

Eastern Kentucky University

College of Health Sciences

School of Nursing

Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

Student Handbook

2026-2027



DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

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Introduction

This Student Handbook is intended for students entering Eastern Kentucky University's (EKU), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program. The ECU DNP Program is a post-master's program. Applicants must have at minimum a bachelor's in nursing (BSN) with a master's in a leadership and/or health care field (i.e., MSN, MPH, MHA, MBA, etc.). The DNP Student Handbook is not intended to replace the Graduate Catalog or the University Handbook for Students, but is provided for informational purposes to assist DNP students as they enter, progress through, and complete the DNP program. Students should consult with the DNP Faculty, DNP Coordinator, or Department Chair to obtain information or answers to their particular questions and/or clarify their particular circumstances.

All statements in this DNP Student Handbook are announcements of present policy and are subject to change without prior notice. Every effort is made to communicate changes with students in a timely, appropriate manner. Nothing contained in this publication is intended to create, nor shall be constructed as creating a contract, either expressed or implied, or guarantee for any term for any specific procedures. The department reserves the right to make changes in its policies, procedures, handbook, academic curricula, informational and printed materials, and all other items whenever needed to fulfill and properly exercise its educational responsibilities and objectives in ensuring a quality educational program.

School of Nursing

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the School of Nursing is to educate nurses at the Associate, Baccalaureate, Masters and Doctorate levels who work in interprofessional environments to promote health and well-being across the Commonwealth, country and world.

PREAMBLE

Eastern Kentucky University's Associate Degree Nursing Program was organized in 1965. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program was started in 1971. The programs became part of the newly established College of Allied Health and Nursing in 1975. In 1995, the Master's of Science in Nursing Program was approved and implemented. The department name was changed to Department of Baccalaureate & Graduate Nursing (DBGN). In 1999, the college name was changed to the College of Health Sciences. In 2011, the first class of post-Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice students was admitted. The RN to BSN and graduate level programs began transitions to online in 2012. The online format of the RN to BSN, Master's of Science in Nursing (MSN) and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs creates an educational opportunity open not only to nurses in Kentucky, but in many states. In 2020, the Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) program joined the DBGN. The department name was changed to the School of Nursing (SON), reflecting the new organizational structure. The ASN program was renamed the Associate of Applied Science in Nursing (AASN) in 2021 to expand funding opportunities for students.

The beliefs of the faculty and students relevant to nursing and health care are set forth in the philosophy statement. The philosophy guides the educational programs and learning environments.

The School of Nursing within the College of Health Sciences functions as an autonomous educational unit deriving the broad outlines of aims and functions from the guiding values of Eastern Kentucky University. The College of Health Sciences affirms the University's guiding values of **Opportunity** (Community Engagement, Multiple Perspectives and Lived Experiences, Professional Growth, Hospitality, Celebration) and **Trust** (Consistency, Effective Communication, Accountability, Efficiency, Leadership). The foundations of professional nursing education are congruent with the purposes of the University and the College of Health Sciences.

Revised June 2025

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

Consistent with the guiding values of Eastern Kentucky University and the College of Health Sciences, the faculty of the School of Nursing embrace the following beliefs about patient, environment, health, nursing, associate nursing education, baccalaureate nursing education, and graduate nursing education:

PATIENT

Patient includes individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations. Each patient is unique and merits respect, support, and dignity. Patients develop and adapt in recognizable phases and patterns. Patients continually seek meaning and purpose. Through participation in life's experiences, patients grow, assume responsibility and develop across the lifespan. Patients are holistic beings integrating biological, psychological, socio-cultural, and spiritual dimensions. The term "client" may be used interchangeably with "patient".

ENVIRONMENT

Environment is the aggregate of all objects, conditions, forces, and ideas that interact with patients. The elements of the environment include the physical, biological, sociocultural, and organizational systems. A health promoting environment facilitates movement toward wellness.

HEALTH

Health is a dynamic process between the patient and environment. Optimal health includes biological, environmental, psychological, sociocultural, spiritual, and organizational influences. Health reflects a patient's ability, willingness, and resources to engage the environment in a manner that maximizes wellness.

NURSING

Nursing is an autonomous and caring profession. Nursing is an art and science that promotes health through patient-centered care. While respecting patients' rights to self-determination, nursing provides holistic care during health, illness, and death.

ASSOCIATE NURSING EDUCATION

The Associate of Applied Science in Nursing (AASN) degree provides the foundational education necessary to become a registered nurse. The AASN program incorporates knowledge in nursing and key biological and social science as well as the study of humanities. Graduates are eligible to sit for the National Council of State Boards of Nursing licensure examination (NCLEX-RN). Upon licensure, graduates are prepared to practice in a variety of care settings. Graduates of the AASN program exhibit competencies of human flourishing, nursing judgement, professional identity, and the spirit of inquiry.

Associate degree nursing education is a transformative journey for both students and faculty, grounded in mutual accountability and shared responsibility. Teaching is a collaborative and cooperative endeavor, where students and faculty work together to integrate experience, knowledge, and skills. Faculty serve as facilitators and role models, guiding students through the learning process. Graduates are equipped to engage in lifelong learning and to practice effectively across healthcare settings and delivery models.

Approved by Faculty Organization January 2020

BACCALAUREATE NURSING EDUCATION

Preparation for professional nursing requires liberal and professional baccalaureate education. Baccalaureate nursing education develops critical thinking, collaboration, and decision making. Baccalaureate graduates are prepared to function as providers of patient-centered care, designers/managers/coordinators of care, and members of a profession who are proactive in a changing health care system. Baccalaureate graduates must be professional, responsible, and accountable for evidence-based practice.

Baccalaureate nursing education is a transformative process for students and faculty and is a process of reciprocal accountability and responsibility. Teaching is a cooperative, collaborative venture. Students and faculty share responsibility for the integration of experience, knowledge and skills. Faculty serve as role models and facilitators. Graduates are prepared to pursue lifelong learning, function in a variety of health care settings, and delivery models, as well as specialize at the graduate level.

Revised August 2025

GRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION

Preparation for advanced nursing roles is obtained through graduate education in nursing. Graduate education in nursing further develops the intellectual skills of critical thinking, analytic inquiry, and problem solving which were initiated in undergraduate nursing education.

Building upon the foundations laid by baccalaureate education, the faculty recognizes the need for additional knowledge to prepare graduates for specialty practice and for advanced roles. The evaluation of theory and research in nursing and related fields is imperative for graduates to incorporate evidence-based practice into their advanced nursing roles. A higher level of synthesis, analysis, and application of advanced nursing knowledge is essential for performance of advanced nursing roles. The integration of the additional knowledge, theory, and skills is obtained through graduate education in nursing. The graduate develops professional concepts and behaviors in order to function in an advanced role.

Nurses prepared at the graduate level must collaborate with other health disciplines in providing innovative health care delivery. They do so as full partners, sharing the responsibility for delineating society's health goals, developing health care policy, and functioning as advocates for the health care consumer.

The faculty is committed to educating nurses at the graduate level who will contribute to the general health of the nation and globally. The educational process at the graduate level is collegial in nature and promotes independent, self-directed learning and self-evaluation. Students communicate the results of their discovery, analysis, and synthesis of knowledge both orally and in writing to prepare for increased autonomy and responsibility in advanced practice roles. Graduate education in nursing prepares nurses to serve as advanced practice nurses and leaders in the health care system.

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program

DNP Goal Statement

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program at Eastern Kentucky University prepares nurses to innovate, lead change, and improve health outcomes for patients and populations. The ECU DNP degree is a practice-focused nursing doctorate. It prepares nurses for the highest levels of practice. Practice, as defined by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2004), may include, but is not limited to direct patient care, organizational leadership, policy making, and other essential practice roles. The ECU program has a strong emphasis on organizational leadership and incorporates the 2021 AACN Essentials as the organizing framework.

DNP Program Outcomes

Graduates of the DNP program will be able to:

1. Synthesize and apply advanced nursing knowledge and theories to inform clinical and systems-level transformation, innovation, and sustainable improvements in health outcomes.
2. Lead the design, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based care within a system that is culturally responsive and grounded in shared decision-making.
3. Utilize population health data, epidemiological trends, and policy analysis to design, lead, and evaluate system-wide strategies that address social determinants of health and promote health.
4. Generate, translate, and disseminate practice-based evidence to inform decision-making, improve care quality, and shape practice and policy at the organizational and population levels.
5. Design, lead, and evaluate quality improvement initiatives using data-driven methods and implementation science to enhance safety, effectiveness, and outcomes within healthcare systems.
6. Build and sustain strategic interprofessional partnerships to lead collaborative change efforts, align shared goals, and optimize care delivery within healthcare systems.
7. Demonstrate strategic leadership within a healthcare system to manage resources, influence policy, and ensure the delivery of safe, quality, cost-effective care.
8. Integrate informatics, data analytics, and emerging technologies to guide organizational decision-making, evaluate care delivery, and support strategic innovation.
9. Model professional identity and accountability through ethical leadership, policy advocacy, and lifelong commitment to the values of the nursing profession.
10. Demonstrate leadership that fosters positivity, resilience, reflective practice, mentoring, and lifelong learning.

Professional Standards for the DNP Program

The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice, published in 2006 by the American Association of College of Nursing (AACN), was utilized as the professional standard to develop the DNP curriculum. In 2022-2023, a gap analysis was completed and curriculum revisions were initiated based on the new AACN's The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (2026). The AACN *Essentials* are organized into ten domains used to identify expected competencies for graduates.

The AACN Essentials (2026)

- **Domain 1:** Knowledge for Nursing Practice
- **Domain 2:** Person-Centered Care
- **Domain 3:** Population Health
- **Domain 4:** Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline
- **Domain 5:** Quality and Safety
- **Domain 6:** Interprofessional Partnerships
- **Domain 7:** Systems-Based Practice
- **Domain 8:** Informatics and Healthcare Technologies
- **Domain 9:** Professionalism
- **Domain 10:** Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development

Students can access / review the full AACN Essentials (2026) at <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Publications/Essentials-2026.pdf>

Admission Information for the DNP Program

Individuals interested in applying to the DNP Program should first contact ECU Enrollment Counselor Meghan Russell (meghan.russell@eku.edu). Questions related specifically to nursing, the DNP Experience/Clinical Hours, or other professional inquiries will be forwarded to the DNP Program Coordinator Dr. Fontaine Sands, at fontaine.sands@eku.edu. Applicants may also email the DNP Coordinator directly to schedule an appointment.

Additional questions about graduate education or concerns can be directed to:

Eastern Kentucky University, Graduate School

Phone: 859-622-1742

Hours: Monday - Friday, 08:00 am- 04:30 pm EST

Admission Requirements

Minimum requirements for admission to the DNP program include:

- A master's degree in either nursing (MSN) **or** other leadership and health-related fields (i.e., MPH, MHA, MBA, MSc) from a nationally accredited program. If the applicant's master's degree is not in nursing (MSN), the applicant must have a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from an accredited program.
- Unencumbered RN license from an approved state (*click to check the State Authorization Map for state participation* eku.edu/state-authorization/#sara-member-states).
- A graduate GPA of at least 3.0 (4.0 scale).
- If applicable, an APRN license from an approved state.

Graduate School Application Process

A student seeking admission to the Post-Masters DNP Program at Eastern Kentucky University must apply online for admission to the Graduate School. The student is responsible for submitting completed materials to the Graduate School, including the Graduate School Application Form, transcripts of all previous college work (except for coursework at Eastern Kentucky University), and the current application fee. Applications for the Graduate School are available online from the Graduate School website.

Please note that students will be required to respond to several short answer questions as part of their online application. Student responses will be carefully reviewed by the DNP Admissions Committee. They will be used to evaluate the student's written communication skills, professional goals, experience with online learning, and the alignment of those goals with the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program.

The applicant must provide three professional references. The applicant will provide the email addresses and an electronic reference form will be emailed to each reference when the application is submitted. A variety of references is suggested to provide a more complete picture of potential for graduate study (i.e., peer, supervisor, and professor). References from family members and friends are not considered professional in nature. Please inform individuals receiving electronic reference forms that your application file cannot be completed until the reference form is submitted to the ECU Graduate School.

A completed application packet includes:

- A completed application form
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae
- Short written responses to required questions, as instructed in the application
- Three professional references

Program Expenses

These could include the following:

Application for admission

Tuition and University fees

Program course fees (i. e., Student ID Badge, Minitab Statistical Software)
Professional Liability Insurance (annual)
Computer with camera
Internet access
Application for Graduation
Potential clinical expenses based on agency's onboarding requirements (i.e., immunizations, background check, drug screening, etc.)

Textbooks Utilized

The following textbooks will be utilized during the DNP Program. Please note: the most recent edition of these textbooks will be utilized.

- McEwen, M. & Wills, E. (2023). *Theoretical Basis for Nursing* (6th Ed.). Wolters Kluwer Publishing.
- McBride, A. (2019). *The Growth and Development of Nurse Leaders*. Springer Publishing
- McBride, S., & Tietze, M. (2026). *Nursing informatics for the advanced practice nurse: Patient safety, quality, outcomes, and interprofessionalism* (4th ed.). Springer Publishing.
- Greenhill, R. (2026). *Introduction to healthcare quality management* (5th ed.). Health Administration Press.
- Rath, T., & Conchie, B. (2008). *Strengths-based leadership: Great leaders, teams, and why people follow*. Gallup Press.
- Knickman, J. R., & Elbel, B. (2023). *Jonas and Kovner's Health Care Delivery in the United States* (13th Ed.). Springer Publishing.
- Agresti, A. (2022). *Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences* (5th Ed.). Person Publishing.
- *Bonnel & Smith (2026). *Proposal Writing for the DNP Project* (4th Ed.). Springer Publishing. Will be utilized in several ECU DNP Courses.
- *American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association. Used in all courses.

Students may wish to “opt-in” with the [ECU BookSmart program](#) and pay for course access to an electronic copy of the required textbooks by semester or purchase the textbooks, especially those that will be utilized within multiple courses (marked with an asterisk*).

Deadlines for Application Submission

Application deadlines for the DNP program are consistent with those published by the ECU Graduate School. Students are admitted for enrollment four times per year:

- Fall A start (application due July 1)
- Fall B start (application due August 15)
- Spring A start (application due November 1)
- Summer I start (application due March 15)

Selection of Applicants for Admission

Completed application packets will be reviewed by members of the DNP Committee on an ongoing basis. Applicants will be admitted, denied, or asked to participate in a phone or video conference interview. Enrollment in the Graduate School does not guarantee either admission or completion of the DNP Program. As a limited number of applicants are accepted for admission, selection will be based on careful consideration of all admission information and the degree to which each candidate meets the requirements. Only completed applications will be reviewed. Notification of acceptance will occur by email.

Transfer of Credit from Outside Doctoral Programs

Consistent with the Graduate Catalog, an incoming student may transfer no more than twelve (12) credit hours into the ECU DNP Program. Students wishing to transfer credits will be required to submit official transcripts and course syllabi for review. Transfer of credit is at the discretion of the Primary Course Leader and the DNP Committee; and will be assessed on an individual basis to determine the congruence of previous course work with the pertinent ECU NSC course outcomes.

Disclosure of Protected Information

The SON seeks to collaborate with the Board of Nursing and other agencies involved in the examination and/or certification of nursing professionals to the fullest extent possible in the best interest of all students, the SON, and the University. There may be times, though, that, in order to provide examination and/or certification agencies (e.g., Board of Nursing) with all information and records sought, a student will be asked to complete a voluntary consent permitting SON to disclose relevant FERPA-protected information to such agencies. Students providing this consent often benefit as it can enhance the speed of remediation of any questions or concerns.

Student Services

Class Offerings

Classes are offered through an on-line format with occasional synchronous classes utilizing web video conferencing technology. No on-campus class meetings are required.

Bookstore Services

BookSmart Program

Students are automatically enrolled in the ECU BookSmart Program each semester unless they choose to opt out. The cost is \$26 per credit hour per semester, based on the student's total number of credit hours for that semester. BookSmart provides access to required course materials.

Students who prefer to purchase textbooks and required course materials from another vendor may opt out of BookSmart each semester and are responsible for obtaining all required materials independently.

For additional information about BookSmart, visit the ECU BookSmart website: <https://www.ecu.edu/in/guides/booksmart/>.

Barnes and Noble Bookstore

Website: <https://ecu.bncollege.com/>

Telephone: (859) 622-2696

Fax: (859) 622-2660

If you have an accommodation and the materials for this course are not in the format that you need, please fill out the Center for Student Accessibility's [Digital and Physical Books Request Form](#) and email the completed form to kelly.cogar@ecu.edu.

Library Assistance and Services

General library services include access to over 292 databases, group and individual research assistance, in-person and [electronic reference assistant](#), discipline-specific subject guides ([Nursing Library Guide](#)), and assignment-based instruction via classroom or Canvas.

For reference assistance, DNP students may schedule a consult, ask questions, or see frequently asked questions and answers by accessing ECU's [Ask Us service](#). Individual support can be provided in-person, live via conferencing technology, or by other means.

Information Technology Services

Email

Every student registered with Eastern Kentucky University has access to a free EKU email address. Students are expected to check their EKU email address on a regular basis since this is the primary method of contact for online classes. Use this website to activate the EKU email account: <https://ekuonline.eku.edu/eku-online-activating-your-student-e-mail-account>

Helpdesk

EKU's ITDS Helpdesk serves as the first point of contact for all our computing needs. Call (859) 622-3000 for needed support. <https://it.eku.edu/supportdesks>

myEKU

“myEKU” provides students with access to a variety of online services including but not limited to course schedules, managing EKU account passwords, and student financial information.

Advising and Registration

Students register online through their myEKU account (<https://experience.elluciancloud.com/eku/>). If registration is blocked for any reason, students must contact their Online Academic Advisor, Haley Anders, at haley.anders@eku.edu for assistance. Students must always consult with their Online Academic Advisor before registering for classes. **In addition, it is very important that students consult with their Online Academic Advisor if they are planning on deviating from their curriculum progression plan under which they were admitted or if they are experiencing any academic difficulties.**

Upon admission, DNP students receive a gap analysis and curriculum plan (discussed in a later section). Students are expected to follow the agreed upon plan for academic progression. The DNP Coordinator serves as the primary faculty advisor for enrollment and curriculum progression.

EKU DNP Coordinator:

Dr. Fontaine Sands, DrPH, MSN, RN, CIC

Email: fontaine.sands@eku.edu

Professional Liability Insurance

Professional Liability Insurance (PLI) must be purchased through Eastern Kentucky University. The time-period of coverage is August 15-August 14; no pro-rating for partial year coverage is

possible. The liability insurance purchased through the University is paid for with the tuition and fees; a copy of the receipt must be shown to faculty before students can participate in DNP Experiences. The insurance covers only clinical experiences which are part of scheduled classes, and the insurance will no longer be in effect if the student withdraws from school or graduates.

- You will receive instructions for purchasing PLI when you receive your registration information. If there are any questions, contact Hayley Anders, hayley.anders@eku.edu.
- PLI must be carried during the entire DNP Program.

EKU Student Photo ID

A professional ECU Photo ID must be worn at all times students are in DNP Experience/clinical sites. The process for obtaining the ID is included in admission information forwarded to students following acceptance into the DNP Program. The ECU Photo ID process should be completed prior to enrolling in the first NSC course.

- You will receive instructions for the ECU Photo ID process upon admission. If there are any questions, contact Hayley Anders, hayley.anders@eku.edu

Technology

Canvas: Students will need to develop basic navigational skills in Canvas. Students should be able to manage course materials, engage in discussions, submit assignments, and utilize the Canvas inbox for communications. A working knowledge of accessing and navigating different modules and understanding the course layout in Canvas is essential. For those unfamiliar with Canvas, a [student guide](#) is available; you can contact [EQU Support](#), or you can contact [Canvas support](#) for assistance.

Microsoft Office: To be successful in the DNP program, students will need proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. Students should be able to create and edit documents, perform basic calculations and data manipulation in Excel, create presentations in PowerPoint, and manage email and calendar functions in Outlook. If you lack experience with these applications, please refer to the free training modules available through the [Microsoft Office Training](#) portal.

Google Suite: Students will need to have foundational skills in Google Suite. Competencies should include creating, sharing, and collaborating on documents using Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides, as well as effectively managing emails and calendars with Gmail and Google Calendar. Those unfamiliar with these tools should explore the [Google Workspace Learning Center](#) for instructional guides and practice resources prior to the commencement of the course.

Computer With Internet Access

A laptop or desktop computer running a modern operating system such as Windows 11 or MacOS is required. Tablets or smartphones, while convenient, may not be sufficient for all course activities.

Up-to-Date Web Browser

The latest version of Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox best positions students to be successful. Please ensure your browser is up to date to avoid compatibility issues with the learning management system and associated technologies.

Camera and Microphone

A built-in or external webcam and microphone are essential for participating in live sessions and completing various multimedia assignments, such as screen recording. ZOOM will be utilized for virtual sessions. Students may connect via computer, phone, or tablet as long as the device has a camera.

DNP Curriculum

Required Course Credits and Course Descriptions

The following is a summary of the required courses in the DNP Program, the credit hours for each, and the course descriptions.

Core Courses	Course Name	Credit Hours
NSC 840	Theory for Advanced Practice	3
NSC 843	Informatics and Resource Management	3
NSC 855	Population Health & Policy	3
NSC 857	Leadership, Quality & Safety	3
NSC 905	Analytical Methods for EBP	3
NSC 941	DNP Project Seminar	2
NSC 991	Ethics in Research	2
Organizational Leadership	Clinical-Based & DNP Project	Credit Hours
NSC 900	Organizational Leadership DNP Experience I	1-3
NSC 901	Organizational Leadership DNP Experience II	1-3
NSC 990	DNP Project Development	3
NSC 992	DNP Project Implementation & Data Collection	3
NSC 994	DNP Project Analysis & Dissemination	3
Total Hours		30-34
*NSC 938	Special Topics (optional for additional clinical hours)	*1-3

Required clinical hours will be evaluated individually based on each student's planned program of study, academic background, and career goals.

Exit Requirements – Candidates are required to satisfactorily complete and present a DNP Project before they are eligible to graduate from the program. Students must have documentation of a minimum of 1,000 total clinical hours completed beyond the BSN degree (Masters + DNP). If additional hours, above the 660 clock hours provided in the DNP program and those achieved with the master's degree, are needed to reach the 1,000 hours, a plan of study will be developed accordingly.

Didactic Core Course Descriptions

NSC 840: Theoretical Application for Advanced Practice (3 credit hours)

Analyze the interrelationship of theory, research, and practice by exploring theoretical foundations and perspectives for evaluation and application in advanced nursing practice.

NSC 843: Informatics and Resource Management (3 credit hours)

Evaluate health information technology to support decision-making and cost-effective resource management.

NSC: 855 Population Health and Policy (3 credit hours)

Use data and stakeholder collaboration to advocate for evidence-based policies that enhance population health.

NSC: 857 Leadership, Quality & Safety for Healthcare Systems (3 credit hours)

Prepares advanced practice nurses to lead systematic transformation in healthcare by synthesizing principles of safety, quality improvement, and organizational leadership.

NSC 905: Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice (3 credit hours)

Description and analysis of quantitative data using statistical and graphical methods, for purposes of evidence-based practice.

NSC 941: DNP Project Seminar (2 credit hours)

Seminar course where students engage in outlining the planning process of a DNP project.

NSC 991: Ethics in Research (2 credit hours)

Explores the ethical principles and standards that guide research in nursing practice. Students will examine issues such as informed consent, confidentiality, and the responsible conduct of research. Emphasis is placed on ethical decision-making and the application of ethical frameworks to real-world research scenarios.

DNP Experience and Project-Based Course Descriptions (1 credit hour is equivalent to 60 clinical clock hours).

NSC 900: Organizational Leadership: DNP Experience I (1-3 credit hours; 60 to 180 clock hours)

This course facilitates experiential learning in doctoral leadership role transition, organizational assessment and gap analysis, and interprofessional collaboration with healthcare partners to identify a scholarly evidence-based, system-level quality and/or safety improvement project idea.

NSC 901: Organizational Leadership: DNP Experience II (1-3 credit hours; 60 to 180 clock hours)

This doctoral-level experience engages students in system-level principles related to emergency preparedness, leadership, scholarship, and quality and safety when developing evidence-based strategies that promote personal and employee well-being, population health, and organizational outcomes.

NSC 990: DNP Project Development (3 credit hours – 180 clock hours)

In this course, students will engage in synthesizing evidence for the development of a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Project proposal to enhance evidence-based practice and health outcomes.

NSC 992: Implementation Methods for DNP (3 credit hours – 180 clock hours)

Translate scientific multi-disciplinary knowledge into complex interventions to improve practice and health outcomes in the implementation of an evidence-based practice project.

NSC 994: DNP Project (3 credit hours– 180 clock hours)

Translate a body of evidence-based research in the implementation, analysis, and dissemination of a project to improve practice and health outcomes.

NSC 938: Special Topics for DNP (1-6 credit hours – 60 to 360 clock hours)

Selected topics will be offered as appropriate for enhancement of advanced nursing role. This course is optional for those students needing additional clinical clock hours (above the 660 provided)

DNP Curricular Plans

Students admitted to the DNP Program will progress according to a curriculum plan based on the semester in which they start the first course of the program. The DNP Academic Advisor and DNP Faculty Advisor will advise the student on enrollment each semester.

Students can progress through the DNP program at a pace that fits their needs (part-time or accelerated).

- Part-time – maximum of 6 credits in a semester
- Accelerated – maximum of 12 credits in a semester

On a part-time basis, students should be able to complete the program in 6-8 semesters. However, time to completion can be decreased by 1-2 semesters depending on the number of eligible courses approved for transfer (max 12 credits).

If a student wishes to progress more quickly with an **accelerated path**, they can complete the program in 5-6 semesters. Please note that some semesters in the accelerated option will require a significant time commitment to be successful.

Whether progressing at a part-time or accelerated pace, overall time to completion/graduation may depend on which graduate-level core courses have already been completed with the student's master's degree and approved for transfer by the DNP Faculty (up to 12 credit hours may be transferred).

Graduate-level courses meeting the same competencies as DNP Program's 800-level courses can be evaluated for potential transfer upon request after admission to the DNP Program. Acceptable courses must have been taken within the last 5 years to be considered for transfer. Students will need to submit course syllabi from the time they took the course(s) for evaluation, unless the course(s) were taken at the ECU School of Nursing (we keep these on file).

- NSC 840 Theory for Advanced Practice – 3 credit hours
- NSC 843 Informatics & Resource Management – 3 credit hours
- NSC 855 Population Health & Policy – 3 credit hours
- NSC 857 Leadership, Quality & Safety – 3 credit hours

Examples of a part-time or accelerated progression plan can be seen below. Please note that the sequence of courses may be different based on what semester a student enters the program (fall, spring, summer) and if any master's level courses are approved for transfer. Furthermore, any plan can be adjusted as needed if unexpected circumstances occur.

Example progression, including the four 800-level core courses. This example is based on a Fall semester start; the course order may be different if starting in a different semester, as not all courses are offered every semester.

	A Session	B Session	A Session	B Session	Summer Session
Part-Time Option Semester 1-3	NSC 843* Informatics & Resource Mgt (3 cr) 7 weeks	NSC 857* Leadership, Q&S (3 cr) 7 weeks	NSC 840* Theory (3 cr) 7 weeks NSC 941 DNP Project Seminar (2 cr) 7 weeks	NSC 855* Pop Health & Policy (3 cr) 7 weeks	NSC 905 Analytical Methods for EBP (3 cr) 7 weeks
Accelerated Option Semester 1-3	NSC 843* Informatics & Resource Mgt (3 cr) 7 weeks NSC 941 DNP Project Seminar (2 cr) 7 weeks	NSC 857* Leadership, Q&S (3 cr) 7 weeks	NSC 840* Theory (3 cr) 7 weeks NSC 900** OL DNP Exp. I (1-3 cr; 60-180 clock hrs) 15 weeks	NSC 855* Pop Health & Policy (3 cr) 7 weeks →	NSC 905 Analytical Methods for EBP (3 cr) 7 weeks NSC 901** OL DNP Exp. II (1-3 cr) 60-180 clock hrs 10 weeks

Part-time Option Semesters 4-6	NSC 900** → OL DNP Exp. I (1-3 cr; 60-180 clock hrs) 15 weeks	NSC 990** DNP Project Development (3 cr) (180 clock hours) 15 weeks → NSC 991 (2 cr) Ethics In Research 7 weeks	NSC 901** OL DNP Exp. II (1-3 cr) 60-180 clock hrs 10 weeks		
Accelerated Option Semester 4-6	NSC 990** DNP Project Development (3 cr) (180 clock hours) 15 weeks → NSC 991 (2 cr) Ethics In Research 7 weeks	NSC 992** → DNP Project Implementation & Data Collection (3 cr) (180 clock hrs) 15 weeks	NSC 994** DNP Project Analysis & Dissemination (3 cr; 180 clock hrs) 12 weeks Graduation		
Part-time Option Semesters 7-8	NSC 992** → DNP Project Implementation & Data Collection (3 cr) (180 clock hrs) 15 weeks	NSC 994** → DNP Project Analysis & Dissemination (3 cr; 180 clock hrs) 15 weeks Graduation			

*800-level core courses may be eligible for transfer from a master's program – up to 12 credit hours

**Clinical-based courses – 1 credit hour = 60 clock hours

Example with the transfer of equivalent 800-level courses being accepted for all four core courses (12 credit hours)

- NSC 840* Theory for Advanced Practice – 3 credit hours
- NSC 843* Informatics & Resource Management – 3 credit hours
- NSC 855* Population Health & Policy – 3 credit hours
- NSC 857* Leadership, Quality & Safety for HC Systems – 3 credit hours

If you did not graduate from EKU's MSN program, please note, this progression plan will change based on which of the 1-4 courses are accepted for transfer.

	Session A	Session B	Session A	Session B	Summer I	
Part-time Option Semesters 1-3	NSC 941 DNP Project Seminar (2 cr) 7 weeks	NSC 905 Analytical Method for EBP (3 cr) 7 weeks	NSC 900** OL DNP Exp. I (1-3 cr; 60-180 clock hrs) 15 weeks →		NSC 901** → OL DNP Exp. II (1-3 cr; 60-180 clock hrs) 10 weeks	

Accelerated Option Semesters 1-3	NSC 941 DNP Project Seminar (2 cr) 7 weeks NSC 900** OL DNP Exp. I (1-3 cr; 60-180 clock hrs) 15 weeks	NSC 990** → DNP Project Development (3 cr; 180 clock hrs) 15 weeks NSC 991 (2 cr) Ethics In Research 7 weeks	NSC 905 Analytical Method for EBP (3 cr) 7 weeks NSC 901** → OL DNP Exp. II (1-3 cr; 60-180 clock hrs) 10-12 weeks
Part-time Option Semesters 4-6	NSC 990** → DNP Project Development (3 cr; 180 clock hrs) 15 weeks NSC 991 (2 cr) Ethics In Research 7 weeks	NSC 992** → DNP Project Implementation & Data Collection (3 cr; 180 clock hrs) 15 weeks	NSC 994** → DNP Project Analysis & Dissemination (3 cr; 180 clock hrs) 12 weeks Graduation
Accelerated Option Semesters 4-5	NSC 992** → DNP Project Implementation & Data Collection (3 cr; 180 clock hrs) 15 weeks	NSC 994** → DNP Project Analysis & Dissemination (3 cr; 180 clock hrs) 15 weeks Graduation	

*800-level core courses may be eligible for transfer from a master's program – up to 12 credit hours

**Clinical-based courses – 1 credit hour = 60 clock hours

DNP Project Team

DNP students will be assigned a Faculty Advisor upon admission. This DNP faculty member will advise students throughout the program and become the “Faculty Chair” for the students’ DNP Project. The DNP student will begin to formally identify a DNP project idea in collaboration with a clinical agency and faculty project chair in NSC 900 (first clinical experience). If not already completed, a second Faculty Team member will be assigned at the end of NSC 900.

The role of the DNP Team is to guide the student through the academic requirements of the DNP Project. Each DNP Project Team will consist of the following members at a minimum:

- DNP Student
- DNP Project Chair
- DNP Team Member

The DNP Committee will assign the DNP Project Chair to the student based upon goodness of fit and faculty workloads. The DNP Chair must be a doctorally prepared faculty member of the ECU School of Nursing. The DNP Committee reserves the right to reassign the student to a new DNP Project Chair in the event of personal emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances. The appointment of the DNP Project Chair will be recorded in the DNP Committee Meeting minutes.

The second DNP Team member will be added after the appointment of the DNP Project Chair and as soon as the DNP Chair determines the trajectory of the DNP Project. Often DNP Team Members are selected based on academic or clinical expertise or other contributions they may make to the DNP Project. The DNP Committee will approve additional DNP Team member(s) based on faculty workload and goodness of fit.

DNP Team members must also be doctorally prepared and have current CITI training. They may be a member of the ECU School of Nursing or the partnering organization within the community. If they are from the partnering organization, the student must submit their CV with a cover letter explaining their qualifications and potential contributions to the project. The appointment of the DNP Team member will be reflected in the minutes of the DNP Committee Meeting.

Additional stakeholders may also be involved in the project, including but not limited to, the student's DNP Preceptor, organizational representatives, or practice experts.

DNP Project Requirements (see document, *DNP Project Guidelines*)

DNP Requirements for DNP Experience/Clinical Hours

Required DNP Experience Documentation and Expectations

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) require DNP graduates to document 1,000 hours of "clinical" hours beyond the BSN to demonstrate mastery of the DNP Essentials. In 2015, the AACN recommended that these hours be referred to as "DNP Experience Hours." The hours must be completed as part of an academic program (AACN, 2015).

Upon admission to the ECU DNP program, a gap analysis is completed. Students can access their gap analysis by contacting Hayley Anders, hayley.anders@ecu.edu. Credit is awarded, when possible, for previous equivalent graduate-level core courses and clinical hours completed during the student's master's program. Please note that the Credentialing Center for Nurse Education (CCNE) requires completion of 1,000 post-baccalaureate clinical-clock hours to receive a DNP degree. Part of the gap analysis process will determine how many clock hours are eligible for transfer to be added to the hours achieved in the DNP program.

A minimum of 660 clinical clock hours are completed by all students within ECU's DNP Program. These hours are earned by completing the work for the DNP Project and other select DNP Experience courses. Students cannot start DNP Experience hours prior to the start of the semester or until all on-boarding paperwork and contract agreements are completed. The student will receive an email from Christi Isaacs, College of Health Sciences (CHS) Clinical Agreement and Compliance Coordinator, indicating they are approved to begin.

Students should complete the *Request for DNP Experience Site Approval Form* for each clinical course (listed below). After the initial approval and before each course that includes DNP

Experience hours, the student will resubmit the site approval form and indicate that they are “continuing” at the same site if there are no changes in the information.

Courses involving DNP Experience Hours include:

- NSC 900: DNP Organizational Leadership: DNP Experience I
- NSC 901: DNP Organizational Leadership: DNP Experience II
- NSC 990: DNP Project Development
- NSC 992: DNP Project Implementation and Data Collection
- NSC 994: DNP Project Analysis and Dissemination
- Optional if more hours needed: NSC 938: Special Topics for the DNP

Deadlines for Request for DNP Experience Site Approval Form:

- Spring: October 1st
- Summer: February 1st
- Fall: May 1st

For each of these courses, the following current/updated documentation is required:

- Current and unrestricted Registered Nurse License in the state of residence or nursing practice, with no State Board of Nursing imposed restrictions on practice, voluntary or otherwise.
- Proof of Professional Liability Insurance purchased through Eastern Kentucky University.
- Other documentation and/or requirements specific to the clinical site.

A log of the DNP Experience/Clinical Hours must be maintained and submitted at midterm and at the end of each course. The DNP Experience/Clinical Log will be provided to the students within the course and requires the student to record the date, time, a detailed description of each daily learning activity, and correlation to the course's modular assignments. Furthermore, a short-written reflection summarizing the overall experience and the alignment of the skills obtained with the AACN DNP Essentials and AONL Competencies must be included.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Expectations regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools may vary by course and assignment. Students are responsible for reviewing and adhering to the AI use requirements outlined in each course syllabus and individual assignment instructions. Unauthorized use of AI may constitute an academic integrity violation.

Vaccine Declination Statement:

The School of Nursing partners with hospitals and other healthcare agencies throughout the region to provide students with valuable clinical learning opportunities. To participate in clinical experiences, students are required to submit documentation of their vaccination status through the designated online clinical onboarding platform.

Students who choose to decline one or more required vaccinations must submit all required exemption or declination documentation in the online clinical onboarding platform. The

student's vaccination status and any applicable exemption or declination documentation will then be provided to the clinical agency for consideration.

Each clinical agency establishes and enforces its own policies and requirements regarding vaccination and whether a vaccination exemption or declination will be accepted. Because these requirements vary among clinical agencies, the School of Nursing cannot guarantee placement at a specific clinical facility or guarantee that an appropriate clinical placement will be available for a student who declines required vaccinations. This may result in delays in clinical progression and, potentially, a delay in graduation.

EKU ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Eastern Kentucky University is a community of shared academic values, foremost of which is a strong commitment to intellectual honesty, honorable conduct, and respect for others. In order to meet these values, students at ECU are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. These standards are embodied in this policy and the Student Code of Conduct. By honoring and enforcing this Academic Integrity Policy, the University community affirms that it does not tolerate academic dishonesty. This policy defines the various forms of academic dishonesty, and it outlines the consequences for each. Additionally, this policy gives the method for appealing a complainant's allegation that some form of academic dishonesty has in fact occurred.

Academic dishonesty can occur in different forms, some of which include cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication. The University treats all instances of academic dishonesty seriously.

Anyone who knowingly assists in any form of academic dishonesty shall be considered as responsible as the student who accepts such assistance and shall be subject to the same sanctions.

The Academic Integrity policy is located at: [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#)

The Academic Integrity Pledge, below, is administered through the Terms of Usage for ECU Direct.

The Pledge:

I hereby affirm that I understand, accept, and will uphold the responsibilities and stipulations of the Eastern Kentucky University Academic Integrity policy.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE POLICY

In order to protect patient safety and to comply with clinical agency requirements and applicable Board of Nursing recommendations, the following policy will apply to all students who are accepted into the DNP Program. All students are required to have a negative drug screen prior to entering their first clinical experience and may be subject to further drug/alcohol screenings at the discretion of SON Faculty and/or the clinical facility.

Any SON Faculty member or the student's clinical instructor, preceptor, or similar supervisor, in consultation with SON Faculty, has the authority to direct a student to immediately undergo a drug and/or alcohol screening when there is a "reasonable suspicion" of drug or alcohol use as indicated by the student's behavior, speech, body odor, or appearance. Specific behavior which could create a "reasonable suspicion" of drug or alcohol use includes any conduct that prevents the student from performing any essential function of the program or poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others as well as, for example, the following: odor of alcohol or drugs; unsteady or staggering gait; rapid or slurred speech; pinpoint or dilated pupils; unresponsiveness; bloodshot eyes; fine motor tremors; difficulty participating in activities or assignments; nausea; vomiting; sweating; erratic behavior; incoherent speech; verbal or physical outbursts; self-report of drug use or alcohol abuse; unsafe behavior; unsatisfactory care for others; and threats, to harm self or others.

Any student directed to immediately undergo a drug and/or alcohol screening will do so at the student's own expense and will be suspended from all educational and clinical activities until the issue is resolved to the satisfaction of the Department Chair. No University employee will be responsible for providing transportation to students who demonstrate signs of impairment, and any costs related to transportation to/from the screening site or elsewhere will be at the student's own expense.

If a student receives a positive drug and/or alcohol screening, violates this policy in any other manner, or admits to drug and/or alcohol use, the student will be deemed to have engaged in an unsafe practice and/or unprofessional conduct and will face disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the DNP Program. Breathalyzer tests done by law enforcement for suspected criminal impairment will also count as a positive alcohol screening. Any student who is directed to but refuses to immediately undergo a drug and/or alcohol screening will be treated as if the result were a positive drug and/or alcohol test. Depending on the circumstances, a student with a positive drug and/or alcohol screening may also be referred to law enforcement for possible criminal sanctions as well as to the University's Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, which could issue additional disciplinary measures up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University and/or eviction from University housing.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES & BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGEN POLICY

Although rewarding, the nursing profession is full of occupational risks, including potential exposure to diseases and bodily fluids. The School of Nursing recognizes the importance of minimizing the exposure of students and/or patients in a clinical setting to communicable diseases and blood-borne pathogens, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The SON emphasizes this through education regarding Universal Precautions, proper hand hygiene and disinfection/decontamination procedures, and collection of student immunization and health screening records. Students must adhere to the University Exposure Control plan as well as the Exposure Control Plan of the assigned clinical agency.

However, while steps can and must be taken to mitigate these risks, but such risks cannot be entirely avoided. Exposures to blood or body fluids that occur as a result of needle sticks, cuts, splashes, or sprays that occur during clinical experiences could result in transmission of blood borne disease (such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, or HIV). Care should be taken to ensure student and patient safety. In the event of an exposure, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. Wash site immediately and thoroughly with soap and water to remove and potentially infectious fluid and tissue. Flush mucous membranes with water.
2. Immediately report exposure to SON Faculty and, if applicable, to the appropriate authorities at the clinical site. Following care as outlined below, appropriate ECU Nursing Program and clinical agency forms also should be completed as directed.
3. Post-exposure care: Students should access care by proceeding to the nearest health care provider or emergency facility or, if applicable, by following the Exposure Control Plan of the clinical site, which may offer on-site medical care.
4. Follow-up of post-exposure care: Students should follow-up within a week at the facility where care was received to confirm that all blood tests have been reviewed and that appropriate treatment is in place. Additional follow-up may be required, and students must follow the advice of the health care provider.

A student's decision to participate in the DNP Program and otherwise pursue a career in the nursing profession demonstrates an understanding and acceptance of these inherent risks. Students bear responsibility for taking necessary precautions to minimize these risks to the fullest extent possible and, in the event of an exposure, are solely responsible for all financial costs associated with any necessary post-exposure care. Students are encouraged to promptly consult their insurance providers for any inquiries regarding coverage for post-exposure care as well as the associated processes and procedures.

LATEX SENSITIVITY/ALLERGY POLICY

Those persons with known sensitivity to latex shall be treated as if they have a known allergy. Students may be requested to provide documentation from their health care provider.

Purpose

To provide general information about latex products and potential types of allergic reactions.
Procedure for those persons with sensitivity/allergy to latex.

Scope

Pertains to all students and faculty.

Responsibility

- Students are responsible for providing accurate allergy history.
- College will provide persons with non-latex gloves upon request in the laboratory setting.
- Students are responsible for preventing and/or limiting their exposure to latex in laboratory/clinical situations.
- If a latex sensitivity/allergy exists, the student understands that 100% prevention of exposure to latex in any laboratory/clinical situation may not be possible and that they may experience a life-threatening allergic reaction.

- Thus, if a latex sensitivity/allergy exists at any time during the program of study, the student must consult with their health care provider to determine whether pursuing a career in nursing is medically appropriate and feasible.

DNP Completion, Progression, Readmission, Withdrawal, and Reinstatement Policies

Time Limit for Completion

EKU Graduate School has policies regarding the total length of time a student may take from the first to the last class. See the *Graduate Catalog* for specific details. The Department may place other restrictions on the time limit for program completion to promote currency and competency of graduate nursing students who are sitting for national certification examinations. Please refer to the *DNP Program Progression, Readmission, and Reinstatement Policy* (later section) for more complete information.

Meeting the Graduate School and School of Nursing Requirements

DNP advisors will work closely with students to facilitate meeting of requirements by both the Graduate School and School of Nursing. However, it is the student's responsibility to be knowledgeable of policies and deadlines and to ensure they are in compliance.

Students should carefully note the required dates for submitting and filing materials, or their progression and graduation from the program may be delayed. The required dates and materials are published in the *Graduate Catalog*.

Grading

The grading scale is provided in each NSC course syllabus. Please refer to course syllabi and the *Graduate Catalog* for information on grading. It is the policy of the School of Nursing that all NSC course grades are not truncated; grades are not rounded up.

Application for Graduation

The Graduate School will send directions regarding applying for graduation. Applications are available online. If the student applies for graduation and then does not complete requirements

by the anticipated date, the date can be changed by contacting the Graduate School. To be considered candidates for graduation, students must have an overall and program GPA of 3.0 or higher at the beginning of the semester in which they are to graduate. Information specific to application for graduation can be accessed online at *Steps to Apply for Graduation*.

DNP Program Progression, Readmission, and Reinstatement Policy

To progress in the program, DNP students must achieve a grade of “B” or higher in all NSC courses. Students who fail to achieve the required grade in a NSC course must apply, in writing, to the DNP Committee by filing the *DNP Progression/Readmission/Reinstatement Application* for permission to continue in the program and to correct the deficiency. It is the student’s responsibility to file the readmission application at the end of the semester in which an unsatisfactory grade is received. The application should be filed as early as possible so the DNP Committee will have sufficient time to schedule a meeting and notify the student of the decision in advance of the start of the term in which the student is seeking readmission.

DNP Admission, Progression/Readmission/Reinstatement Committee

Purpose

The purpose of the DNP Admission/Progression/Readmission/Reinstatement Committee is to promote quality of the program, to ensure safety of clients, and to assist the student with entry into and progression within the DNP Program. The Committee will consider applications for admission, applications for readmission, and for course repeat approval for students who have received less than a grade of “B” in an NSC course with a normal grading option. In addition, the Committee will consider applications for readmission from students who have withdrawn from the DNP Program and not been granted permission to interrupt their studies and return at a specified date.

Committee Composition

The Committee will be appointed by the Chair of the School of Nursing and will be composed of members of the School of Nursing’s Graduate Committee representing the DNP Program.

Meeting of Committee

The Committee will meet to consider applications for admission following the deadlines for receipt of applications and will meet at other times, as indicated. When an application for readmission or progression is received within the dates specified by the policy, the Committee will meet before the start of classes for the next term. When an application for reinstatement after removal of unsafe practice is received, the

Committee will meet within ten working days of the receipt of the application for reinstatement.

Student Notification

Students applying for readmission or reinstatement will be notified within ten (10) days following the meeting. Notification will be sent to the student's official ECU email listed on the application form. If the student no longer has an active official ECU email, communication will be sent via mail to the contact address provided.

Appeal of Decision

If a student elects to appeal the decision regarding progression, readmission, reinstatement, the appeal must be made in writing in the following sequence:

- Chair, DNP Admission/Progression/Readmission/Reinstatement Committee
- Chair, School of Nursing
- Dean, College of Health Sciences
- Graduate School

Withdrawal from the University

See the *ECU Colonel Compass* for withdrawal dates by semester. Students who withdraw prior to the designated time will receive a grade of "W". Students who leave the University without officially withdrawing are subject to receive a grade of "F". A graduate student who must withdraw after the above stated time-period may petition for late withdrawal due to extenuating circumstances from the University. Students should contact the ECU Registrar's Office for specific deadlines and directions for this procedure (<https://registrar.eku.edu/reg-withdrawal-information>). Students who withdraw from the program are not guaranteed readmission to the program at a later time. Please refer to the section above on the *DNP Program Progression, Readmission, and Reinstatement Policy*.

Withdrawal from the DNP Program

Students who withdraw from a DNP course are considered to be withdrawn from the DNP Program. The student must reapply for admission by submitting the *DNP Progression/Readmission/Reinstatement Application*. The decision to readmit or reinstate the student will be determined by the DNP Committee and is based on factors such as the circumstances surrounding the withdrawal from the program, the student's standing at the time of withdrawal, the time period from the withdrawal until return to the program, and spaces available in the program at the time the student would re-enter the program.

Delayed Initial Enrollment in the DNP Program

A student who is admitted is expected to enroll in the term for which admission is granted. The

student may defer enrollment one time until the next start date. If the delay will be greater than one year of initial acceptance into the program the student will be required to reapply for admission and will be reconsidered for admission on a competitive basis with other new applicants.

Academic Probation

According to the ECU Graduate Catalog, students on academic probation, or who have been dismissed, cannot take a course from another institution for the purpose of transferring the credit to their program.

Student Complaints and Appeals

Students who believe they have not been treated appropriately by a university official may file a complaint or grievance following the procedures listed in the *ECU Student Handbook*. Please note that grade appeal and readmission appeals follow a separate policy and process. If the complaint involves an academic affairs area, it is noted in the *ECU Student Handbook* as follows,

Academic Affairs Area

Complaints involving a particular class or instructor should be communicated to the instructor or a faculty member directly involved. If a resolution is not reached, a complaint or grievance should be filed, in writing, with the Department Chair of the class where you are having a problem. If you are not satisfied with the Department Chairs' explanation, the final appeal of the complaint or grievance procedure should be made in writing to the Provost or Vice President for Academic Affairs, Coates, Room 108."

Complaints involving other areas than Academic Affairs should follow the procedure in the *ECU Student Handbook*. Any concerns involving discrimination or harassment should be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX (<https://www.ecu.edu/equal-opportunity-title-ix/>). Complete information is given in the *ECU Student Handbook*.

If the concern is related to a grade appeal or readmission, those policies should be followed specifically. The readmission policy is given in detail in this *DNP Student Handbook*. The policy for appeal of a grade is given in the ECU Policy, 4.1.15P and in the *ECU Student Handbook*.

Additional information specific to the School of Nursing includes,

Grade Appeal

If a student wishes to appeal a course grade, the procedure below should be followed:

- The student should consult with the instructor, seeking a satisfactory explanation. In the SON, if the instructor is not the course coordinator, the

student should also consult the course coordinator.

- If, after consulting the instructor, the student believes that a grievance exists, the student may present a complaint in writing outlining the basis of the grievance to the Department Chair within 30 days after the beginning of the next semester, exclusive of the summer session.
- The Department Chair shall consider the matter, in consultation with the instructor and the student, and exercise influence towards mediation.
- If the grievance remains unsettled, the Department Chair shall, as soon as practicable, refer the matter to the departmental committee on academic practices composed of the Department Chair, two members of the department elected by faculty thereof (with one alternate member to serve in the event that one of the regular members is the person against whom the complaint has been lodged), and one student member chosen by the Department Chair. All members of the committee shall have voting privileges.
- Meetings of the departmental academic practices committee shall be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time when all relevant parties can reasonably be expected to participate. A student who has agreed to a time for a meeting of the departmental academic practices committee and who does not appear at that meeting may forfeit their right to present evidence beyond that furnished in the original letter of appeal. Only the Committee members and the student may be present during the appeal meeting.
- After considering the evidence and any rebuttals submitted by the student and/or the instructor, the committee shall make a decision which shall be binding. All parties shall be informed of this decision within ten working days.
- Appeals from the committee's decision may be made on procedural grounds only and must be made within 20 days following notification of the departmental committee decision. Such an appeal should be made to the dean of the college in which the course is offered and, if necessary, then to the Provost and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs."

As noted above, appeals to the committee's decision can be made on procedural grounds only. Procedural violations would be a deviation from the above listed procedure. An example would be a meeting that was not scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time when all relevant parties could reasonably be expected to participate.

Social Media Policy

The EKU, School of Nursing (SON) has developed and adopted the following social media policy.

- SON students must not transmit or place online individually identifiable patient or clinical agency information.
- SON students must observe ethical and professional student-faculty and student-patient boundaries online. Online social media contact with faculty or patients blurs these boundaries, as defined by the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics (2015) and the National Council of the State Boards of Nursing Social Media Guidelines (2012).
- SON students should understand that patients, colleagues, organizations, and employers may view postings.

- SON students must be aware that social networking venues are shared by patients, faculty, colleagues, and the public. Privacy settings should be utilized to separate personal and professional information online.
- SON students should bring content that could harm a patient or students' privacy, rights, or welfare to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

Mental Health Services

Eastern Kentucky University is committed to the wellbeing of all students. Students can access mental health support from a licensed professional 24 hours/day by contacting the **National Suicide Hotline by dialing 988** or 1-800-273-8255 or the ECU Counseling Center at (859) 622-1303 – this includes business hours, evenings, weekends, holidays, and university closures.

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