program employs a standardized grading system to promote academic excellence, fairness, transparency, and consistency across the curriculum while supporting competency-based learning outcomes.

- **Minimum Passing Standard:** NARs must earn a final course grade of **84% (B) or higher** in all didactic courses to successfully pass and progress in the program.
- **Grade Determination:** Final course grades are assigned by course faculty based on evaluation methods identified in the course syllabus. These may include, but are not limited to, examinations, quizzes, written assignments, presentations, simulation-based assessments, laboratory activities, and class participation.
- **Rounding:** Final course grades will be calculated to one decimal place and then rounded to the nearest whole number for determination of the final letter grade. Standard mathematical rounding rules will be applied (i.e., 83.5 is rounded to 84%, while 83.4 is rounded down to 83% and is not a passing grade).
- **Faculty Authority:** Course faculty are responsible for evaluating NAR performance and assigning final grades. Faculty decisions regarding grade determination are considered final, subject to institutional academic policies and established grade appeal procedures.
- **NAR Responsibility:** NARs are responsible for monitoring their academic progress and seeking clarification regarding grading expectations, assignments, or performance concerns in a timely manner.
- **Timely Submission and Documentation Requirements:** NARs are expected to submit assignments, forms, and other required coursework by established deadlines. Failure to submit required work, obtain required documentation or signatures, or complete program requirements within designated timeframes may result in grade reductions, incomplete assignments, remediation requirements, or other academic consequences as outlined in course syllabi and program policies.

EXAMINATION AND PROCTORING POLICY

The DNP-NA Program maintains examination procedures designed to promote fairness, protect examination integrity, and accurately assess NAR achievement. Examinations may be administered in person or remotely using Program- or University-approved testing and proctoring methods.

Examination Administration

Nurse Anesthesiology Residents (NARs) must comply with all examination instructions provided by course faculty or the proctor.

Unless specifically authorized:

- Cell phones, smart watches, headphones, electronic devices, notes, reference materials, and other unauthorized resources may not be accessed or used during an examination.
- Only faculty-approved calculators, scratch materials, or other resources may be used.
- NARs may not communicate with another person or access outside assistance during an examination.
- NARs must remain in the designated testing environment until the examination is completed unless authorized by the proctor.

NARs must arrive on time and prepared for scheduled examinations. Late arrival may result in reduced testing time or other action consistent with the course syllabus and University policy.

The Program reserves the right to require examinations to be completed in person and/or under direct or electronic proctoring.

Electronic and Remote Examinations

Electronic examinations may require a secure browser, webcam, microphone, internet access, or other Program-approved technology. NARs are responsible for maintaining technology that meets published Program requirements.

For remotely proctored examinations, NARs must:

- Complete the examination in a private testing environment free from unauthorized persons, materials, and assistance.
- Remain visible and comply with required audio/video monitoring throughout the examination.
- Permit verification of the testing environment when requested by the proctor.
- Follow all additional examination instructions provided by faculty.

Any technical problem, illness, disruption, or other circumstances that may affect examination completion must be reported to the proctor immediately when it occurs. Reported circumstances will be addressed in accordance with course and University policies.

Examination Security

All examination questions, answers, images, and related testing materials are secure and confidential.

- NARs may not copy, photograph, record, screen capture, reproduce, memorize for the purpose of reconstruction, distribute, post, transmit, share, or otherwise retain examination content before, during, or after an examination or examination review.
- Possession, use, solicitation, or distribution of unauthorized examination materials constitutes a potential violation of academic integrity.
- Suspected violations will be addressed in accordance with the NMSU Student Academic Code of Conduct and applicable School of Nursing and Program policies.

Examination Review

Faculty may conduct examination or item review when educationally appropriate. The method and extent of review are determined by the Faculty of Record (FOR).

When review is permitted:

- Examination materials remain secure.
- Recording, photographing, screen capturing, copying, or reproducing examination content is prohibited.
- Notes may not be taken unless specifically authorized by faculty.

Previous examinations and secure examination materials will not be released to NARs unless authorized by the FOR.

Examination Item Concerns

NARs who believe an examination item contains an error may submit a written request for faculty review within the timeframe established by the course faculty.

The request must identify the concern, provide a rationale, and include support from an appropriate authoritative or scholarly source when applicable.

Faculty will review the item and applicable examination data and determine whether an adjustment is warranted. Examination item review does not replace a NAR's rights under applicable NMSU academic grievance or appeal procedures.

Accommodation

Approved examination accommodations will be provided in accordance with NMSU Disability Access Services (DAS) requirements and applicable University policy. NARs are responsible for following established University procedures for requesting and arranging approved testing accommodations.

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION POLICY

In accordance with NMSU Graduate School policies, NARs enrolled in the DNP-NA Program must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of **3.0** and earn a grade of **B or higher** in all required courses to remain in good standing and progress in the curriculum.

The DNP-NA Program is a full-time, three-year course of study designed for sequential progression and uninterrupted completion to support optimal learning and preparation for the National Certification Examination (NCE). **Note: Because nurse anesthesiology and DNP core courses are offered only once annually, failure to earn a grade of B or higher in a nurse anesthesiology course prevents continued progression in the program. In such cases, the NAR would be dismissed from the program.**

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

NARs with a disability, medical condition, or impairment that may affect academic performance should contact **Disability Access Services (DAS)** as early as possible to begin the accommodation review process. NARs are responsible for submitting an Academic Accommodation Application and providing any required documentation directly to DAS. Medical information should not be submitted to program faculty, staff, or administrators.

Approved accommodations will be communicated to course faculty by DAS. The Program Director or designee may serve as a liaison between the program and DAS as needed. Accommodations must allow NARs to meet the cognitive, technical, and professional standards required for safe nurse anesthesiology practice.

Disability Access Services (DAS)

Corbett Center, Room 208

Phone: (575) 646-6840

Email: das@nmsu.edu

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

DIDACTIC COURSE REMEDIATION

The DNP-NA Program is committed to ensuring that all graduates demonstrate the knowledge and competencies necessary for safe entry into nurse anesthesiology practice. The minimum passing grade for all required didactic courses is **84% (B)**. In limited circumstances, a student who narrowly misses the minimum passing grade may be eligible for a one-time remediation opportunity.

ELIGIBILITY

A NAR who earns a final course grade between **80.00%** and **83.99%** in **one required didactic DNP-NA course** may be eligible for course remediation.

Eligibility for remediation is subject to review and approval by the **Nurse Anesthesiology Admission and Progression Committee** and is not guaranteed.

Remediation is **not** available:

- For final course grades below **80.00%**.
- For clinical residency or other practicum/lab courses.
- For course failures resulting from academic misconduct, professional or ethical violations, unsafe clinical practice, or other conduct that would otherwise warrant disciplinary action or dismissal.
- More than once during the DNP-NA Program.

REMEDIATION PROCESS

Students approved for remediation will complete a faculty-developed remediation plan designed to address the specific course learning outcomes in which competency was not demonstrated.

The remediation process:

- Must include a comprehensive, proctored reassessment of the deficient course content. Remediation will not consist solely of extra credit assignments or repetition of previously administered examinations.
- Must be completed before the beginning of the next semester or progression to the next clinical course, unless otherwise approved by the Program Director.
- Requires the student to demonstrate competency by achieving a score of **84% or higher** on the comprehensive reassessment.

Upon successful completion of remediation, the final course grade will be recorded as **84% (B)**, the minimum passing grade for the course. No higher course grade will be awarded through the remediation process.

UNSUCCESSFUL REMEDIATION

Failure to successfully complete the remediation process or to achieve the required level of competency will constitute failure of the course and may result in dismissal from the DNP-NA Program in accordance with the program's academic progression and dismissal policies.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS POLICY:

The DNP-NA Program is committed to supporting Nurse Anesthesiology Resident (NAR) success while maintaining standards for academic achievement, clinical competency, professionalism, integrity, and patient safety. When concerns are identified, the Program may implement corrective action appropriate to the nature, severity, frequency, and potential impact of the concern.

Corrective actions may include, but are not limited to, a Letter of Counseling (LOC), Academic Improvement Plan (AIP), probation, suspension, or dismissal from the Program. Corrective actions are not required to occur sequentially. The Program may initiate the level of corrective action determined appropriate based on the circumstances.

Examples of Concerns That May Result in Corrective Action may include, but are not limited to:

1. Unsatisfactory academic performance or failure to meet progression requirements.
2. Unsafe, unsatisfactory, or inconsistent clinical performance.
3. Failure to demonstrate expected progression in knowledge, technical skills, clinical judgment, decision-making, or clinical competency.
4. Failure to integrate didactic knowledge into clinical practice.
5. Failure to meet course, clinical, simulation, laboratory, or other Program requirements.
6. Repeated errors in clinical judgment, preparation, medication administration, or anesthesia management.
7. Conduct or performance that jeopardizes or has the potential to jeopardize patient safety.
8. Failure to accept, incorporate, or appropriately respond to feedback or corrective instruction.
9. Unprofessional, inappropriate, disruptive, or insubordinate behavior.
10. Excessive or repeated tardiness, absenteeism, no-call/no-show occurrences, or unauthorized departure from required Program activities.

11. Failure to maintain required documentation, evaluations, clinical logs, timesheets, licensure, certifications, or credentialing requirements.
12. Dishonesty, academic misconduct, falsification or alteration of records, or other violations of academic or professional integrity.
13. Violation of patient confidentiality or privacy requirements.
14. Violation of University, Program, clinical site, professional, regulatory, or legal requirements.
15. Removal from or restriction by a clinical site because of performance, conduct, safety, or compliance concerns.

LETTER OF COUNSELING (LOC)

A Letter of Counseling (LOC) is a formal written notice identifying a performance or conduct concern that requires correction. The LOC will describe the concern, expected improvement, available resources or strategies for improvement, the timeframe for reassessment, and potential consequences if improvement is not demonstrated.

The NAR will meet with the appropriate faculty member(s), academic advisor, and/or Program leadership to review the LOC. The NAR is expected to demonstrate timely and sustained improvement. Failure to meet the expectations identified in the LOC may result in additional corrective action, including placement on an AIP, probation, suspension, or dismissal, as appropriate.

ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN (AIP)

An Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) is a structured corrective action used when a NAR requires formal remediation or closer monitoring of academic, clinical, and/or professional performance.

The AIP will identify the areas requiring improvement, measurable expectations, required remediation activities, methods of evaluation, the timeframe for reassessment, and consequences for failure to meet the identified requirements.

Examples of remediation activities may include, but are not limited to, additional academic assignments, simulation, skills validation, clinical evaluation, increased supervision, faculty meetings, case reviews, study plans, or other activities appropriate to the identified deficiency.

NARs on an AIP will meet with their academic advisor or designated faculty at least every two weeks, or more frequently when required. An AIP may continue for up to 10 weeks. Successful completion requires demonstration of satisfactory and sustained improvement. Failure to meet the requirements of the AIP may result in probation or other corrective action.

PROBATION

Probation is a formal status indicating that a NAR's academic, clinical, and/or professional performance does not meet Program expectations and requires immediate and sustained improvement.

A LOC or AIP is not required before placement on probation. The Program may place a NAR directly on probation when warranted by the nature or severity of the concern.

The NAR will receive written notification describing the reason(s) for probation, required corrective actions, expectations for successful completion, the timeframe for reassessment, potential consequences of failing to meet those expectations, and applicable appeal rights.

During probation, requirements may include, but are not limited to, increased faculty meetings, additional clinical supervision, clinical reassignment, simulation or skills validation, additional academic work, focused clinical evaluations, or other remediation activities determined appropriate by the Program.

Successful completion of probation requires satisfactory and sustained improvement and completion of all assigned requirements. Failure to successfully complete probation may result in an unsatisfactory course or clinical grade, suspension, dismissal, or other action consistent with University and Program policies.

A NAR may be placed on probation only once during the DNP-NA Program. A subsequent occurrence of behavior or performance that would otherwise warrant probation may result in dismissal from the Program.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is the temporary removal of a NAR from some or all Program activities when continued participation is not appropriate because of academic, clinical, professional, conduct, compliance, or patient-safety concerns.

Examples of circumstances that may result in suspension include, but are not limited to, failure to meet probation or remediation requirements; continued performance deficiencies; significant concerns regarding clinical competency, professional conduct, or patient safety; or failure to comply with Program requirements, corrective actions, or faculty directives.

During suspension, the NAR may be removed from didactic, laboratory, simulation, and/or clinical activities as determined by Program leadership. Written notification will identify the reason(s) for suspension, applicable restrictions, requirements for potential reinstatement, and applicable appeal rights.

Suspension does not guarantee reinstatement. Reinstatement will be determined based on the NAR's ability to satisfy established requirements and demonstrate readiness to

safely and successfully resume the curriculum. Failure to satisfy suspension requirements or continued deficiencies may result in dismissal from the Program.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal is permanent separation from the DNP-NA Program. A NAR may be dismissed when academic, clinical, professional, ethical, behavioral, or compliance deficiencies are incompatible with continued progression or safe nurse anesthesia practice.

Examples of circumstances that may result in dismissal include, but are not limited to:

3. Failure to meet academic or Program progression requirements.
4. Failure to successfully complete an AIP, probation, suspension, or other required remediation.
5. Unsafe clinical practice or failure to demonstrate required clinical competency.
6. Conduct or performance that jeopardizes patient safety.
7. Academic or professional misconduct.
8. Falsification or alteration of academic, clinical, patient, medication, evaluation, attendance, or other official records.
9. Significant or repeated violations of professional, ethical, University, Program, or clinical site standards.
10. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or protected health information.
11. Impairment during academic, simulation, laboratory, or patient-care activities.
12. Failure to maintain required licensure, certifications, credentialing, or eligibility for clinical placement.
13. Removal from a clinical site when the circumstances prevent the Program from providing the clinical education required for progression or completion.
14. Failure to meet the knowledge, skills, judgment, professional behavior, or other competencies required for safe entry-level nurse anesthesia practice.

IMMEDIATE CORRECTIVE ACTION VS. DISMISSAL

The Program is not required to progress through each level of corrective action before implementing a more serious action. Depending on the nature and severity of the circumstances, the Program may initiate probation, suspension, or dismissal without a preceding LOC or AIP.

Examples that may warrant immediate suspension or dismissal include, but are not limited to, serious threats to patient safety, significant academic or professional misconduct, falsification of records or official documents, impairment during patient-care

activities, serious breaches of confidentiality, egregious professional or ethical misconduct, or serious violations of University, Program, clinical site, regulatory, or legal requirements.

A single incident may warrant suspension or dismissal when sufficiently serious to compromise patient safety, professional integrity, clinical eligibility, or the integrity of the educational program.

Acknowledgment of Corrective Action

NARs receiving a Letter of Counseling (LOC), Academic Improvement Plan (AIP), probation, suspension, or other formal corrective action will be asked to sign the document acknowledging receipt and review of the action.

The NAR's signature acknowledges receipt and does not indicate agreement with the corrective action or waive the NAR's right to appeal when applicable.

If a NAR declines or fails to sign the acknowledgment, the faculty member or Program representative will document the refusal or failure to sign, including the date the corrective action was provided to the NAR. Refusal or failure to sign does not invalidate, delay, or prevent implementation of the corrective action, its requirements, established timelines, or associated consequences.

NARs remain responsible for complying with all requirements of the corrective action regardless of whether the acknowledgment is signed. Failure to participate in or comply with required corrective actions may result in additional action, up to and including suspension or dismissal from the DNP-NA Program.

DOCUMENTATION, NOTIFICATION, AND APPEAL

Corrective actions will be documented and communicated to the NAR in writing. Documentation will identify the concern, required corrective actions when applicable, expectations for improvement, applicable timelines, and potential consequences. Documentation will be maintained in accordance with Program and University record-retention requirements.

The NAR's acknowledgment of receipt does not waive applicable due process or appeal rights. Appeals of grades, Program dismissal, or other eligible academic actions will follow applicable NMSU and School of Nursing policies and procedures. NARs should refer to the DNP and Post-Graduate APRN Certificate Handbook for applicable Grade Appeal and Program Dismissal Appeal policies and procedures.

Program Authority

The Program strives to identify concerns early and provide opportunities for improvement when appropriate; however, prior counseling, remediation, warning, or probation is not required when the nature or severity of a concern warrants a higher level of corrective

action. All corrective actions are subject to applicable NMSU and School of Nursing policies and procedures.

DUE PROCESS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

The DNP-NA Program is committed to fair, consistent, and transparent decision-making regarding academic, clinical, and professional progression.

A NAR will receive formal written notification of any adverse action, including probation, suspension, dismissal, or other action affecting progression in the program. The descriptions of the notification content can be found in the appropriate section(s) above.

NARs may submit a written appeal within 10 calendar days of the beginning of the following full (fall/spring/summer) semester.

Appeals must include supporting documentation and will be reviewed according to established NMSU and School of Nursing procedures. Delete and replace with: Please refer to the DNP and Post Graduate APRN Certificate Handbook for Grade Appeals and Program Dismissal Appeal policies and procedures.

Unless otherwise directed by program leadership or university policy, NARs must continue to comply with all program requirements while an appeal is under review.

All decisions are subject to applicable university policies and procedures and become final upon completion of the established review process.

SECTION 5: SIMULATION CURRICULUM & STRUCTURE

Simulation activities are an integral component of the DNP-NA curriculum and are designed to develop clinical judgment, technical skills, communication, professionalism, and safe anesthesia practice. All NARs are expected to participate fully, maintain professional standards, and comply with simulation center requirements.

SIMULATION CENTER ORIENTATION AND EXPECTATIONS

The NMSU School of Nursing's Skills and Simulation Center includes a Perioperative Training Suite with a simulated operating room and areas for anesthesia skills training. All NARs must complete a mandatory Simulation Center orientation before participating in any simulation activity. Documentation of orientation completion will be maintained in the resident's educational record in Project Concert.

Orientation includes:

- Simulation Center layout and resources
- Program and Simulation Center policies
- Safety procedures and emergency protocols
- Professional conduct and attire expectations
- Confidentiality requirements
- Operation and limitations of simulation equipment and high-fidelity manikins

Simulation activities may include high-fidelity scenarios, skills laboratories, OSCEs, crisis resource management exercises, and other experiential learning activities aligned with program outcomes. Participation is considered a required component of the curriculum and is subject to the same standards of professionalism, attendance, and assessment as all other program activities.

NARs are expected to:

- Arrive on time and be prepared.
- Participate actively in simulations and debriefing.
- Communicate respectfully and professionally.
- Foster a psychologically safe learning environment.
- Handle all equipment appropriately and report malfunctions or safety concerns immediately.

Failure to meet these expectations may result in remediation, restricted simulation privileges, or other academic action.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING

Photography and video recording may be used for educational, programmatic, accreditation, or promotional purposes. All residents sign a media release upon entry into the program. Residents who wish to withdraw consent must submit written notification to the program office and notify faculty when participating in activities in which recording may occur.

PREPARATION AND PRE-BRIEFING REQUIREMENTS

Preparation and attendance are mandatory for all simulation activities.

Prior to each simulation experience, NARs may be assigned:

- Learning objectives
- Required reading
- Case materials
- Medication reviews
- Physiology and pathophysiology content
- Equipment orientation materials

Each simulation will begin with a structured pre-brief designed to:

- Review learning objectives
- Clarify participant roles and expectations
- Orient residents to available equipment and resources
- Discuss simulator limitations
- Establish psychological safety
- Review confidentiality and professionalism expectations

NARs who fail to complete required preparation or attend the pre-brief may be excluded from participation and assigned remediation or other academic consequences.

SAFETY AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

NARs are responsible for always maintaining a safe and professional learning environment.

General safety expectations include:

- Following faculty and simulation staff instructions
- Proper use of simulation equipment and supplies
- Appropriate disposal of sharps
- Compliance with infection prevention practices
- Immediate reporting of injuries, accidents, equipment failures, or unsafe conditions
- Maintaining a clean and orderly work environment

Food, beverages, and unauthorized personal items may not be brought into designated simulation areas when they could compromise safety, equipment, or the learning environment.

Professional behavior, respect, confidentiality, and psychological safety are expected of all participants. Failure to comply with safety or conduct requirements may result in removal from the activity, remediation, restricted access, or disciplinary action.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Simulation activities are confidential educational experiences designed to support learning, reflection, and performance improvement.

NARs may not:

- Share simulation scenarios or case details.
- Discuss peer performance outside sanctioned educational settings.
- Photograph, record, reproduce, or distribute simulation materials without authorization.
- Disclose debriefing discussions or feedback received during simulation activities.

Residents may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement before participating in simulation experiences.

Violation of simulation confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, remediation, restricted simulation privileges, or other program sanctions.

SIMULATION ASSESSMENTS AND OSCES

Simulation-based assessments and Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) are used to evaluate:

- Clinical decision-making
- Technical skills
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Professionalism
- Achievement of course and program outcomes

Attendance and preparation requirements apply to all graded simulation assessments and OSCEs.

Performance may contribute to course grades, progression decisions, and identification of remediation needs. Residents will receive feedback and may be required to complete remediation when minimum performance standards are not achieved.

SIMULATION REMEDIATION

Simulation remediation may be required when deficiencies are identified in:

- Clinical judgment
- Technical skills
- Communication
- Professional behavior
- Patient safety practices
- Performance during simulation assessments or OSCEs

Remediation plans are individualized and may include:

- Faculty coaching and feedback
- Assigned learning activities
- Skills practice
- Repeat simulation exercises
- Repeat OSCE assessment

Residents must complete all remediation requirements within faculty-designated timelines. Failure to successfully complete remediation may affect course progression, clinical participation, or academic standing.

SIMULATION DEBRIEFING

All simulation activities include structured debriefing facilitated by faculty or simulation personnel.

Debriefing is an essential component of simulation-based education and promotes:

- Reflective learning
- Clinical reasoning
- Knowledge integration
- Teamwork and communication skills
- Continuous performance improvement

NARs are expected to participate actively, engage in self-reflection, provide respectful feedback, and maintain confidentiality regarding debriefing discussions.

Faculty may use information obtained during debriefing to identify strengths, learning needs, and opportunities for coaching, remediation, or further evaluation.

SECTION 6: NAR RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

This section outlines tuition and fee obligations, financial assistance opportunities, technology requirements, and NAR support resources necessary for successful participation in the DNP-NAP.

TUITION, FEES, AND FINANCIAL AID

Tuition and mandatory university fees are established by New Mexico State University and are subject to change without notice.

Although the DNP-NA Program utilizes a modified academic schedule to accommodate clinical and curricular requirements, all official university reporting dates—including enrollment reporting, transcript processing, National Student Clearinghouse reporting, and financial aid disbursement—follow the official NMSU academic calendar.

NARs should plan accordingly, as financial aid and other university processes may not be available until official university start dates.

PROGRAM FEES

Students enrolled in the DNP-NA Program are assessed a program fee each semester to support educational resources and experiences necessary for successful completion of the program. Fees may support specialized technology and software, clinical tracking systems, simulation and skills training, educational and board-preparation resources, certification-related expenses and the National Certification Exam, professional memberships, conferences, and other program-related educational needs.

Program fees and their use are **reviewed annually** to ensure they remain appropriate, fiscally responsible, and aligned with current curriculum, accreditation requirements, and student educational needs. Specific resources and services supported by program fees may change as program needs evolve.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC EXPENSES

In addition to tuition, program fees, and university fees, NARs are responsible for all program-related expenses, including but not limited to:

- Additional educational software and learning platforms
- Textbooks and reference materials
- Clinical attire
- Self-Evaluation Examinations (SEE) Testing: Mandatory standardized testing; timing and quantity of exams will be provided by the NAP.

Program expenses are subject to change and may vary throughout enrollment.

Residents are responsible for all costs associated with clinical eligibility and compliance requirements, including:

- RN licensure and license renewal fees
- BLS, ACLS, PALS, and other required certifications
- Immunizations and titers
- Background checks
- Fingerprinting
- Drug screening
- Tuberculosis screening
- Additional clinical site requirements

Clinical affiliates may modify requirements without advance notice. Residents are responsible for maintaining compliance at all times.

CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION EXPENSES

Self-Evaluation Examination (SEE) and NCE Readiness

The National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) Self-Evaluation Examination (SEE) is used by the NMSU DNP–Nurse Anesthesiology Program to assess academic progress, identify areas for improvement, and support preparation for the National Certification Examination (NCE).

The SEE is one component of the Program's overall assessment of NCE readiness and is not used as the sole measure of academic performance, progression, or readiness for graduation.

SEE Requirements

All Nurse Anesthesiology Residents (NARs) are required to complete the SEE **twice** during the Program at Program-designated points in the curriculum.

For each required SEE administration, the Program will establish a testing window during which the examination must be completed. The NAR is responsible for:

- Selecting an eligible examination date within the Program-designated testing window.
- Scheduling the examination in accordance with NBCRNA procedures and testing availability.
- Paying all examinations, scheduling, and other applicable fees associated with the SEE.
- Completing the examination within the assigned testing window.

- Providing documentation of completion and/or results as required by the Program.

Failure to schedule or complete the SEE within the designated testing window may be considered failure to complete a Program requirement.

Program benchmarks are:

- **SEE I:** 400 or greater.
- **Final SEE:** 430 or greater.

These are NMSU DNP-NA Program benchmarks used to guide academic support and NCE preparation.

SEE I

NARs who score 400 or greater will continue standard Program preparation.

A score below 400 requires an individualized remediation plan developed or approved by Program faculty. Remediation may include targeted content review, APEX or other Program-approved resources, practice assessments, faculty mentoring, or other activities based on identified learning needs.

Successful completion of assigned remediation is required for satisfactory academic progression.

Final SEE

All NARs must complete the Final SEE during the Program-designated testing window.

- **430 or greater:** Meets the Program's expected Final SEE benchmark. The NAR continues standard NCE preparation.
- **410–429:** Does not independently require formal remediation or an additional SEE. The NAR will review identified areas of weakness and continue focused NCE preparation using Program-approved resources.
- **Below 410:** Requires an individualized NCE-readiness remediation plan developed or approved by Program faculty.

Remediation for a Final SEE score below 410 may include faculty mentoring, targeted content review, APEX or other Program-approved activities, practice examinations, additional assessments, and an additional SEE when determined necessary.

Faculty may require additional assessment or remediation at any score when the NAR's overall academic performance or other indicators demonstrate a significant concern regarding NCE readiness.

Additional SEE Examinations

The two Program-designated SEE examinations are required of all NARs. **An additional SEE may be required** when Program faculty determine that further assessment of NCE readiness is necessary.

NARs are responsible for scheduling and paying all applicable fees for any required additional SEE examination unless otherwise specified by the Program.

All SEE examinations must comply with current NBCRNA requirements, including applicable waiting periods and examination-attempt limits.

NCE Readiness

NCE readiness is evaluated using multiple measures and is not determined solely by a single SEE score. Faculty may consider SEE performance, didactic course performance, Program examinations, NCE-preparation activities, remediation progress, and other relevant evidence of academic readiness.

NARs scoring **below 410 on the Final SEE** must satisfactorily complete all required remediation and demonstrate adequate progress toward NCE readiness.

NARs scoring **410–429** will continue focused NCE preparation but will not automatically be placed into formal remediation or required to complete an additional SEE.

Failure to Complete Required NCE Preparation or Remediation

Failure to schedule or complete a required SEE within the Program-designated testing window, or failure to complete assigned NCE-preparation activities, remediation, faculty meetings, or required assessments, may result in corrective action in accordance with the Academic, Clinical, and Professional Performance Management Policy.

Program Review

The Program will periodically review SEE benchmarks, remediation thresholds, NCE outcomes, NBCRNA requirements, and Program outcome data and may revise requirements when warranted. NARs will be notified of applicable changes.

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

NMSU participates in federal, state, military, and institutional financial aid programs. NARs are expected to understand and fulfill all obligations associated with receiving financial assistance, including repayment requirements for applicable loan programs.

The Office of Student Financial Services provides:

- Financial aid counseling and packaging
- Assistance with federal and private loan applications
- Scholarship application support
- Veteran and military education benefit assistance
- Coordination of work-study opportunities, when available
- Financial literacy and loan repayment counseling

Additional scholarship opportunities may be available through:

- New Mexico State University
- Professional nursing organizations
- The American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology (AANA)
- Potential employers
- Community and healthcare foundations
- Other external funding sources

NARs are encouraged to explore financial aid and scholarship opportunities early and throughout the program.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Learning Management System (Canvas)

Canvas is the official Learning Management System (LMS) for New Mexico State University and serves as the primary platform for course content, assignments, examinations, grades, and program communications.

NARs must:

- Access Canvas regularly to review course announcements, assignments, and communications.
- Use a desktop or laptop computer for examinations, quizzes, and assignment submissions. Mobile devices should be limited to content review and other low-risk activities.
- Utilize current versions of supported web browsers for optimal system performance.
- Configure notifications to route Canvas communications to their NMSU email account.
- Failure to maintain access to Canvas or monitor course activity does not excuse missed assignments, examinations, or deadlines.

Secure Testing Platforms

You are required to use Respondus Lockdown Browser with webcam monitoring software, or other approved proctoring technologies to support examination security and academic integrity.

NARs must:

- Install all required testing software before scheduled examinations.
- Complete technology checks or practice examinations when required.
- Comply with in-person, remote, or third-party proctoring requirements.
- Ensure their devices meet all testing requirements before examination dates.
- NARs are responsible for resolving technology issues before scheduled testing activities.

Required Digital Tools and Equipment

All NARs must maintain technology that meets or exceeds current NMSU requirements.

- Required technology includes:
- A personal laptop or desktop computer meeting university specifications.
- Reliable high-speed internet access.

- Microsoft 365 applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook).
- A functioning webcam and microphone.
- Current PDF reader software.
- Appropriate antivirus and security protections.
- NARs are responsible for maintaining fully operational equipment throughout the program.

Professional Email Expectations

The official NMSU email account (@nmsu.edu) is the designated method of university communication and must be used for all academic and program-related correspondence.

NARs are expected to:

- Monitor their NMSU emails daily.
- Communicate professionally using appropriate grammar, tone, and formatting.
- Include relevant identifying information when communicating with faculty and staff.
- Recognize that university email communications constitute official university correspondence.
- Failure to review or respond to official communications does not exempt NARs from academic or administrative responsibilities.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

NMSU offers a variety of resources to support NAR success throughout the DNP-NA Program.

Available resources include:

- **IT Help Desk** – Technical assistance with myNMSU, Canvas, email, and university-supported software.
- **Student Success Center** – Academic coaching, study strategies, and professional development.
- **University Library Services** – Research databases, evidence-based practice resources, and librarian consultation.
- **Disability Access Services (DAS)** – NARs who need academic accommodations in accordance with federal and state regulations, should contact: **Disability Access Services (DAS)**: Phone: 575-646-6840, Email: das@nmsu.edu, Website: <https://NARlife.nmsu.edu/disability-access-services1/index.html>
- **Student Assistance Services** – Support for academic, financial, and personal challenges that may affect NAR success.
- **Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)** - NARs who experience or wish to report discrimination or harassment, or who have questions about their rights or the complaint process, should contact: Office of Institutional Equity, Phone: 575-646-3635, Email: equity@nmsu.edu, Website: <https://equity.nmsu.edu/index.html>

NARs are encouraged to seek support early when challenges arise.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE

Description

The Doctor of Nursing Practice–Nurse Anesthesiology (DNP-NA) Program is a full-time, sequential program that requires consistent participation in all didactic, simulation, and clinical learning experiences. Attendance and active engagement are essential for the development of clinical competence, professional accountability, patient safety, and successful progression through the curriculum. These guidelines establish expectations regarding attendance, absence reporting, leave requests, and time away from program activities and are intended to support residents in meeting all academic, clinical, and accreditation requirements.

The program adheres to the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Student Handbook and NMSU Administrative Rules and Procedures (ARP §4.46 – Authorized Absences). Approval of absences, leave requests, make-up activities, and related requirements is at the discretion of the Program Director (PD), Associate Program Director (APD), and/or FOR, consistent with university and program policies.

Guidelines

- Attendance is required for all scheduled classes, laboratories, simulation experiences, clinical assignments, and other mandatory educational activities.
- Residents are responsible for notifying appropriate faculty, program personnel, and clinical site representatives of absences in accordance with established program policies and procedures.
- Residents are responsible for accurately documenting all missed academic and clinical time and completing any required absence documentation.
- Missed educational activities may require:
 - Make-up assignments
 - Remediation activities
 - Additional simulation experiences
 - Additional clinical experiences
 - Other corrective actions as determined by program leadership
- Due to scheduling limitations, clinical site availability, faculty resources, equipment access, or accreditation requirements, some missed activities may not be eligible for rescheduling or make-up opportunities.

- Approval of absences, leave requests, make-up activities, and associated requirements is determined by the Program Director (PD), Associate Program Director (APD), and/or FOR in accordance with university and program policies.
- Failure to comply with attendance and absence-reporting requirements may result in academic or clinical consequences and may affect progression within the program.

ABSENCE DEFINITIONS

Excused Absences

An absence from a required academic, simulation, or clinical activity for which the NAR has appropriately notified program faculty and, when applicable, the clinical site in accordance with program procedures.

Unexcused Absences

An absence from a required academic, simulation, or clinical activity without proper notification to program faculty and, when applicable, the clinical site. Unexcused absences are considered unprofessional conduct and may result in disciplinary action. A second unexcused absence may result in dismissal from the program.

Excessive Absences

Generally defined as more than three absences within a semester. Excessive absences may adversely affect progression and competency attainment and may result in remediation, probation, delayed progression, or other corrective action.

Illness and Medical Leave

Residents who are unable to attend a scheduled academic or clinical activity due to illness must notify the Program Director and course faculty as soon as possible. For clinical days, NARS must also notify their clinical site coordinator and/or preceptor no later than **one hour before the scheduled clinical start time**. Residents are responsible for completing an **Authorized Time Off (RTO) Request Form** and coordinating with the clinical site coordinator to identify an appropriate make-up date, when required. The proposed make-up date should be documented on the RTO form before submission.

Residents requiring extended **medical leave** must submit a written request to the Program Director. Residents requesting an excused clinical absence due to illness may be required to provide documentation verifying that they sought medical evaluation or treatment. Documentation should verify the date of the visit only and should not include a diagnosis or other protected health information. Faculty will review the documentation

solely to determine whether the absence qualifies as excused and will not retain medical records containing protected health information

Approved medical leave supported by healthcare documentation will be considered an **excused absence** and generally will not require make-up time; however, all graduation, clinical competency, and accreditation requirements must still be satisfied.

Prior to returning to clinical activities following a medical leave, residents must provide written clearance from a qualified healthcare provider confirming their ability to safely perform the essential academic, clinical, and professional responsibilities of the program, with or without approved accommodations. The program reserves the right to require additional documentation or evaluation when necessary to ensure patient safety and compliance with program requirements.

PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH, AND PARENTAL LEAVE

The NMSU School of Nursing is committed to support students who are pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related conditions, including childbirth, miscarriage, termination of pregnancy, lactation, and recovery from these conditions, in accordance with federal and university policy.

Residents seeking reasonable modifications, excused absences, or other accommodations related to pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition should promptly contact the NMSU Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). OIE is responsible for coordinating pregnancy-related modifications and communicating approved accommodations to the appropriate University personnel.

Residents who are pregnant should notify the Program Director as early as possible to facilitate planning for clinical experiences and course requirements; however, they are not required to disclose medical information directly to faculty. The School of Nursing will work with residents and OIE to provide reasonable modifications while ensuring that students continue to meet the essential academic and clinical requirements of the nursing program.

Residents requesting time away from the program for parental bonding, adoption, foster placement, or other non-medical caregiving responsibilities are subject to the program's ATO policies. While the program will make reasonable efforts to accommodate these requests, students are responsible for completing all required coursework and clinical experiences, and an extension of the program may be necessary.

Residents returning to clinical activities following pregnancy must provide appropriate healthcare provider clearance when required.

Approved leave does not waive required course, clinical, or graduation requirements.

CONFERENCE AND PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

Attendance at professional conferences and educational meetings may be approved when consistent with program objectives and course requirements. However, NARs assigned to specialty rotations, including rural, pediatric, obstetric, and cardiac rotations, are not permitted to attend conferences or educational meetings during these rotation periods due to the unique clinical learning requirements and limited availability of these experiences.

Requests for conference leave must be submitted in advance and approved by the Program Director. Residents remain responsible for completing all missed course requirements and clinical obligations. In addition, attendance at conferences will not be approved if it interferes with required clinical experience or academic responsibilities.

EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE PROGRAM

The DNP-NA Program is a full-time, intensive course of study that requires students to devote their full attention to academic, simulation, and clinical responsibilities. Residents should plan financially to complete the program without relying on outside employment. Outside employment is prohibited throughout enrollment in the program, including during both the didactic and clinical residency phases of the curriculum.

Students in the first year of the program may engage in employment during official semester breaks (e.g., between-semester breaks) when they are not enrolled in coursework or participating in required program activities. Such employment must not interfere with the student's ability to return to the program prepared to meet all academic and professional responsibilities.

The only exception is part-time employment as a Graduate Assistant (GA) within the NMSU School of Nursing during the senior year of the program, with prior approval from the Program Director. Graduate Assistant responsibilities must not interfere with the student's academic progress, clinical education, professional responsibilities, personal wellness, or patient safety.

APPENDIX

Links to Forms Associated with the Handbook: [NA DNP Virtual Advising](#)