

Doctor of Nursing Practice Program Guidelines for Clinical Mentors

Definition of Clinical Mentor: A clinical mentor is defined as a non-faculty clinician that supervises advanced clinical learning experiences for assigned students in the DNP program in clinical courses NURS7020, NURS7030, NURS7080, NURS7180, NURS7890, NURS7970, and NURS7980. They serve as a professional role model and resource person for students in the practice setting. They also provide appropriate formative and summative evaluation data of student's clinical performance to course faculty.

Clinical Site Agreements are individual contractual arrangements for supervision of students. Arrangements are initiated by the College of Nursing and negotiated with each agency. Clinical experience involves one student and is negotiated with the clinical mentor.

Role of Faculty member:

1. Assist student with identification of learning goals and outcomes for the course.
2. Provide student with updated Clinical Mentor Guidelines for distribution to mentor.
3. Approve planned practice activities, in conjunction with the clinical mentor, consistent with the student learning outcomes.
4. Monitor student progress in achieving student learning outcomes and provide feedback, as required, to the student and mentor.
5. Make self available to the student and mentor to determine the efficacy of the practice experience and assess the student's performance.
6. Evaluate each student's achievement and progress in relation to the clinical outcomes, with input from the clinical mentor.

Role of Clinical Mentor:

1. Discuss learning needs with student and faculty related to student learning outcomes
2. Review Mentor Guidelines and complete the Clinical Mentor Agreement Form.
3. Provide a CV/Resume kept on file in the Graduate Program Office.
4. Facilitate access to site(s).
5. Provide resources and contacts for student to accomplish planned activities.
6. Provide direction for student consistent with learning outcomes.
7. Assist student in professional development, with opportunities to explore the doctoral level nursing role.
8. Provide feedback to faculty regarding student performance and experiences.
9. Complete an evaluation of the student at the end of the term.

Role of the Nursing Student:

1. Clearly identify learning needs, planned activities, and planned outcomes.
2. Distribute written plan to faculty and clinical mentor for approval by the end of the second week of term.
3. Provide clinical mentor with Clinical Mentor Agreement Form, Clinical Mentor Guidelines, course materials and evaluation forms.
4. Return signed Clinical Mentor Form and Clinical Mentor CV/Resume to DNP Program support staff.
5. Maintain professionalism in all aspects of clinical experience.
6. Seek assistance as needed to complete planned activities and deliver planned outcomes.
7. Communicate on a regular basis with faculty and clinical mentor.

8. Seek regular feedback regarding clinical progress and completion of outcomes.
9. Provide mentor with all promised outcomes pertaining to the site.
10. Obtain all needed evaluations at the end of the practice experience and deliver to the course faculty.
11. Provide feedback to mentor following completion of the practice experience.

Procedure:

1. For DNP courses with practice components (NURS 7020, NURS 7030, NURS 7080, NURS 7180, NURS 7890, NURS 7970 and NURS 7980), students are responsible to select sites that will meet student learning outcomes; their immediate employer is **not** a preferable site. All sites must have the approval of the faculty in the specific course. Questions pertaining to the appropriateness of sites should be directed to the DNP Program Director.
2. The mentor will be given a copy of this guideline to make an informed decision regarding agreement to the terms of the role.
3. The student and mentor will complete the Clinical Mentor Agreement form.
4. The student will provide the mentor and the instructor with their finalized plan for activities during this practice experience no later than the second week of the term. The plan should address activities for achieving each of the clinical outcomes for the course along with specific outcomes to be delivered at the completion of the practice hours.
5. On completion of the agreed upon practice hours, the mentor is to provide the student with a copy of the completed "Evaluation of Student by Clinical Mentor" form (see below) to be delivered to the course faculty.
6. The student is to complete a copy of the "Evaluation of Clinical Mentor and Site by Student" form (see below) and submit the form to the course faculty.
7. The student will log practice hours on the DNP Clinical Practice Log for NURS 7020, NURS 7030, NURS 7080, NURS 7180, and NURS 7890. The form is available on the CON website and on course websites.
8. The student will log final practicum hours on the Final Practicum Log for NURS 7970 and NURS 7980.
9. The student will deliver all documentation to the course faculty upon completion of the course. All students are encourage to make copies of completed documentation for personal file.
10. Faculty will cosign and date forms and give to the Graduate Program support staff for filing in student file.

Doctor of Nursing Practice Program Information

Program Outcomes

1. Synthesize knowledge derived from a scientific foundation in order to demonstrate expertise in advanced clinical nursing practice to improve delivery of care.
2. Demonstrate continuous quality improvement in patient care situations while providing leadership in clinical decision making through use of information systems and technology for the improvement and transformation of health care.
3. Use clinical scholarship and analytical methods to implement safe, quality improvement in administration of patient care.
4. Encourage interprofessional collaboration and teamwork to enhance and improve population health outcomes.
5. Engage in influencing the development and implementation of health policy that provides an interface between practice, research and policy development.

Characteristics of the Graduate

The characteristics of the graduate reflect the *Essentials for Doctoral Education in Advanced Nursing Practice* (AACN, 2006, pg 8-17). These essentials focus on eight areas of advanced nursing practice. The areas are as follows:

Essential #1: Scientific Underpinnings for Practice

The DNP program prepares the graduate to:

1. Integrate nursing science with knowledge from ethics, the biophysical, psychosocial, analytical, and organizational sciences as the basis for the highest level of nursing practice.
2. Use science-based theories and concepts to:
 - a. Determine the nature and significance of health and health care delivery phenomena;
 - b. Describe the actions and advanced strategies to enhance, alleviate, and ameliorate health and health care delivery phenomena as appropriate; and evaluate outcomes.
3. Develop and evaluate new practice approaches based on nursing theories and theories from other disciplines.

Essential #2: Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking

The DNP program prepares the graduate to:

1. Develop and evaluate care delivery approaches that meet current and future needs of patient populations based on scientific findings in nursing and other clinical sciences, as well as organizational, political, and economic sciences.
2. Ensure accountability for quality of health care and patient safety for populations with whom they work:
 - a. Use advanced communication skills/processes to lead quality improvement and patient safety initiatives in health care systems.
 - b. Employ principles of business, finance, economics, and health policy to develop and implement effective plans for practice-level and/or system-wide practice initiatives that will improve the quality of care delivery.
 - c. Develop and/or monitor budgets for practice initiatives.
 - d. Analyze the cost-effectiveness of practice initiatives accounting for risk and improvement of health care outcomes.

- e. Demonstrate sensitivity to diverse organizational cultures and populations, including patients and providers.
3. Develop and/or evaluate effective strategies for managing the ethical dilemmas inherent in patient care, the health care organization, and research.

Essential #3: Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice

The DNP program prepares the graduate to:

1. Use analytic methods to critically appraise existing literature and other evidence to determine and implement the best evidence for practice.
2. Design and implement processes to evaluate outcomes of practice, practice patterns, and systems of care within a practice setting, health care organization, or community against national benchmarks to determine variances in practice outcomes and population trends.
3. Design, direct, and evaluate quality improvement methodologies to promote safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable, and patient-centered care.
4. Apply relevant findings to develop practice guidelines and improve practice and the practice environment.
5. Use information technology and research methods appropriately to:
 - a. Collect appropriate and accurate data to generate evidence for nursing practice.
 - b. Inform and guide the design of databases that generate meaningful evidence for nursing practice.
 - c. Analyze data from practice.
 - d. Design evidence-based interventions.
 - e. Predict and analyze outcomes.
 - f. Examine patterns of behavior and outcomes.
 - g. Identify gaps in evidence for practice.
6. Function as a practice specialist/consultant in collaborative knowledge-generating research.
7. Disseminate findings from evidence-based practice and research to improve healthcare outcomes.

Essential #4: Information systems/Technology and Patient Care Technology for the Improvement and Transformation of Health Care

The DNP program prepares the graduate to:

1. Design, select, use, and evaluate programs that evaluate and monitor outcomes of care, care systems, and quality improvement including consumer use of health care information systems.
2. Analyze and communicate critical elements necessary to the selection, use and evaluation of health care information systems and patient care technology.
3. Demonstrate the conceptual ability and technical skills to develop and execute an evaluation plan involving data extraction from practice information systems and databases.
4. Provide leadership in the evaluation and resolution of ethical and legal issues within healthcare systems relating to the use of information, information technology, communication networks, and patient care technology.
5. Evaluate consumer health information sources for accuracy, timeliness, and appropriateness.

Essential #5: Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care

The DNP program prepares the graduate to:

1. Critically analyze health policy proposals, health policies, and related issues from the perspective of consumers, nursing, other health professions, and other stakeholders in policy and public forums.
2. Demonstrate leadership in the development and implementation of institutional, local, state, federal, and/or international health policy.

3. Influence policy makers through active participation on committees, boards, or task forces at the institutional, local, state, regional, national, and/or international levels to improve health care delivery and outcomes.
4. Educate others, including policy makers at all levels, regarding nursing, health policy, and patient care outcomes.
5. Advocate for the nursing profession within the policy and healthcare communities.
6. Develop, evaluate, and provide leadership for health care policy that shapes health care financing, regulation, and delivery.
7. Advocate for social justice, equity, and ethical policies within all healthcare arenas.

Essential #6: Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes

The DNP program prepares the graduate to:

1. Employ effective communication and collaborative skills in the development and implementation of practice models, peer review, practice guidelines, health policy, standards of care, and/or other scholarly products.
2. Lead interprofessional teams in the analysis of complex practice and organizational issues.
3. Employ consultative and leadership skills with intraprofessional and interprofessional teams to create change in health care and complex healthcare delivery systems.

Essential #7: Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation's Health

The DNP program prepares the graduate to:

1. Analyze epidemiological, biostatistical, environmental, and other appropriate scientific data related to individual, aggregate, and population health.
2. Synthesize concepts, including psychosocial dimensions and cultural diversity, related to clinical prevention and population health in developing, implementing, and evaluating interventions to address health promotion/disease prevention efforts, improve health status/access patterns, and/or address gaps in care of individuals, aggregates, or populations.
3. Evaluate care delivery models and/or strategies using concepts related to community, environmental and occupational health, and cultural and socioeconomic dimensions of health.

Essential #8: Advanced Nursing Practice

The DNP program prepares the graduate to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive and systematic assessment of health and illness parameters in complex situations, incorporating diverse and culturally sensitive approaches.
2. Design, implement, and evaluate therapeutic interventions based on nursing science and other sciences.
3. Develop and sustain therapeutic relationships and partnerships with patients (individual, family, or group) and other professionals to facilitate optimal care and patient outcomes.
4. Demonstrate advanced levels of clinical judgment, systems thinking, and accountability in designing, delivering, and evaluating evidence-based care to improve patient outcomes.
5. Guide, mentor, and support other nurses to achieve excellence in nursing practice.
6. Educate and guide individuals and groups through complex health and situational transitions.
7. Use conceptual and analytical skills in evaluating the links among practice, organizational, population, fiscal, and policy issues.

Description of Practice Hours

Integrative practice experiences in the Doctor of Nursing Practice curriculum prepare students with advanced leadership skills necessary to translate the highest level of evidence into practice resulting in the maximum positive impact on the health outcomes of populations. “Practice experiences for the DNP student are not intended to be solely direct patient care focused but should include indirect care practices in healthcare settings or related environments that broaden the experiences of the student (AACN, 2015, p.8)

Each course that has designated practice hours will have a doctoral faculty member assigned. The faculty member in conjunction with the student will develop learning objectives for the practice experience(s). In addition, a clinical mentor is necessary to facilitate the student’s activities at the practice site. A clinical mentor is defined as a person employed at the site who can facilitate the student’s entry and progress toward meeting their objectives. The clinical mentor should be the most qualified person available and may not be doctoral prepared.

An intensive final practicum provides a focused opportunity to synthesize new doctoral skills into clinical practice. Students work with their DNP Project Chair during the final practicum and a clinical mentor to identify opportunities for clinical learning that demonstrate proficiency with the new skills. The final practicum may contribute directly or indirectly to the student’s project. Students may take up to one-half of their practicum hours prior to the final term of the program. The number of credit hours allocated per semester will be decided by the DNP Project Chair in conjunction with the Director of the DNP Program and Graduate Advisor (refer to DNP Program Progression).

Professional dress and College of Nursing nametags are required of all UT students during clinical/practicum activities. Nametags are worn in a prominent manner providing clear identification of UT College of Nursing student status.

For NURS7020, NURS7030, NURS7080, NURS7180, NURS7890, NURS7970, and NURS7980, students have the opportunity to select sites that will meet student learning outcomes and contribute to their professional goals, their immediate employer is not a preferable site. All sites must have the approval of the faculty in the specific course. Questions pertaining to the appropriateness of sites should be directed to the DNP Program Director. Students must provide the course faculty member with a written plan signed by the student, the clinical mentor, and the course faculty member. This written plan should set forth the learning objectives, specific learning activities, time commitment, and outcomes to be accomplished. The signed plan shall constitute a learning contract between faculty, the student, and the mentor. A standard contract between the agency and the University is also completed or on file. This contracting process can take time to complete so advanced planning is strongly encouraged. The course faculty member, in consultation with the clinical mentor, will determine whether the outcomes were satisfactorily met.