



**Indiana State
University**

**Doctor of Nursing Practice
Clinical Guidelines
Fall 2023-Spring 2026**

Welcome

Welcome to Indiana State University's (ISU) School of Nursing (SON) in the College of Health and Human Services. Congratulations on the start of this new journey as a proud Sycamore graduate student. The SON is a welcoming environment that is student-centered; your success is ours and we are committed to your personal and professional growth. We strive to create an inclusive environment where people from all different backgrounds can come together to form symbiotic relationships that foster academic excellence. We take great pride in our Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program and appreciate you trusting ISU with your graduate education.

This SON DNP Clinical Handbook is designed to share policies and procedures as they relate to DNP clinical courses. The information presented here will help you navigate your way through the DNP program. This handbook is for students who are pursuing their DNP as a post-master's student or as a post-baccalaureate (BSN) student. All nursing programs at Indiana State University are accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

If you are pursuing an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) specialty such as Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), this handbook will be your guide for all doctoral (800 level) clinical courses. Those enrolled in the BSN to DNP program will also complete a set of didactic and clinical courses specific to their APRN role.

All post-master's students must complete a total of 1,000 post-baccalaureate hours to earn their DNP. ISU BSN to DNP students will complete the 350 hours included in the DNP clinical courses plus the hours included in the track for their specific role and population. For example, BSN to DNP/FNP students will complete 350 DNP Project Hours plus the 750 hours included in the FNP role specific clinical courses. Each APRN specialty has a clinical handbook that outlines policies for precepted, role specific, clinical courses (600 level). This handbook only applies to DNP clinical courses (APN 810, APN 881, APN 882, and APN 883).

The primary reference for rules, policies, and procedures concerning graduate education in the SON is the [Graduate Nursing Programs Student Handbook](#). We hope that this handbook helps you make the most of your graduate experience here at ISU. If there are items that you have specific questions about and don't find the answers here, please contact your advisor for guidance.

Once again, thank you for trusting ISU with your graduate education. We are confident that you have made the right choice and we will be with you every step of the way.

**Indiana State University
School of Nursing
Doctor of Nursing Practice
Clinical Guidelines**

Under the guidance of the faculty scholarly project chair, the project advisory team (PAT) and designated mentor, the student will develop and implement a specific outline of clinical experience concerning an area of interest. The outline will identify specific opportunities for meaningful engagement with experts from nursing, as well as other disciplines. The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) project is a process to address a clinically relevant problem in nursing. This requires competence in knowledge development activities such as the translation of research into practice, the evaluation of practice, activities aimed at improving the reliability of healthcare practice and outcomes, and participation in collaborative research.

Clinical experiences are guided by the DNP competencies set forth in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), Essentials document published in 2021, student learning outcomes, and the individual course objectives. Emphasis should be placed on the application and synthesis of new learning while building upon previous knowledge. The clinical experiences can include a wide variety of sites where the DNP student achieves additional competencies for the practice doctorate.

The line between current employment and clinical scholarship hours and project must remain clear to the organization, the mentor, the DNP project advisory team and the DNP student. The DNP student must be able to demonstrate achievement of the DNP competencies, sub-competencies, and student learning outcomes, regardless of whether they are in their current place of employment or a different clinical setting. Mentor(s) will work to facilitate these achievements.

Students should look to the AACN Essentials, 2021 document for guidance on all scholarly projects and related clinical activities. In addition, alignment of the DNP Project and clinical activities with domain(s) of Boyer's Scholarship Model ensures the student's ability to identify elements of scholarly development and progression (Boyer, 1990).

DNP Student Learning Outcomes

Domain 1: Knowledge for Nursing Practice

Integrate foundational and advanced knowledge from nursing and related disciplines to inform practice and decision-making in diverse healthcare settings.

Domain 2: Person-Centered Care

Demonstrate ethical, inclusive, and professional conduct in nursing practice, respecting the rights, autonomy, and dignity of all individuals and groups, while recognizing and addressing the social determinants of health that influence well-being.

Domain 3: Population Health

Develop and implement strategies to promote health, prevent disease, and improve the well-being of individuals, groups, families, and communities.

Domain 4: Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline

Utilize research methods, evidence-based practice, and critical appraisal skills to contribute to the development and dissemination of nursing knowledge that improves health and transforms healthcare.

Domain 5: Quality and Safety

Employ strategies to identify, evaluate, and mitigate potential risks, ensuring patient safety and minimizing adverse events in healthcare settings.

Domain 6: Interprofessional Partnerships

Engage in interprofessional partnerships and collaboration to improve patient outcomes, enhance teamwork, and optimize healthcare delivery.

Domain 7: Systems-Based Practice

Demonstrate an understanding of the healthcare system, including its organization, financing, policy, and regulation and apply systems thinking to improve patient care and healthcare delivery.

Domain 8: Informatics and Healthcare Technologies

Utilize informatics and healthcare technologies to support and enhance nursing practice, healthcare delivery, data management, and evidence-based decision-making.

Domain 9: Professionalism

Cultivate a strong professional identity, embracing the values of nursing and contributing to the advancement of the nursing profession.

Domain 10: Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development

Engage in personal and professional development activities, including leadership training, to enhance skills, knowledge, and abilities as nursing professionals.

Hours

- a) Indiana State University's (ISU) School of Nursing (SON) requires 1000 post-baccalaureate hours of clinical experience for post-master's students who are pursuing the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree;
- b) Supervised clinical hours, completed in an APRN Master of Science program or Post-Master's APRN Certificate program, may be applied toward the 1000-hour requirement. A maximum of 650 post-baccalaureate clinical hours may be applied. Students must have the verification of post-baccalaureate hours form completed by their APRN/MSN program director in order for these hours to be applied. Upon receipt of the verification form, a gap analysis will be conducted to ensure that each post-master's student has a clearly delineated path to meet the required 1,000 post-baccalaureate clinical/practicum hours.
- c) Post-master's students who have not completed 650 post-baccalaureate hours may be required to complete additional clinical hours in the APN 890 variable credit course. This allows students to reach the final 1,000 practice hours to be awarded a DNP from ISU.
- d) The number of hours to be applied from prior degree programs, certificate programs, and/or advanced certifications will be jointly determined by the admissions committee (comprised of nursing faculty) and the Program Coordinator. Hours will be credited in accordance with national standards and in compliance with ACEN criteria.
- e) Documentation of post-baccalaureate hours ([see form](#)) and advanced certification(s) should be sent to the SON as part of the final application packet. This document is linked from the How to Apply Worksheet on the DNP Website.
- f) Students must do a minimum of 350 clinical hours in the program as part of the DNP project series. See Clinical Practicum Guidance section for additional information on clinical activities.
- g) BSN-DNP students must complete a minimum of 350 clinical hours in the program as part of the DNP project series. They must also complete the clinical hours associated with their APRN role and meet the core competencies associated with that role. If the hours associated with the

specific APRN role plus the 350 hours from DNP project courses does not total at least 1,000 hours, additional independent study hours will be needed.

Activities

- a) Early in the program, students will discuss their ideas/plans for clinical with their academic advisor, project chair, mentor, and/or course instructor;
- b) Identified activities should be experiences that will contribute to the student's career and are beyond/different from normal everyday compensated work activities;
- c) Documented hours completed for the student's project may be included as DNP clinical hours, as long as they are new experiences for the student, are well documented, linked to one or more of the end-of-program student learning outcomes/domains, mentored, and deemed appropriate by the advisor/course instructor;
- d) The student, with the help of their advisor/project chair/course faculty, will identify an appropriate mentor; School of Nursing faculty members are allowed to serve as mentors during the first semester of the program as students determine their area of focus for their project and identify a mentor with subject matter expertise.
- e) Mentors should be doctoral prepared, or master's prepared, advanced practice nurses or subject matter experts in the student's area of interest. Students and mentors will complete the mentor agreement and the student will submit this to the Medatrax system. The project chair or program coordinator will determine if the mentor has the necessary qualifications and, if so, will approve their mentor status.
- f) The student will complete an outline of clinical experiences, in collaboration with the mentor and advisor, prior to logging any DNP clinical hours. The outline is a dynamic document that will be altered to ensure that each student's needs are met. The outline will evolve over the course of the program based upon evaluations and feedback from the mentor and project chair.
- g) Objectives, as well as the means of achieving the goals, will be developed with the mentor and approved by course faculty.
- h) Clinical hours will be documented in the Medatrax clinical documentation system and will be reviewed by the lead course faculty or PAT chair at the completion of each semester. Only hours documented in the Medatrax system will be counted towards program hours.

- i) Students will utilize the Medatrax evaluation system each semester to evaluate their mentors. Students must also be evaluated by their mentor and have hours verified by their mentor to earn credit for each semester.
- j) All assignments for DNP project courses must be met to progress in the program. These assignments are designed to help you meet the end of program student learning outcomes and relevant role competencies.

Clinical Practicum Guidance

The following are general suggestions for potential clinical practicum activities. Students are not limited to this list of activities and can combine multiple activities when developing their plan for securing practicum hours. It is important to remember that when clinical hours are logged in the clinical documentation platform, all activities must be linked to one or more of the DNP Domains/Program Outcomes.

Domain 1: Knowledge for Nursing Practice

Integrate foundational and advanced knowledge from nursing and related disciplines to inform practice and decision-making in diverse healthcare settings.

- Join new quality improvement initiative and meet with stakeholders and colleagues
- Investigation of new partnership that could result in collaboration or project support
- Create an advocacy campaign to build support for your project or project concepts
- Integrate sound educational design to address health topics
- Identify strategies for determining resource and budget priorities based on federal, state, local, and organizational financial contributions
- Securing funding and assistance via grant writing
- Business plan development
- Conduct and organize a SWOT analysis
- Host a roundtable discussion with peers from other disciplines to discuss healthcare quality improvement
- Develop innovative nursing strategies or protocols to address healthcare challenges
- Assess the effectiveness of nursing interventions on patient outcomes
- Evaluate your own performance in clinical settings and identify areas for improvement

Domain 2: Person-Centered Care

Demonstrate ethical, inclusive, and professional conduct in nursing practice, respecting the rights, autonomy, and dignity of all individuals and groups, while recognizing and addressing the social determinants of health that influence well-being.

- Utilize health systems data to identify quality gaps and social determinants of health to plan and implement solutions
- Facilitate health system planning to address the needs of patients from all socioeconomic strata
- Lead and facilitate a community health needs assessment
- Host a meeting of healthcare stakeholders to discuss the barriers to healthcare services in your community
- Implement evidence-based solutions to real world clinical problems
- Design programs to promote patient empowerment and shared decision-making

Domain 3: Population Health

Develop and implement strategies to promote health, prevent disease, and improve the well-being of individuals, groups, families, and communities.

- Analyze clinical data to identify shared gaps in care
- Assess clinical performance on quality metrics
- Implement patient-centered quality improvement projects for health promotion and disease prevention
- Collection and analysis of epidemiological data
- Contribute to the measuring, reporting and continuous improvement of organizational performance
- Implement best-practice guidelines or algorithms for the improvement of care quality
- Identification and/or implementation of reliable and valid screening tools
- Design community health initiatives to promote health equity and social justice

Domain 4: Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline

Utilize research methods, evidence-based practice, and critical appraisal skills to contribute to the development and dissemination of nursing knowledge that improves health and transforms healthcare.

- Analyze, Interpret, and summarize de-identified data
- Assess lab-based surveillance or electronic medical record data
- Conduct cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, and cost utility analyses

- Organize, analyze, and summarize data for a report or presentation
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a rapid cycle change or quality improvement project
- Attend grant writing seminar, course, or workshop
- Construction or revision of your EBP/IRB/QI proposal
- Virtual or face-to-face meetings with stakeholders to develop project protocol
- Consultation with statistician before and after data collection (face-to-face or virtual)
- Develop a DNP project or publication to contribute to nursing knowledge
- Develop a quality improvement project proposal to address a targeted outcome or patient population
- Composition of DNP manuscript results and discussion sections
- Assess the quality of evidence in research articles to inform nursing practice

Domain 5: Quality and Safety

Employ strategies to identify, evaluate, and mitigate potential risks, ensuring patient safety and minimizing adverse events in healthcare settings.

- Learning to use Access or Excel
- Database design and development
- Learning to utilize data export and reporting functions of electronic medical record systems
- Learning how to develop and/or utilize mobile/remote applications to facilitate patient interaction with the healthcare system
- Utilization and/or development of web-based data gathering tools to promote a culture of safety and minimize adverse events
- Development of educational methodologies aimed at individual, population, organizational or community levels
- Develop a patient safety program tailored to a specific healthcare setting and/or unique challenge
- Conduct a root cause analysis, identify and implement appropriate solutions to address safety issues
- Assess the effectiveness of patient safety initiatives in reducing healthcare errors

Domain 6: Interprofessional Partnerships

Engage in interprofessional partnerships and collaboration to improve patient outcomes, enhance teamwork, and optimize healthcare delivery.

- Consultations with faculty mentor or clinical mentor (virtual or face-to-face)

- Consultations with expert panel, subject matter experts, or interprofessional team members
- Attendance of community organization or not-for-profit organization meetings
- Tabletop exercise or clinical roundtable to address clinically relevant topic
- Attendance of grand rounds on a project related topic (virtual or face-to-face)
- Facilitate an interprofessional clinical team or journal club to mentor junior colleagues
- Develop strategies to foster a culture of teamwork and respect in healthcare settings
- Design an interprofessional training program to enhance collaboration among healthcare professionals
- Evaluate the outcomes of interprofessional teamwork on patient satisfaction and safety
- Develop interprofessional education initiatives to improve health outcomes and teamwork in health related disciplines

Domain 7: Systems-Based Practice

Demonstrate an understanding of the healthcare system, including its organization, financing, policy, and regulation and apply systems thinking to improve patient care and healthcare delivery.

- Development/Refinement of PICOT Question
- Analyzing literature for quality and project relevance
- Collaborate with nursing resource librarian to learn how to navigate databases and resources
- Online and face-to-face attendance at a topic related conference for CME
- Face-to-face or virtual meeting with subject matter experts on project topic
- Development of materials to convey PICOT and project concepts to faculty and stakeholders
- Assess the success of nursing advocacy efforts in influencing local, state, and national health policy
- Evaluate the outcomes of system-wide healthcare interventions or policy changes
- Analyze the impact of healthcare policies on patient access to care and health outcomes

Domain 8: Informatics and Healthcare Technologies

Utilize informatics and healthcare technologies to support and enhance nursing practice, healthcare delivery, data management, and evidence-based decision-making.

- Development of mobile applications for quality improvement
- Website development or design of web-accessible training/informational material
- Discover how to access, download, and process public data sets
- Appraise existing healthcare platforms or mobile applications
- Serve as a member of an electronic medical record selection team
- Develop guidelines for the ethical use of healthcare technologies in nursing
- Assess the benefits and challenges of integrating new technologies into nursing practice
- Design a technology-based patient education program for a specific population

Domain 9: Professionalism

Cultivate a strong professional identity, embracing the values of nursing and contributing to the advancement of the nursing profession.

- Utilize health systems data to identify quality gaps and implement solutions
- Facilitate health system planning
- Lead and facilitate a community health needs assessment
- Implement evidence-based solutions to real world clinical problems
- Demonstrate your cultural intelligence (CQ) to improve your understanding of various cultural clusters and care preferences
- Create a personal and professional development plan to achieve career goals in nursing
- Model professional behavior in all nursing interactions, including with patients, colleagues, and supervisors
- Apply ethical frameworks to analyze and address ethical dilemmas in nursing practice

Domain 10: Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development

Execute personal and professional development activities, including leadership training, to enhance skills, knowledge, and abilities as nursing professionals.

- Mentor others in knowledge discovery, clinical quality improvement, or PICOT statement development
- Support evidence-based practice efforts at your place of employment
- Execute an evidence-based, provider training on new practice or treatment regimen
- Create a leadership development plan with specific goals and action steps
- Attend a leadership development workshop
- Design a leadership project that addresses a specific healthcare issue or improves patient care

- Evaluate the impact of personal and professional development efforts on nursing care quality
- Assess the effectiveness of leadership strategies in achieving organizational goals

Participation in Clinical: Student Guidelines

Mentors

- a) Ideally, mentors should be doctorally prepared and/or have evidence of content/subject matter expertise in the area of project focus. Mentors without a terminal degree will be considered if the student is able to provide documentation confirming that the mentor is an expert in the student's area of interest. Exceptions to this should be discussed with the course faculty, project chair, academic advisor and/or the program coordinator.
- b) Mentors are critical to the student learning experience and must be treated with the utmost care and respect. Students exhibiting conduct to the contrary will face disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.
- c) Please note that DNP clinical hours have supervision and oversight from a mentor. APRN clinical hours have face-to-face preceptors.

Health Requirements

During enrollment in the School of Nursing at Indiana State University, students are expected to demonstrate appropriate health practices by regular health care and personal health behavior. Please see the [Graduate Nursing Programs Student Handbook](#) for additional policies.

If you have a health condition or you are pregnant or have been hospitalized you must be of sound health to return to the healthcare setting. You are required to make faculty aware of any health condition which may put you, your facility, community stakeholders, or patients at an increased risk.

HIPAA Statement

The ISU School of Nursing complies with all federal and state laws related to the confidentiality of patient medical information including the Privacy Regulations issued pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. Students are required to comply with such laws and the medical record confidentiality policies and procedures of any health care facility they are assigned

Name Tags

All students must wear a name tag identifying themselves as an ISU student during any on-site clinical time. Name tags are ordered in advance of entering the clinical setting. Students should identify themselves as a graduate DNP student when speaking to the vendor ([The Trophy Shop](#)).

Clinical Hours

Documentation of your clinical hours will take place in the Medatrax clinical documentation system. Falsification of clinical hours may result in dismissal from the DNP program and/or Indiana State University in congruence with the ISU Student Academic Integrity Code. The most important part of this log, secondary only to tracking the hours, is linking each experience to one or more of the end of program student learning outcomes/domains.

Professional Conduct and Student Expectations

Indiana State University nursing students are expected to demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct in all aspects of their academic work and college life. You are Ambassadors of Indiana State University and are expected to conduct yourselves in a professional manner at all times. Please review the professional [conduct policy](#).

[9/19/2023 Approved SON SAC](#)

References

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2021). *The Essentials: Core*

Competencies for Professional Nursing Education.

<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/AcademicNursing/pdf/Essentials-2021.pdf>

Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton,

NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.