



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

College of Nursing

College of Nursing
Advanced Practice Nursing Program Handbook
2026-2027

At the College of Nursing, we are committed to Inclusive Excellence by embracing and demonstrating a welcoming and collaborative environment throughout all levels of the institution and in the community. We strive to promote inclusive and safe learning environments for all people regardless of background. We uphold that the uniqueness of our students, faculty, and staff is a resource, strength, and benefit. We also uphold that excellence is inseparable from inclusivity. We respect and honor multiple learning needs and strive to model behavior aligning with the College of Nursing Mission, Vision, and values. We will not tolerate any demonstrations of discrimination, and any suggestions on how we can improve our learning environments are welcomed. We affirm that all members of the College of Nursing are responsible in upholding this commitment.

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Handbook Overview

Introduction

This publication is for informational purposes and is neither a contract nor an offer to contract. The College of Nursing reserves the right to change any provision or requirement without notice. This material supplements the University of Arizona Graduate Catalog and the Schedule of Classes.

Additional information may be found at the following websites:

- [The University of Arizona](#)
- [The University of Arizona Catalog](#)
- [The Graduate College](#)
- [The College of Nursing](#)

The Advanced Practice Nursing Program Handbook is designed as a resource for DNP students, Graduate Certificate students, and faculty advisors. Relevant policies and procedures of the University of Arizona, Graduate College, and College of Nursing are included in this handbook. Much of the information is online; therefore, the actual websites are listed for the official information on policies and procedures. Where information is not available online, a brief description is provided. Additional information can be obtained from the [Office of Student & Academic Affairs](#) (OSAA). Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to all established policies and procedures, including the other specialty-specific clinical handbooks.

Relationship to Other Documents

The Advanced Practice Nursing Program Handbook is intended to be used in conjunction with other university documents, including those named and linked above. Students should first consult their Program Handbook and relevant Clinical Handbooks and then consult the appropriate Graduate College or university policies when questions arise. Many policies in the Advanced Practice Nursing Program Handbook are specific to students in the program and within the College of Nursing.

In addition to this handbook, students must review the [Policies & Procedures](#) posted on the College of Nursing's website. These policies include (but are not limited to):

- Healthcare Professionals' Obligation to Self-Report
- Code of Ethics for Nurses
- Social Media Guidelines and Policy
- Student Email Communication Policy
- Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Clinical Setting
- Clinical Handbooks & Policies (technical/essential qualifications, immunizations, uniforms, etc.)
- All course syllabi

The College of Nursing upholds all [University Policies](#) related to but not limited to, the following:

- Absence and Class Participation
- Threatening Behavior
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Code of Academic Integrity
- Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment

DNP Degree: Overview & Pathways

Earning the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program is designed to:

- Prepare nurses with the highest level of practice expertise
- Equip doctorally prepared Advanced Practice Nurses to serve the needs of their communities in Arizona and beyond
- Enable doctorally prepared Advanced Practice Nurses to be leaders and change agents in the clinical setting by:
 - Engaging patients, other clinicians, and administrators in the scholarly evaluation of current procedures and opportunities for improvement
 - Providing the Advanced Practice Nurses with the knowledge to navigate organizational culture and change processes
 - Integrating evidence-based knowledge into practice to ensure quality patient outcomes

Each DNP student will demonstrate competency in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Advanced Level Essentials through coursework, clinical immersion, and scholarly integration, as well as required specialty-specific competencies.

DNP Program & Graduate Certificates

Currently enrolled full-time DNP students have the option to apply to the Graduate Certificate program, adding a different specialty to their degree path, or a dual specialty DNP program. A graduate certificate is not a “minor;” students follow the DNP Program of Study first, and once they have completed all coursework and clinical hours for the DNP degree, then work on following the Program of Study for the Graduate Certificate. Further, applications should only be submitted after support from the student’s current Specialty Coordinator, Faculty Advisor, and potential future Specialty Coordinator are attained. Applications must be submitted by the posted deadline (as stipulated on the [College of Nursing website](#)). Participation in a certificate program could be limited by campus/location classification.

Dual DNP/PhD Degree Pathway

The College of Nursing offers a unique opportunity for a student to pursue the DNP & PhD degrees concurrently. Students interested in this option must review the “Dual Degrees Policy” listed on

the [DNP Program Handbooks](#) website. Potential dual degree students must apply and be accepted into both the PhD and DNP programs.

Changing Specialties

DNP students may request to change clinical specialties after admission. All specialty change requests must occur before the Fall semester prior to the start of the clinical year and provide the program enough time to arrange for clinical placements in the new specialty. Clinical courses may be delayed while clinical sites are set, which may alter the students' projected graduation date. Students who wish to switch must follow the procedure outlined in the Request to Change Advanced Practice Specialties form, starting with discussing with their current Specialty Coordinator. (See the “Academic Progress” section of the Handbook for more information on time-to degree.)

Transferring Between Doctoral Programs within the College of Nursing

Students wishing to transfer from one doctoral program to another (DNP to PhD or PhD to DNP) must be in excellent academic standing in their respective program (for more information on academic standing, see the “Satisfactory Academic Progress within the College of Nursing” section of this Handbook). DNP students should first meet with their faculty advisor or Specialty Coordinator to discuss the transfer and application process for the PhD program. Admittance is not guaranteed. For more information, students may also contact con-osaa@arizona.edu

DNP Program Orientation: Required Immersive Summer Experience (RISE)

The "Required Immersive Summer Experience" (RISE) orientation occurs during the first week of the first semester of the program of study. Students meet with other students, faculty, and staff, are introduced to instructional technologies and supports, and learn more about their program and specialty.

On Campus Requirement: Campus Clinical Immersion (CCI)

The DNP and Graduate Certificate programs are hybrid, combining asynchronous didactic coursework with in-person components. The final year of the program is referred to as the “clinical year” and includes Campus Clinical Immersions (CCI) for the Nurse Practitioner and Nurse-Midwife specialties. See the Nurse Anesthesiology handbook for specialty-specific simulation and required program event information.

Campus Clinical Immersions (CCIs):

- During the clinical year, students are required to attend all on-campus Clinical Immersions.
- The purpose of CCI is to help students develop specialty-specific clinical skills.
Faculty Support:

- Faculty members from all clinical specialties facilitate learning workshops during CCIs.
- These workshops focus on essential clinical skill competencies.

Clinical Rotations:

- Students cannot begin their clinical rotations each semester until they have completed the corresponding CCI.
- Violating this policy will lead to failure of the clinical component of the course and may impact academic progression and graduation.

Absence from CCI:

- Students must maintain perfect, on-time attendance for each CCI.
- If a student cannot attend a CCI, they must submit an email request to their Specialty Coordinator.
- The request should explain the reason for the absence.
- If approved, the student attends a make-up CCI scheduled by the Specialty Coordinator, if offered for that specialty.
- Failing to attend either the originally scheduled CCI or the make-up CCI results can result in failure of the clinical course.

Students may email con-osaa@arizona.edu or their Specialty Coordinator with questions regarding CCI.

Professional Communication

DNP and Graduate Certificate students are expected to demonstrate professional communication in all academic, clinical, and professional interactions, including email, course discussion boards, videoconferences, group work, messaging platforms, electronic health or clinical education systems, and social media. Online communication is an extension of students' professional presence; students should therefore communicate thoughtfully and maintain the same standards of professionalism, integrity, respect, and ethical conduct expected during in-person interactions.

General Communication Expectations

In all electronic communications, students are expected to:

- Use respectful, courteous, and inclusive language.
- Communicate with faculty, staff, peers, preceptors, clinical partners, patients, and other stakeholders in a professional manner.
- Use appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, and complete sentences.
- Review messages for clarity, accuracy, tone, and professionalism before sending or posting them.
- Address individuals by their preferred name and appropriate academic or professional title.
- Clearly identify themselves, particularly when contacting someone for the first time.

- Support academic assertions and disagreements with appropriate evidence and scholarly sources.
- Acknowledge uncertainty rather than presenting assumptions or unverified information as fact.
- Respect differences in perspectives, experiences, identities, and professional opinions.
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality of patients, students, faculty, preceptors, clinical sites, and community partners.
- Assume that electronic communications may be retained, forwarded, or viewed by individuals beyond the originally intended audience.

Students should avoid:

- Profanity, insulting language, personal attacks, hostile exchanges, or discriminatory remarks.
- Sarcasm, ridicule, or humor that may be misunderstood or experienced as disrespectful.
- Writing in all capital letters, which may be interpreted as shouting.
- Excessive slang, abbreviations, emojis, or text-message language in professional communications.
- Sharing another person's personal, academic, clinical, or professional information without authorization.
- Posting messages while angry or emotionally activated. When appropriate, students should pause, review the message later, and consider whether a conversation or meeting would be more productive.

Email Communication

Students should use their official university email account for all program-related communication and regularly monitor (at least every 48 hours) to account for important notices. Professional emails should include:

- A specific and descriptive subject line.
- An appropriate greeting.
- A concise explanation of the purpose of the message.
- Relevant identifying information, such as the course number, clinical placement, specialty, or project, when needed.
- A clear question, request, or proposed next step.
- Use appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, and complete sentences.

Before emailing a question, students should review available resources, including the course syllabus, announcements, program handbook, learning-management system, assignment instructions, and previously distributed communications. When a concern involves multiple questions, a sensitive issue, a complex situation, or an extended discussion, requesting a meeting may be more appropriate than attempting to resolve the matter through a lengthy email exchange. When requesting a meeting, students should provide several dates and times when they are available.

Recommended Email Signature

Students are encouraged to use a professional email signature that includes:

First and Last Name
DNP Student and Specialty or Program
Faculty Advisor and DNP Project Chair (if applicable)
Expected Graduation Year, if appropriate
University of Arizona College of Nursing
University Email Address
Telephone Number, if appropriate
Professional credentials and pronouns, if desired

Videoconferences and Virtual Meetings

During virtual classes, meetings, presentations, simulation activities, and DNP project activities, students should:

- Join on time and remain engaged.
- Display their preferred professional name.
- Participate from an appropriate setting whenever possible.
- Minimize background noise and distractions.
- Use the mute function when not speaking, as appropriate.
- Dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the purpose of the meeting.
- Avoid multitasking that interferes with participation.
- Follow instructions regarding camera use, attendance, recording, and participation.
- Obtain permission before recording, photographing, or sharing content from a virtual meeting.

Chat functions should be used professionally and should contribute to the purpose of the meeting. Private chat messages remain subject to the same standards of respectful and professional conduct as other program communications.

Please refer to the [CON Communication Policy](#) for additional links and information.

Line of Communication

The CON is committed to creating an environment that promotes student learning experiences. Open and respectful dialogue between students and faculty is critical to enriching the learning experience. The CON has outlined a line of communication to resolve academic issues that may arise in the classroom and at the clinical site, facilitating open communication between students and faculty. Student issues or concerns need to be addressed promptly and according to the established line of communication outlined below.

Dialog with the next person in the line of communication is necessary only after prior contact does not lead to a resolution.

1. Course or Clinical Instructor
2. Course Chair (if applicable)
3. Specialty Coordinator
4. DNP Program Director
5. Associate Dean of Academic Affairs: CON-ADAA@arizona.edu

OSAA can assist the student in this process at con-osaa@arizona.edu or 520-626-3808. The Graduate College also provides resources for students related to grievances on its website.

Grievance Policy

Should a graduate student feel they have been treated unfairly, with few exceptions, students should first attempt to resolve difficulties by following the line of communication outlined above. However, if that process does not bring about a satisfactory resolution, additional resources and policies are available within the Graduate College “[Grievance Policy](#).”

Program Resources

Office of Student & Academic Affairs (OSAA)

OSAA works collaboratively to support the educational mission of the College of Nursing. OSAA is responsible for student services, including academic advising, recruitment, admissions, progression, success, academic support services, graduation, student-centered events, and education and degree verifications. Students may contact OSAA via email (con-osaa@arizona.edu) or by calling 520-626-3808. When contacting OSAA, students should provide their Student ID number, year admitted to the program, and specialty.

Faculty Advisor

The role of the faculty advisor is to mentor and guide the student throughout the program of study. The faculty advisor will facilitate accessing resources of the University and the College of Nursing. Before RISE, students will be assigned a faculty advisor based on specialty. Students may request to change their faculty advisor. To change advisors, the student must complete the Change of Advisor Form. The form is available on the College of Nursing [DNP Program Forms and Resources](#) page. Approval from the students’ current and new advisor is required.

Doctoral Advisor

DNP students also have access to a Graduate Coordinator within the Office of Student and Academic Affairs (OSAA). The Coordinator provides guidance to graduate students, helping them navigate the policies, requirements, and deadlines specific to the College of Nursing, the Graduate College, and the University. Additionally, students can turn to their Graduate Coordinator as a resource for general inquiries or concerns. To get in touch with the Graduate Coordinator, simply email con-osaa@arizona.edu

Student Support Specialist

Academic support is available to all DNP students throughout the program. Services include assistance with study strategies, time management, exam preparation, navigating university resources, and developing effective approaches to online learning. Students are encouraged to utilize these resources proactively to strengthen their academic success and achieve their educational goals. To connect with academic support, email con-osaa@arizona.edu

Financial Aid & Scholarship Information

The College of Nursing offers scholarships yearly and requires all interested students to apply. An email is sent to all newly admitted and current students during the spring term with relevant information. All students are encouraged to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Many college and university scholarships rely on information provided by the FAFSA to be awarded. The University of Arizona maintains a comprehensive database of scholarships available to students in all programs and majors. Students may log in with their NetID to search for opportunities and complete applications. All College of Nursing scholarship applications must be submitted through Scholarship Universe. Students may email con-osaa@arizona.edu for more information or contact the [Office of Financial Aid](#) for more information.

Graduate students in the College of Nursing are assigned alphabetically (last name) to counselors in the Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid (OSFA). Students with questions should use the contact information on OSFA's website to reach out to the appropriate individual for inquiries related to financial aid.

Disability Resource Center

DRC ensures disability access on campus for students, employees, and visitors. Early contact allows for a thorough exploration of options available to address disability-related barriers without compromising the rigor or essential functions of the program.

Students with disabilities who anticipate access barriers related to the format or requirements of the program can meet with the appropriate course chair or specialty coordinator as early as possible to identify options for flexibility. If a student would like to request formal ADA accommodations, they are responsible for affiliating with the DRC. As the DRC determines reasonable accommodations, faculty may serve as subject matter experts to ensure an accommodation does not alter or compromise academic integrity or essential program requirements. After consultation, the DRC will communicate with the student and faculty regarding reasonable accommodations.

SALT Center

The Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques (SALT) Center is a fee-based academic support program that provides resources and services to U of A students with various learning and attention challenges. Services include, but are not limited to, tutoring, workshops, and psychological and wellness resources. More information is available on the [SALT Center](#) website.

Online Systems

There are several university systems that students in College of Nursing programs students will need to use (links provided for tutorials):

- [UAccess Student](#)
- [Desire2Learn \(D2L\)/Brightspace](#)
- [GradPath](#)
- [Current Student Portals](#)

Students will be oriented to other systems throughout their program of study.

University of Arizona Student Email

All students are given an official University of Arizona email address (@arizona.edu) upon admission. The U of A email is the official source of communication between faculty, staff, and students. Students are responsible for all program updates and requests sent to the U of A email. Students should check their email a minimum of three times per week, ideally daily, and respond promptly to communication from faculty and staff. During the academic semester, students can generally expect faculty and staff to acknowledge or respond to emails within three business days. Some questions may require additional time to investigate, consult with others, or fully resolve. In those circumstances, the initial response should provide an update or anticipated timeframe for follow-up. Business days do not include weekends, University holidays, scheduled academic breaks, or periods when the faculty or staff member is on approved leave or otherwise out of the office. Students should allow the full response period before sending a follow-up message.

University Information Technology Services and Resources

The [University of Arizona Information Technology Services \(UITS\)](#) assist in enhancing the students' learning experience. The UITS department is responsible for technical support and developing enabling technologies for students, faculty, and staff. A wide range of supportive services is available to students via the [IT for Students page](#).

All students should have appropriate technology resources to meet the requirements for the instructional and evaluation activities in the hybrid format of the advanced practice nursing programs, as outlined on the College's [Student Technology Needs](#) site. Due to online testing and on-site clinical rotations in these programs, a laptop is recommended.

Changes to Contact Information

To help ensure the CON can effectively communicate with students, the CON requires students to promptly update their contact information, including their permanent mailing address. Students must submit updates using the Student Center in UAccess. In addition, students must notify OSAA of changes to contact information. Students must also meet with their Specialty Coordinator before moving to another state during the DNP program to determine how moving to another state will impact their clinical placement opportunities.

GradPath Forms

GradPath is a list of electronic forms that enables the Graduate College to track and record graduate student progress in their respective program. GradPath forms are submitted throughout a DNP or Graduate Certificate student's academic journey. [GradPath User Guides](#) are available on the Graduate College website; students may also reach out to con-osaa@arizona.edu with any GradPath related questions.

The following table details the list of required GradPath forms for DNP and the Graduate Certificate pathways:

GradPath Forms	Forms Required for the DNP Degree	Forms Required for the Grad Certificate	Completed & Submitted By
Responsible Conduct of Research Statement	X	X	Student
Plan of Study	X	X	Student
Doctoral DNP Project Committee Appointment	X		Student
Prospectus/Proposal Confirmation	X		Doctoral Advisor
Announcement of Final Oral Defense	X		Student
Results of Final Oral Defense	X		Committee Chair
Commencement Verification			Student

For more information, please see the “GradPath Forms Timeline: DNP & Graduate Certificate Students” document on the [Academic Program Resources page](#) in the “DNP Program” section.

Program of Study

The Program of Study is a crucial resource for students as it lists required coursework as well as the course sequence for each semester. Students can find it on the DNP and Graduate Certificate Programs of Study webpage: <https://nursing.arizona.edu/resources/dnp-program/guides>

Meeting with your Faculty Advisor:

- Students should meet with their faculty advisor if they encounter any changes that might prevent them from following the Program of Study.

GradPath “Plan of Study”

- All DNP and Graduate Certificate students must complete and submit the GradPath ‘Plan of Study’ by the deadlines shared by OSAA, the DNP Program Director, or Specialty Coordinator.

For additional information or assistance, reach out to your Specialty Coordinator or con-osaa@arizona.edu

Transfer of Graduate Course(s)

Transfer unit/credit requests must be submitted within the first semester of admittance to the program. Graduate certificate students can transfer (or substitute – see section below) up to 9 units/credits from other graduate programs. DNP program students can transfer up to 40% of the degree requirements (only for non-clinical courses; all clinical courses and DNP project courses must be taken at the University of Arizona College of Nursing). Transfer courses must be graduate level from an accredited university with a grade of “A” or “B.” To start the transfer request process, the student must complete and submit a [DNP Program Course Transfer Form](#). If the request is approved, OSAA will instruct the student to submit a “Transfer Credit Form” to the Graduate College via GradPath. There is no opportunity to appeal transfer decisions. All decisions are final. If a student is not approved for the requested maximum allowed number of courses, they may submit additional courses for evaluation by following the process outlined on the “DNP Program Course Transfer Form.”

Course Substitutions

A course substitution differs from transfer credit. DNP and Graduate Certificate students may request to replace a required course in their degree plan with a graduate-level course taken at the University of Arizona with similar or exact content. DNP students may substitute and/or transfer up to 9 units total. There is no appeal process for the evaluation of completed course substitution requests. Please note: Courses from the U of A MS-MEPN degree cannot be substituted for DNP or Graduate Certificate program courses. If approved for credit, course substitutions must be listed on the student’s “Plan of Study.” Please contact the Doctoral Advisor at con-osaa@arizona.edu for more information.

Satisfactory Academic Progress within the College of Nursing

Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress

Successful completion of the DNP program and/or Graduate Certificate program requires a substantial time commitment each semester. Assigned readings, various assignments, online discussion participation, clinical rotations, and personal study are all intrinsic to earning a DNP degree or Graduate Certificate. To be a student making satisfactory academic progress, one must:

- Follow the [Program of Study](#) as well as the policy for continuous enrollment and time-to degree
- Follow your respective program’s Clinical Handbook
- Maintain regular communication with your Specialty Coordinator and Faculty Advisor, particularly regarding life events that could impact program progression

- Maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA and grades of A or B (see the section “Grading and Program Progression” for more information)
- Adhere to the [Code of Ethics for Nurses](#)
 - Maintain a professional demeanor in all written and verbal communications

The College of Nursing (CON) Faculty collaborates with students to provide the necessary resources and guidance for maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress. However, failure to adhere to the stipulated guidelines may result in dismissal from the program.

Time Limits on Graduate Coursework

- All requirements for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) must be completed within 6 years. Time-to-degree begins with the first semester of DNP enrollment at the University of Arizona.
- All requirements for a graduate certificate must be completed within 4 years. Time-to-certificate begins with the first semester of Graduate Certificate enrollment at the University of Arizona.
- Transfer Credits: The Graduate College policy specifies that the earliest coursework for the degree cannot be more than 10 years from graduation for doctoral programs.
- In addition to University and program time limits, students in clinical specialties should be aware that state boards of nursing may establish specific recency requirements for certain courses, such as advanced pharmacology, advanced health assessment, and advanced pathophysiology. These requirements vary by state and may affect eligibility for advanced practice licensure or prescriptive authority. Students are responsible for identifying and meeting the current licensure requirements of the state or states in which they intend to practice, including any limits on how recently required coursework must have been completed.

Continuous Enrollment Policy / Minimum Enrollment

Advanced practice students must maintain [Continuous Enrollment](#) as defined by the Graduate College. The policy requires enrollment in a minimum of 1 unit in Fall and Spring semesters. Students who are not enrolled in classes during the Fall and Spring semesters and are not on a Leave of Absence (LOA), will be automatically discontinued from their respective programs prior to the end of the semester.

In addition to the Graduate College policy, to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress within the College of Nursing, students are expected to follow their Program of Study, which requires Summer enrollment. If a student does not enroll for the Summer term, they will not maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress within the College of Nursing. Students should immediately contact their Faculty Advisor if they are concerned about their ability to follow their Program of Study sequence.

While DNP students are not required to maintain full-time enrollment (9 units), student financial aid may require full-time status. DNP Students receiving funding such as assistantships,

fellowships, loans, grants, scholarships or traineeships may be required by their funding source to register for more than 1 unit to meet full-time status requirements and should check with their funding agency regarding such requirements.

DNP students who have completed all coursework and six units of DNP project coursework may apply for Advanced Status with the University. Advanced Status allows the DNP student to be considered full-time at 1 unit. Interested students must review the policy in the University catalog and complete the required form. For more information, please contact con-osaa@arizona.edu

Students must be enrolled in a minimum of one unit of NURS 922 in the term in which they hold their Final Oral Defense (see “The DNP Project” section of this Handbook for more information).

Leave of Absence

When there is a personal or medical emergency and/or significant life event, students may request a Leave of Absence (LOA) for up to one academic year. An approved LOA does not extend time-to-degree.

To take an LOA, students must follow the process outlined on the College of Nursing website under [DNP Program Forms and Resources](#). The LOA is not official until both the College of Nursing and the Graduate College approve the request. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A student who does not return from an LOA within the approved time will no longer be making Satisfactory Academic Progress within the College of Nursing.

- Students who fail to return from an LOA for the Spring or Fall semester will be automatically discontinued from the program by the end of the semester and will be required to reapply to the program. Readmittance is not guaranteed.
- Students who fail to return from an LOA for the Summer semester may be recommended for dismissal from the program.
- LOA extensions and retroactive applications will be considered in cases of extenuating circumstances. Students must contact their Faculty Advisor and Specialty Coordinator to discuss applicability to their situation. Approval is not guaranteed, and all decisions are final. In cases where approval is granted, the LOA process as outlined on the [DNP Program Forms and Resources](#) page must be repeated.

Grading and Program Progression

The program course grading policy ensures that students are safe, competent, advanced practice nurses and prepared to become licensed healthcare providers upon graduation from the DNP program for clinical specialties and competent advanced practice leaders and educators for the EHSL and NEL specialties. The grading policy aligns with the national accreditation standards of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA), the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME), and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) standards that address patient and public safety.

Additionally, students are expected to follow policies and expectations outlined in their course syllabi.

A high level of performance is expected of students enrolled in the program. To remain enrolled in the program, a student must be making satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree and as per the criteria defined below. A student will be recommended to the Graduate College for immediate dismissal from the program for unsafe clinical practice or unethical conduct during clinical training and/or leadership practicum experiences; see the specialty-specific clinical handbook content.

The College of Nursing enforces the [University and Graduate College](#) policies on Graduate Academic Standing, Progress, and Probation with the following additions:

Grade Point Average (GPA)

A student must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or better to be making Satisfactory Academic Progress and to be awarded the DNP degree or Graduate Certificate. Students with less than a 3.0 GPA will be placed on Academic Probation per Graduate College Policy and will have two terms (including Summer) to raise their GPA.

Grades: All Specialties (except the NA Program)

Graduate students in the College of Nursing are expected to earn grades of A or B in every course. Grades below a B are considered unsatisfactory and no course with a grade lower than a B will be included on the “Program of Study” in GradPath (see the “GradPath section for more information).

- Courses with less than a B must be repeated.
- A student may attempt the same course no more than three times.
- If a student does not earn an A or B the third time, the student will be recommended for dismissal from the program.
- Due to course prerequisites, students who earn less than a B in a non-clinical course may have progression toward their plan of study impacted. Students in this position should reach out to their Faculty Advisor and Specialty Coordinator.
- If a student earns less than a B in any clinical course, the student may not register for any other clinical courses until they have repeated and passed the course in question with an A or B. Clinical courses are only offered once per year.
- Students can do one Grade Replacement Opportunity (GRO) for a course they earned a C or lower in. Students seeking to use a GRO will file a GradPath Petition before a deadline each term to replace a prior grade with the outcome of an in-progress attempt. Students with questions can contact con-osaa@arizona.edu

Grades: DNP-NA Students

Students in the Nurse Anesthesiology (NA) program who earn lower than a B in any given course, including clinical courses, are not eligible to repeat the course and shall be recommended to the Graduate College for dismissal from the program.

Grades: Extra Credit

Extra credit is not permitted in the DNP or graduate certificate program courses. Grades are determined by each course's specific syllabus.

Grades: NURS 922 DNP Project

- Are graded using S (superior), P (pass), or F (failure) each semester of enrollment
- Grades (S, P, or F) awarded for NURS 922 units do not factor into the GPA
- The units may be applied toward the DNP degree if a grade of S or P is earned
- A total of 6 units of NURS 922 with grades of S or P are required to earn the DNP degree

Grades of Incomplete

The grade of "I" for "Incomplete" may be awarded only at the end of the semester when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed, as determined by the course chair. An incomplete grade cannot be awarded for Independent Study or DNP project coursework, per the Graduate College. The policy and process for taking an "Incomplete" is located on the Office of the Registrar's website.

A Leave of Absence (LOA) does not extend the one-year time frame for Incomplete resolution. If there is a possibility that the student's cumulative GPA will fall below 3.00 through the conversion of Incomplete grades to failing grades, the DNP degree will not be awarded. For more information, please contact con-osaa@arizona.edu

Grade Appeal

All graduate students at the University may appeal a grade. According to [University policy](#), the basis for filing a grade appeal in any course is limited to fundamental fairness in treatment of the student by the instructor, as specified by the syllabus supplied to students at the beginning of the course. When considering a grade appeal, a student should meet with an OSAA team member to review the required steps and timelines. All grade appeals should follow the line of communication provided in this handbook.

Withdrawal Grades

The University controls withdrawal (dropping a course or withdrawing from the University) processes. Complete policies are available on the [Office of the Registrar's](#) website. Students leaving the University without a statement of formal withdrawal will be awarded a failing grade in each course.

Students should review the current term's Registration [Dates & Deadlines Calendar](#) when considering a withdrawal. Summer courses are often dynamically dated, with non-standard start and end dates – please see the registrar's calendars for Dates and Deadlines for Classes with Nonstandard Start Dates to verify the appropriate term deadlines.

Dismissal from the Program

The College of Nursing may request the dismissal of a student from DNP or Graduate Certificate program for one or more of the following reasons:

- Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress, based on the Graduate College academic probation policies.
- Failure to return from a Leave of Absence (LOA) by the approved semester.
- Engaging in illegal or unethical conduct.
 - Violating policies outlined by (but not limited to) the [Code of Ethics for Nurses](#), the U of A [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the College of Nursing's Advanced Practice Nursing [Clinical Handbook](#).

Prior to requesting a dismissal, the Specialty Coordinator and/or Faculty Advisor as well as any relevant member(s) of the Graduate Faculty will meet with the student to discuss concerns and a possible path forward. Failure to adhere to any plan crafted with the faculty will result in a recommendation to the Graduate College for dismissal from the program.

Students automatically discontinued from the DNP or Graduate Certificate program for violating the Graduate College [Continuous Enrollment](#) policy will have to reapply to the program. Readmission is not guaranteed.

All graduate students have the option to appeal a dismissal decision; please see the [Grievance Policy](#) outlined on the U of A website for more information.

DNP Portfolio

DNP students must maintain and complete a DNP Portfolio before graduation from the DNP program. The DNP Portfolio link can be found through UA D2L/Brightspace. Completion of the DNP Portfolio is required for program graduation. Students should contact their Faculty Advisor or Specialty Coordinator for assistance with accessing/using the DNP Portfolio.

The DNP Project

DNP students must complete the DNP Project to graduate. The DNP Project is conducted in two phases: Proposal and Final project defense. During DNP foundational courses, students will develop the skills necessary to develop the DNP project. Students are encouraged to complete core course assignments focused on their planned DNP project topic and meet with their DNP project committee chair before enrolling in their first NURS 922 DNP Project course. DNP project committee chairs are assigned by the Specialty Coordinator by the semester prior to starting the NURS722 course.

DNP Project Course Enrollment

DNP students must complete a minimum of six units of DNP Project courses (two units of NURS722 and four units of NURS922). If six units have been taken and the DNP Project is not

yet completed, students must register for additional units of NURS 922 each semester, as determined by the student and the faculty and OSAA advisor, until the DNP Project is complete.

Doctoral DNP Project Committee

DNP students will establish a DNP Project committee to complete the DNP Project. Additional requirements for DNP Project Committee are outlined in the [DNP Project Tool Kit](#). All DNP students must complete the DNP Project Committee Appointment Form. This form reports the student's planned DNP Project Committee, DNP Project title (subject to change), and the expected graduation term (may be updated as necessary). The Committee Appointment Form must be submitted in GradPath before the defense of the DNP Project Proposal.

Doctoral DNP Project Committee: Special Member

Special members are professionals who may not be faculty at the CON, but whose knowledge, skills, or experience may complement the other members of the student's DNP project committee. Special members should be educated at a doctoral level and have applicable skills and knowledge to apply to the student's work; special members with a master's degree may be approved if they provide critical content expertise, stakeholder input, etc. to the DNP project committee. Special members may be University of Arizona faculty that are not part of the College of Nursing graduate faculty, faculty at other institutions, employed by government entities or the private sector. The special member must participate in the DNP project proposal and final defense. Follow the instructions posted on the [DNP Project Resources](#) webpage and submit the [DNP Committee - Special Member Request](#) before submitting the GradPath "Doctoral DNP Project Committee Appointment" form.

DNP Project Proposal Defense

The student must coordinate a time and date for the DNP Project proposal defense with their DNP Committee Chair and committee members, and all must be present at the DNP Project proposal defense. Students may not defend on any holiday listed on the Academic Calendar or when the University is closed. Within two days of the proposal defense, the student's DNP Committee Chair will complete the "DNP Project Proposal Defense Form" and email it to OSAA at con-osaa@arizona.edu for processing.

Human Subjects & IRB Compliance

All students must submit their proposed DNP project through the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program for review. Students may not submit for eIRB review until the student's faculty committee approves the proposal via the Proposal Defense. Information regarding the Human Subjects process can be found on the [College of Nursing IRB Process](#) webpage. Students may not commence any study-related activities (recruit, enroll, etc.) until approval is received. External approval from the project implementation site may be required and must be accomplished in addition to standard university policies.

DNP Project Final Defense

Each student is required to present the DNP Project in an open forum upon completion. Additionally, students are expected to follow the “Final Defense Guide” provided by OSAA. The official term of "Final DNP Project Defense" consists of a presentation of the DNP Project, questions, and a closed session for the student and committee. The closed session follows the presentation and allows the committee to discuss the DNP Project with the student and identify any required revisions before submission.

The student should coordinate the time and date for the presentation with their committee, as all members must be present at the final DNP Project defense. Students must adhere to the deadlines provided by OSAA each term within the “Final Defense Guide” posted on the [College of Nursing DNP Project Resources](#) site.

Artificial Intelligence

Students may use artificial intelligence (AI) tools only in ways that support learning, uphold academic integrity, and comply with University, College of Nursing, and course-specific requirements. Expectations regarding whether and how AI may be used can vary by course, assignment, and clinical or scholarly activity. Some courses allow AI use, some do not, and some never permit it. Students are responsible for reviewing and following the AI expectations and policies stated in each course syllabus and assignment instructions. When requirements are unclear, students should consult the course faculty before using an AI tool.

When AI use is permitted, students are expected to adhere to the following:

- **Adjunctive use.** Use AI as a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, their own critical thinking, clinical judgment, scholarly analysis, and professional accountability.
- **Disclose usage.** Be transparent about the use of AI and acknowledge or cite its use when required by the course, assignment, or applicable professional or scholarly standards.
- **Human oversight is required.** Independently verify the accuracy, quality, relevance, and appropriateness of AI-generated information, including any references or citations. AI can ‘hallucinate’ and fabricate output. AI can also draw on outdated or previously erroneous input that the tool (model) was trained on, as well as unspecified algorithms. Inaccurate output can also occur due to less-than-optimal prompting.
- Evaluate AI-generated content for bias, omissions, misinformation, and potential harm.

Error types:

<i>Factual</i>	States false information as true (e.g., fabricated citations, invented drug dosages)
<i>Faithfulness</i>	Contradicts or drifts from provided source material
<i>Reasoning</i>	Plausible-looking statements, but contain errors in logic
<i>Temporal</i>	Model applies outdated knowledge from training cutoff to current context. [Requires knowledge-cutoff tracking and date-aware retrieval and may be difficult to assess].

- **Treat AI tools with HIPAA precautions.** Protect privacy and confidentiality by never entering protected health information, personally identifiable information, student information, proprietary organizational information, unpublished project data, or other sensitive content into an AI platform unless its use has been explicitly authorized and appropriate safeguards are in place.
- Ensure that submitted work accurately represents the student's own knowledge, reasoning, and contributions.

Students remain fully responsible for all content they submit or use, regardless of whether AI contributed to its development. Unauthorized, undisclosed, deceptive, or inappropriate use of AI may constitute a violation of course expectations, academic integrity standards, professional conduct requirements, or applicable privacy and confidentiality policies.

When AI is allowed, students should use University of Arizona tools (below). These tools provide additional security to prevent unauthorized training of the tool, which contributes to emerging AI tool behaviors, output, responses, and unintended consequences.

See this webpage for more information: <https://responsibleai.arizona.edu/ai-tools-guide>

Suggested tools: log in using your U of A NetID credentials (aka 'Enterprise' version).

Examples:

U of A GenAI (Anthropic – Claude)

CoPilot Enterprise

Google Gemini Enterprise